

---

# RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM<sup>®</sup> Newsletter

November 2007

Vol. 19 No. 4

---

## Q & A: What's one thing you do to re-energize yourself when fatigue and stress from teaching set in?

John Battye team-teaches fourth and fifth graders in a combined classroom at Burgundy Farm Country Day School in Alexandria, Virginia.

**Answer:** When I'm feeling overwhelmed by all the things I could do, should do, need to do, and want to do, I make a "Capture List"—a sheet of paper on which I write down all of those things. Then I choose a couple of the "want to's"—playing with my three-year-old daughter, reading just for fun—and commit to doing those things that day. My stress melts away when I end the day having done not just necessary things, but also a couple of things that add emotional value to my life.

Kristen Vincent has taught fourth graders at Newman Elementary School in Needham, Massachusetts.

**Answer:** I keep a folder of mementos from past school years to remind myself of the joy of teaching. I save notes from parents, thanking me for giving their child a caring, supportive learning environment; photos of students working; and hopes and dreams from students who struggled all year but finally reached their goals. I also keep students' writing, poems, songs—things that show how much they learned in my classroom. Looking at this folder redirects my focus. Reminded of the success and goodness of my work, I'm ready for more teaching and learning with my fourth graders.

Marianne Harcourt teaches first graders at Federal Street Elementary School in Greenfield, Massachusetts.

**Answer:** I take brisk walks, which I find both energizing and stress-reducing. I live in a small historic village, so I enjoy walking through town and out into the farmlands. It reminds me of quieter and slower times. When I can, I spend time walking along the beach. But wherever and whenever I walk, I try to keep my mind on my surroundings, rather than on school. That makes each walk a true mini-retreat.

Mike Anderson teaches fourth graders at Mary C. Dondero Elementary School in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

**Answer:** I remind myself that in my life, just as in my classroom, certain things are non-negotiable. An important non-negotiable for me is exercise: I swim every morning before school. When I'm stressed, it's tempting to think about skipping my swim. But I remind myself firmly that lack of exercise will compound my stress and ultimately make me feel worse. The sense of well-being I feel after swimming reinforces my belief that I have to take care of myself if I'm going to have the energy to take care of others.

© Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc.  
85 Avenue A, Ste 204, PO Box 718  
Turners Falls, MA 01376  
Ph: 800-360-6332 Fax: 877-206-3952  
[www.responsiveclassroom.org](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org)