



Superintendent Update: December 6, 2013

Quote for the week: “What we learn, from any given set of circumstances, determines whether we become increasingly powerless or more powerful.”—Blaine Lee

I ran across this article below through an email. With the holidays, bad weather, and shorter amounts of daylight, I thought this information may be helpful in giving each of us reasons to stay strong in order to support our family, colleagues and friends. I hope you enjoy the thoughts of Amy Morin. I have edited portions to fit our professional workplace.

Mentally Strong People: The 13 Things They Avoid

For all the time educators spend concerned about physical strength and health, when it comes down to it, mental strength can mean even more. There are numerous articles which speak to critical characteristics of mental strength—tenacity, “grit,” optimism, and an unfailing ability to put the needs of others first. As educators, it is important for us to be well read on encouraging thoughts and ideas of others.

However, we can also define mental strength by identifying the things mentally strong individuals **don't do**. I was impressed by this list compiled by Amy Morin, a social worker and Psychotherapist. It impressed me enough I'd also like to share her list here along with my thoughts on how each of these items is particularly applicable to educators. **Remember, this is a list of what we DON'T do.**

1. Waste Time Feeling Sorry for Themselves. You don't see mentally strong people feeling sorry for their circumstances or dwelling on the way they've been mistreated. They have learned to take responsibility for their actions and outcomes, and they have an inherent understanding of the fact that frequently life is not fair. They are able to emerge from trying circumstances with self-awareness and gratitude for the lessons learned. When a situation turns out badly, they respond with phrases such as “Oh, well.” Often, school folks will just say “things will work out o.k.”

2. Give Away Their Power. Mentally strong people avoid giving others the power to make them feel inferior or bad. They understand they are in control of their actions and emotions. They know their strength is in their ability to manage the way they respond.

3. Shy Away from Change. Mentally strong people embrace change and they welcome challenge. Their biggest “fear,” if they have one, is not of the unknown, but of becoming complacent and stagnant. An environment of change and even uncertainty can energize a mentally strong person and bring out their best.

4. Waste Energy on Things They Can't Control. Mentally strong people don't complain (much) about bad traffic, lost luggage, or especially about *other people*, as they recognize that all of these factors are generally beyond their control. In a bad situation, they recognize that the one thing they can always control is their own response and attitude, and they use these attributes well.



5. Worry About Pleasing Others. Know any people pleasers? Or, conversely, people who go out of their way to *dis*-please others as a way of reinforcing an image of strength? Neither position is a good one. A mentally strong person strives to be kind and fair and to please others where appropriate, but is unafraid to speak up. They are able to withstand the possibility that someone will get upset and will navigate the situation, wherever possible, with grace. It takes much practice to hone mental strength in this particular effort.

6. Fear Taking Calculated Risks. A mentally strong person is willing to take calculated risks. This is a different thing entirely than jumping headlong into foolish risks. But with mental strength, an individual can weigh the risks and benefits thoroughly, and will fully assess the potential downsides and even the worst-case scenarios before they take action.

7. Dwell on the Past. There is strength in acknowledging the past and especially in acknowledging the things learned from past experiences—but a mentally strong person is able to avoid mirroring their mental energy in past disappointments or in fantasies of the “glory days” gone by. They invest the majority of their energy in creating an optimal present and future.

8. Make the Same Mistakes Over and Over. We all know the definition of insanity, right? It’s when we take the same actions again and again while hoping for a different and better outcome than we’ve gotten before. A mentally strong person accepts full responsibility for past behavior and is willing to learn from mistakes. The ability to be self-reflective in an accurate and productive way is one of the greatest strengths of spectacularly successful executives and educators. Sometime it would be interesting to research being reflective as research does support this idea as a great tool to stay focused on becoming the best one can be.

9. Resent Other People’s Success. It takes strength of character to feel genuine joy and excitement for other people’s success. Mentally strong people have this ability. They don’t become jealous or resentful when others succeed (although they may take close notes on what the individual did well). They are willing to work hard for their own chances at success, without relying on shortcuts.

10. Give Up After Failure. Every failure is a chance to improve. Even the greatest teachers are willing to admit that their early efforts invariably brought many failures. Mentally strong people are willing to fail again and again, if necessary, as long as the learning experience from every “failure” can bring them closer to their ultimate goals.

11. Fear Alone Time. Mentally strong people enjoy and even treasure the time they spend alone. They use their downtime to reflect, to plan, and to be productive. Most importantly, they don’t depend on others to shore up their happiness and moods. They can be happy with others, and they can also be happy alone. We have all heard the phrase that encourages each of us to “pull our own happiness wagon.”

12. Feel the World Owes Them Anything. Particularly in the current economy, educators and employees at every level are gaining the realization that the world does not owe them a salary, a benefits package and a comfortable life, regardless of their preparation and schooling. Mentally strong people enter the world prepared to work and succeed on their merits, at every stage of the game.



13. Expect Immediate Results. Whether it's a workout plan, a nutritional regimen, or starting a new degree, mentally strong people are "in it for the long haul". They know better than to expect immediate results. They apply their energy and time in measured doses and they celebrate each milestone and increment of success on the way. They have "staying power." And they understand that genuine changes take time. Do you have mental strength? Are there elements on this list you need more of? With thanks to Amy Morin, I would like to reinforce my own abilities further in each of these areas today. How about you?

News for the week:

I encourage everyone to attend one of our schools' Christmas choral programs. I was able to attend the Nelson-Wilks-Herron second grade program. The kids were so cute and the program was great! In relation to our article today, I would say mentally strong people are those who enjoy the smiles and laughter children bring to their lives.



We had a noon school board meeting at Guy Berry on Wednesday. It is always a special treat to see our kids at Guy Berry College and Career Academy (GBCCA) in the environment where they are becoming successful. Jeff Kincade and the staff model the idea of being mentally strong as they consistently find an avenue of encouragement for the students. We heard testimonials from four seniors who all have definite plans for their future. One has joined the Marines, two are going on to College and one is planning to either attend a trade school or apprentice for a local business. All four were not on track to graduate when entering

GBCCA, but now all four are combining on-line classes with classes at GBCCA and MHHS to graduate in May. I am so, so proud of these kids! *Pictured- Justin Cuendet, Shayla Galla, Marissa Andres and Dalton Reed*

We have the **Dallas Brass** group performing at Dunbar on Monday, December 9th at Dunbar Auditorium. Our band students traditionally perform with the group and I will guarantee an evening of entertainment. There is a charge for the concert. I hope you can make it.

Josh Baker received the Farm Bureau Teacher of the Year Award in Little Rock on Wednesday, December 4th. We are so proud of Josh. Pictured with Josh are his wife Laura Beth and their children Hadleigh, Hannah and Harrison. Below is a quote from Andy Guffey:

On behalf of the Arkansas Farm Bureau, I want to congratulate you on your accomplishments and the many successes that you have had as an ag educator. Your dedication to your students and the program at Mountain Home High School is evident in the list of accomplishments in FFA programs, academic achievement and student success. Thank you for all your efforts in training the next generation of ag educators, professionals and leaders. Your success with your students will one day impact the success of our organization and many others.

[Here](#) is a Simple Truths video for you to enjoy.
Have a great weekend everyone!
Lonnie



Congratulations to Christy Curtis,
Mountain Home Kindergarten teacher and new
National Board Certified teacher.



Mrs. Ludwig's physical Science classes are working on an assignment about Honor. They had to select a science related person who has been honored in some way. Each student had to give their definition of honor and conclude whether or not their selection met their criteria.



Twelve School Days of Christmas Photos...



“Red AND Green Day! :) My husband called me a "candy cane" lol!!!”- Amanda Tulgetske, Pinkston.

Here are a few of us from Junior High in our “Red or Green” for day two of the challenge. Thanks so much!!!

Whitney Hickman

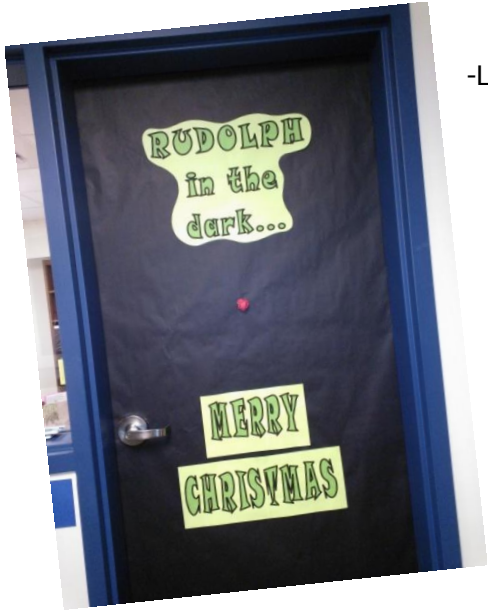


Jim Tejcek

Colleen's door!

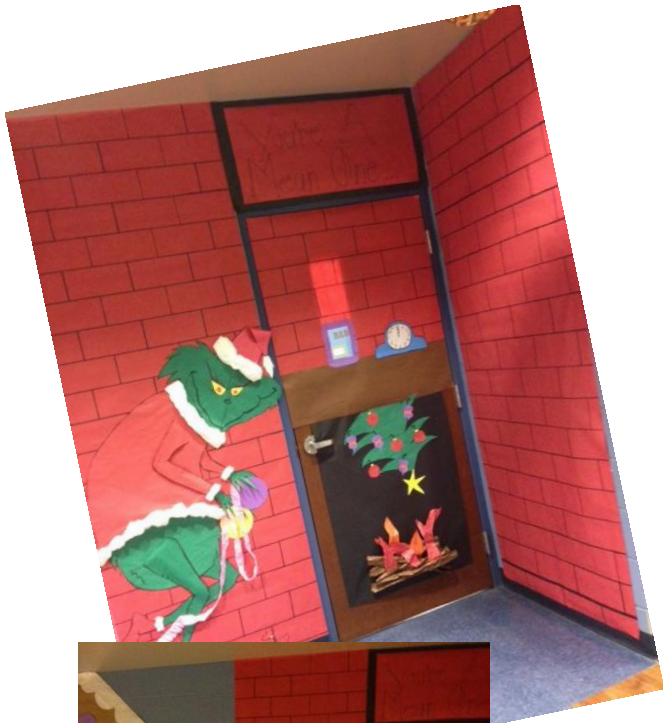


Twelve School Days of Christmas Photos...



-Leisa Simons door High school

Kristi Major's door-



Marsha Partney's door



Shirl Miller's door



Twelve School Days of Christmas Photos...

Seventh Grade math students are getting excited for the holidays as the halls become a festive reminder with decorations from door to door.

LaVon Fairchild
7th Grade Blue Bolts Math Teacher
Pinkston Middle School



Happy Holidays,
Mrs. Lashley
Pinkston Middle School



Alecia Czanstkowski's door

Twelve School Days of Christmas Photos...

Dani Pugsley's door-
Mountain Home Kindergarten



Keith Alman's door-
High School



Jennifer Drewry's door



Twelve School Days of Christmas Photos...



Melissa Greene