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REBOOT Reflections: 5 Lessons for Staying Sound



By [Sarah Brown Wessling](#) | February 20, 2015 3:25 pm

I'm good at projects, at taking on the next new challenge. I'm energized when I start something new, and tend to give myself entirely to whatever venture is in front of me. In short, I'm either "all in" or "not at all." Teaching, great teaching, is an act of complete presence. An act of *sustaining* that complete presence. An act that accrues a special kind of exhaustion. My [5-Day Reboot](#) reminded me that falling into funks may be a normal passage for hectic lives, but a concentrated restart leads to more conscientious living. Reflecting on my own reboot has given me five lessons for staying sound.

Lesson #1: Don't Forego the Physical

I'm one of those teachers who can't really plan for the new school year until my room is organized, arranged, in order. I'm one of those people who works through a stressful situation by creating some clean physical space first. For me, the physical makes way for the cognitive. It's easy to forego the physical, and sleep is always my first victim. Of course, this leads to being less productive and to being less healthy. I'm not proud to admit that I have to actually work at sleeping. Really work at it. Partially because of how I'm wired, partially because the work is *never* finished, partially because I have a tough time saying no. **Regardless of why, I learned that the doorway to de-funk must be constructed of sleep, exercise, and healthy choices.**

Lesson #2: Micro Changes Accumulate

My reboot reminded me that snowballing change creates more motivation. This experience wasn't about anything significant or sweeping; rather, it was about being more deliberate with the smallest moments. Because I wasn't tired, I could launch myself into work by creating better boundaries. I created more meaning because I changed the way I started a conversation. I stole minutes to enjoy what I'm most passionate about. **The reverberation of these micro changes created more space for the good stuff.**

Lesson #3: After the Uncomfortable There's Clarity

One of the most sage voices I listen to is [Brené Brown](#). I recently listened to a recorded interview with her where she suggested that we buy into the idea that vulnerability is a weakness so that we can avoid being present, so that we can avoid trying. Rather, it's vulnerability we must embrace in order to make our lives meaningful. I know this is true, but I needed a healthy dose of cleansing to restore my belief in this tenet. Like many people, I can turn up the noise in my life to make me feel less alone. I can use my busy life as a way to avoid being present. I can choose a *lot* of the mediocre instead of a *taste* of the exceptional. **These days crystallized for me that the best way to show up in our own lives is to find purpose in the uncomfortable.**

Lesson #4: Creation and Connection

I've seen it in students' faces. The difference between being given a task and being asked to construct their own learning. I recognize the excitement and pride in my own children when they emerge from a bedroom having finished a drawing, constructed an original Lego creation, or devised some experiment we must test out. And I'll tell you, it's not the same spark after a session of Clash of Clans. Maria Popova, curator

of *Brain Pickings*, says that, "in order to truly create and contribute to the world, we have to be able to connect." Which makes me wonder: if we want to connect, perhaps we need to create. **My reboot experience taught me about the fiber that aligns the desire for connection with the act of creation.**

Lesson #5: Rebooting is Recursive

The further away I get from my reboot, the more clear it is to me that this is a constant process, **a way of living and working with a bend towards the present that needs a deliberate revisiting every once in awhile.** Being my best self *inside* the classroom is always a product of being my best self *outside* of the classroom. So when the noise level starts to pierce, or the pull in too many directions is leaving you as taut as Gummy, give yourself some days to recalibrate. I know I will!

Read Sarah's 5-Day Reboot [here](#).

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