



21/22

REFLECTIONS

Chapter 1 - It's Okay to Be Human

In SHHS, we're so used to being superheroes for our families.

In movies, superheroes are the ones who always show up in times of trouble to save the day, and who never ask for anything in return. The superheroes on the big screen never cry. They never act exhausted or overwhelmed. They never ask for a hug. In fact, we never even see them eat food or use the bathroom.

And in the eyes of our students, schools, and families, that is what we are—superheroes. Because no matter how much pain or trauma we're holding onto in our own lives, whenever we show up to help our families, we find ways to brush off our tears, put on that smile, and be that pillar of strength for them, as if we weren't going through all that pain and stress ourselves, as if we somehow had an endless reserve of energy and love to give...

...as if we weren't even human.

Yet, we ARE human. And we have every right to be human in this moment.

We have every right to cry when the pain is overflowing... to admit we're exhausted and overwhelmed when we are... to ask our colleagues for a favor, or a hug, or someone to talk to, when that is what we need.

As we have been reminded through our Trauma Stewardship work, we must tend to our own nervous systems, and metabolize the anguish and pain we feel, so that we don't break down or become oversaturated. It is okay to take care of ourselves. It is okay to access services via EAP or our health practitioners. Because no matter how much the world sees us as superheroes—and, let's be clear, we have been acting like superheroes, and have every right to that label—we're also human.

And never has there been a more important time for us to acknowledge and embrace our humanity than right now. I know last year was overwhelming. I know that many of you lost friends and loved ones. I know that all of you continuously carried the burden of students and families so they could make it through another day. I know that every day you navigated Herculean demands at home and at work.

Yes, I know how hard last year was, but I'm going to keep it real with you, as I always do: this year is likely to be just as challenging, if not more so. Already, the pace of work is unrelenting, as the District tends to the needs of students returning to in-person instruction amidst a spreading Delta variant. And, even if the pandemic does fade away and the adrenaline that's been sustaining us stops flowing, experience tells us that this is when the full weight of the trauma we've experienced and the scope of the recovery ahead will begin to sink in. There's no sugar-coating it: this is going to be a challenging year.

To make it through this year, it is critical that we hold onto two things. First, as Keith taught us in last week's professional development, we must **Hold On** to the **Picture** we are **Expecting**, and continue to **HOPE**. For hope is the bridge between our reality and our dreams—it is the fuel that propels us to transform our world and make manifest our highest aspirations.

Second, we must acknowledge our humanity; tend to any exhaustion, grief, trauma, or overwhelm we are experiencing; and *take care of ourselves*, as we also take care of each other and our SHHS community. Because, dear SHHS superheroes, you, too, are human. And in this extraordinary year we are about to experience, we need *you*—the real, human, you—to feel the joy in the work, to exist in a state of **HOPE**, to find the beauty in the storm, to [nurture the lotus from the mud](#), and to help SHHS achieve its aspirations for a better world.

I want to thank all of you for the inspiration you give me to show up daily and give my best toward this vision. The emails and messages I have been receiving over the last few days are a tremendous blessing and deeply appreciated. Please continue to send in your own reflections about this school year, so we can build, and achieve together, our greatest aspirations.

With love and gratitude,

Pia

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