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SPEAKERS

Chris, Kelsey Sorenson

- C** Chris 00:00
Welcome to the Autism Classroom Resources Podcast, the podcast for special educators who are looking for personal and professional development.
- C** Chris 00:10
I'm your host Dr. Christine Reeve. For more than 20 years, I've worn lots of hats in special education. But my real love is helping special educators like you. This podcast will give you tips and ways to implement research based practices in a practical way in your classroom to make your job easier and more effective.
- C** Chris 00:34
Welcome back to the Autism Classroom Resources podcast. I am Chris Reeve, and I'm your host. And I am super excited you are here for this episode because I have an amazing guest, Kelsey Sorenson. Kelsey is a former third grade teacher and a substitute teacher.
- C** Chris 00:49
She's now a homeschool mom to three kids and owner of Wife Teacher Mommy, where she and her team serve pre K through sixth grade teachers. She is also a certified life coach with the Life Coach School. So she's got a lot going on. She spends a lot of her time now focusing on how to help educators, and homeschool parents save time and find balance in their very busy lives.
- C** Chris 01:14
And I know that our normal year has been anything but normal. And with staff shortages and

turnover, along with kids who still aren't quite adapted to being back in school. So I really wanted to have Kelsey on to share some of her wisdom with all of you. We're busting some myths about self care, and she has some amazing actionable tips to help balance all of your different roles, as well as how to conceptualize events in our lives in a way that will impact how you feel about them.

C Chris 01:47

In addition, we're going to talk a little bit about Educate and Rejuvenate, which is a two day virtual summit happening June 27 and 28th. Kelsey and her team have organized a huge list of educators of all types, presenting all different types of things from balance career and home life to homeschooling. I am there I'm talking about behavior. We've got lots of there are other special educators there as well. She's got some amazing keynote speakers that she talks about in our interview today.

C Chris 02:20

So I will have all of Kelsey's links in the show notes for this episode and where to find her. She has a freebie to share with you as well. And you can learn more about Educate and Rejuvenate in the episode. In addition to what we share, though, you can find it with my affiliate link and autismclassroomresources.com/educate2023. And you can also find the show notes for this episode at autismclassroomresources.com/episode162. So let's get started.

C Chris 02:54

Welcome back to the Autism Classroom Resources podcast. I am really excited that you are here to listen today to Kelsey Sorenson, who is going to talk about some of the stress that everybody has been under this year, and ways that we can cope with it because I know that's an area that has been very, very difficult for this audience. And with the short staffing and things like that as we come to the end of the year, I think a lot of people are kind of at the end of their tether.

C Chris 03:23

So I thought it would be really nice for her to come on and talk about some thoughts about self care and things like that. So I'm going to turn it over to Kelsey to tell us a little bit more about herself. She's from wife, mommy, teacher,

K Kelsey Sorenson 03:36

Wife Teacher Mommy, I know, people do that all the time all the time.

C Chris 03:42

Podcast you can catch her there. We'll make sure that link is in the show notes. But I'll let her tell you a little bit about herself.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 03:48

Yeah, well, thank you so much for having me, Chris. I'm really excited to be here. And I know you said that I was like on your list. And you were on mine too. So we're gonna have you on my show at some point too.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 03:57

But yeah, I'm Kelsey from Wife Teacher Mommy and totally normal for people actually had to buy wifemommyteacher.com For it to redirect because I feel like a lot of people are like, Oh, well, you're mommy before teacher, right. But I actually did it in the order I became those things literally, that is like why it was that name. And I didn't think it was really going to go anywhere at that time when I picked the name of just my little TPT store.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 04:19

So I started that in 2014 While I was substitute teaching because I wanted to like I got my teaching degree taught a little bit but then when I had my oldest I wanted to just have something a little more flexible so I could also have more time home with him. So I substitute taught and then when I was subbing I realized that teachers could use some more help with sub planning because I've now seen both sides it as a sub I was like, oh, sometimes like I needed a little more.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 04:45

So I started making sub plans both so I could bring them with me and just so teachers if they wanted to buy them like they could. So did that. And then fast forward. It's like now we do a lot more than just sub planning. We're now like putting on the these events and I realized that teachers, especially with COVID, as we were planning our first Educate and Rejuvenate conference in summer of 2022, I was like surveying our members and people in our community to find out like, what was it that you need the most support with just to kind of figure out what this event would even become? Because we were like, we promised an event when we launched our membership. And I was like, Okay, well, now what, you know, just trying to figure it out.

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Kelsey Sorenson 05:27

And what I realized is, you know, teachers, they need so much more than just like printables and resources, right now. They need true support, because there's so much stress going on. So I also ended up in 2022 starting my life coaching certification, because I feel like teachers just need more support than that, too. So I certified this year, so now certified life coach as well. And that's the direction that we're going with the company now is like, giving that more like

doing events and offering life coaching and doing more holistic support. We still do the printables, too, but we just feel like kind of more big picture. So that's what I do over at Wife Teacher Mommy,

C Chris 06:08

That doesn't keep you busy at all, I'm sure.

K Kelsey Sorenson 06:10

No, not at all. And I have three children who we homeschool. So there's that to

C Chris 06:15

Okay. Wow, that is a lot. That would be a full time job by itself.

K Kelsey Sorenson 06:19

Yeah. And actually, I mean, I wouldn't be able to manage that all myself, my husband actually does more the homeschooling at this point, like the business is our full time thing. So

C Chris 06:28

That's great. That's really cool. So I'm so glad you're here, because this has been just a really rough year for a lot of teachers. I know, in my Special Educator Academy, I hear a lot from the teachers of some of the struggles we've had this year with classrooms being short staffed, not being able to add support, lack of paraprofessional support, a lot of turnover, that has been really difficult, especially when we're working with really challenging students.

C Chris 06:59

And so I would love for you to share some of your suggestions about these are all things we can't control. And I think those are the hardest thing sometimes to cope with, because you can't see when they're going to end and you don't really know what to do. I would love to have your suggestions. I know my audience would as well, for how do you handle stress about things that you can't control?

K Kelsey Sorenson 07:22

Yes, well, first off, very first thing, I think we need to give ourselves so much grace, because there is a lot going on. And our students do have wider gaps both in behavior and in education and everything than before. And we're handling things like what I'm hearing is a lot of what used to work isn't working now.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 07:41

And that can lead to a lot of putting extra pressure on ourselves or thinking, Oh, I just can't figure this out or whatever. But I think what we need to do is give ourselves and this is actually a quote from Kristina Kuzmic, who is one of our keynotes to Educate and Rejuvenate, which we'll get into later in this episode, but I was interviewing her. And she's amazing. And in her book, and on the podcast, she shared this quote, and it's give yourself more credit than criticism and more grace than judgment.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 08:09

And I feel like so often we give ourselves so much criticism, so much judgment when really what we need to be giving ourselves more than ever is grace and credit for what we are doing. And another thing is like the harder the day, this is another thing she said, the harder the day, the more grace you need to give. Not the more judgment. Not the more piling on those thoughts of like, you know that are going to pressure us even more because what I also want to share here is so much we can't control in our lives.

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Kelsey Sorenson 08:32

Like we can't control our students' behavior, right? We ultimately they behave in the way they're behaving, right? We we control how we manage it and what we do, how we react, but we don't control what they're doing. We don't control, you know where they're at educationally exactly in this exact moment. Right.

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Kelsey Sorenson 08:58

So one thing that has been a game changer for me that I've learned and this is why I ended up certifying as a life coach and everything. Just such a game changer is the difference between the circumstances and our thoughts. Because you might even know the definition like Oh, circumstance, that's just what things are. That's like the facts of the situation. And our thoughts are like what we think about it, the story they put behind it. But so often, we think a thought is the circumstance.

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Kelsey Sorenson 09:24

A big one that has come up for what it sounds like, what comes up for your academy a lot is, I have a hard class or this student is, I have the bad kids in my class. And like everyone around us

C

Chris 09:36

Or I'm not doing this right.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 09:38

Yeah. And everyone around us is kind of like, oh, yeah, this is the hard class or whatever. And we kind of just roll with that as if it's a fact you know. And really it might just be the meaning we're putting behind it. Like maybe it's I just have students who need more support or whatever. But when we say like, certain things like word it in a certain way that causes us to feel maybe more anxious or more stressed. And when we feel that way, we show up in a different way. And we get different results.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 10:06

So it's just kind of being aware of that. Just bringing awareness to what is going on, and how the way we're framing things inside our head, even small tweaks can make a big difference.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 10:17

So one thing I like to do, because even now knowing this and having studied coaching for, and for me, I've been studying coaching since beginning of 2020, I just got certified starting last year, but I've worked with a coach since the very beginning of 2020. And I was very glad that shortly before COVID, that I learned all these things, but is like doing a big brain dump of just getting everything out of your head.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 10:40

For one even that is just refreshing because it no longer just lives in your head, you can like physically hold it, you're like, Okay, here's everything. And then you go back and read it, and try to read it from just like as clean of a perspective as you can. Because if you're reading something like your friend was telling it to you instead of your own writing. And then you can kind of analyze it, like, oh, wow, like, I didn't realize I was telling myself this or whatever, or that. And then you can kind of see like, Oh, this is why I'm feeling the way I'm feeling. And it just gives you that awareness of what is going on.

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Kelsey Sorenson 11:13

And you don't necessarily even have to change anything. It's just that awareness. But you might when you read it, realize things you do want to like, okay, maybe I do want to kind of try to reframe that. And, like, again, there's nothing wrong, ever with how you're doing anything. Like it's all like, that's the circumstance, too the way you were thinking about it. So in the past, and you just get to kind of use that awareness, either it's like, okay, now I'm at least aware of what's going on. Or okay, maybe I want to change something. Totally up to you. Nothing wrong either way.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 11:45

Kelsey Sorenson 12:13

But it's just that we understand that those thoughts are what drive our feelings. So those feelings of anxiety or stress or whatever, and how we show up and what the results end up being. So we can just take a look at that. But what we don't want to do is use that as another thing to beat ourselves up about, like, if you're reading that and you're like, oh, man, I can't believe I was saying that about my students. That was terrible of me or whatever. Like don't don't use it as another thing to just pile on more judgment. It is an awareness tool, and nothing more than that.

C Chris 12:14

I really like that. And I know from work with coaches that I've worked with that concept that the way that you frame your thoughts impacts the way you respond to them, the way that you interpret them, builds on how they make you feel. And so, you know, my background is in behavior and cognitive psychology. And so that fits right in there with that idea of we can change the way that we're perceiving a situation, which changes the way we respond to it. So I think that's really, really good.

C Chris 12:47

And I love the quotes about give yourself grace. I think that that is a huge thing that I think I say to my audience so so often, especially in the academy. I'm like, I feel like I'm broken record, but I feel like we need to say this again.

K Kelsey Sorenson 13:01

Yes, over and over, you can not hear it too much. Because we need that reminder, like every hour, I swear. Like set that reminder on your phone. There are times I've needed to do that actually is like have like a little thing that pops up and be like with like affirmations or whatever, like you're doing great. And you're like, oh, yeah, I am, you know?

C Chris 13:19

Yeah, that's so true. Alongside with that, I would love to get your take on how teachers can advocate for what they need. I think it's really hard for teachers, especially and I don't know if this is really teachers in general, but teachers and special ed often have to advocate for what their classroom needs and what kinds of supports their students do. And I give them you know, I talked about tools that they can use to show why they need more staff and things like that. But I think it's still really hard for a lot of teachers to kind of stand up for themselves, because they feel like they're being pushy, or they feel like they're going to be kind of labeled a complainer.

C Chris 13:58

But being able to actively advocate for yourself in a positive manner is not only necessary for your mental health, but it also I think puts them forward as being a more self aware teacher

who really understands what is needed in a situation. But I think they're, they have a hard time figuring out kind of where that line is and how to do that. So I'd love to get your thoughts on that as well.

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Kelsey Sorenson 14:26

Yeah, and I feel like all teachers have been seeing this too. Like, it's just there's so much going on and with COVID, I honestly, and this is where I want to also mention that teachers so often fall into this people pleasing, I feel like we always have. And I feel like even maybe so because it is a very female dominated profession and women in general, we tend to love to make everybody around us happy, potentially at our own expense a lot of times.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 14:55

But another thing that I've learned through my certification and I actually really want to dive deeper into that. But sometimes it can even be a trauma response. And I do feel like teachers like you might think a trauma is like, when something big happens, like obviously, like, there's PTSD, like, you know, when people go to war, or there's like, you know, assault and all those things, but there's like smaller traumas too, such as, like when I feel like what COVID The having to go back and forth and everything that was going on. There are some teachers who have felt some institutional trauma, that is the thing from teaching.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 15:28

And there is a trauma response, like you've probably heard of fight, flight, freeze, but there's one called fawning as well. And the actual definition of that is like your people pleasing. And I learned about this during my certification. And what fawning is, is really, you're just basically trying to do everything you can to, and the incredible thing is, I've seen how I do this in my own life, you're doing everything you can to please everybody else so you don't have to feel the uncomfortable feeling of bringing things up.

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Kelsey Sorenson 15:57

So in a way, you don't realize this but you're actually being a little bit manipulative, because you're like, I don't want to, I don't want to actually address this, I'm going to pretend everything's okay. But it's because you have this deep fear of doing it. So it's nothing intentional. And it's actually like, you might not even be ready to have that conversation or whatever. But it's just been like, oh, wow, that's actually what is going on. It's pretty fascinating.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 16:19

And this is where our nervous system really comes into it. It's like, sometimes like and I want to learn more about this, I'm actually planning on doing an additional certification because they feel they just touched on this. And I'm like, this is like fascinating and want to learn more about

it. So I plan on doing that.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 16:34

But I feel like whether or not it's a trauma response, people pleasing just always comes up. And when that happens, you just have this built up resentment, you're not being true to yourself. And sometimes it's going to take some time to do that. And it's okay to like, you can just be in that for a little bit if you need to. But it's important to have that awareness of what's going on and know that by waiting for it, this is what will continue happening if you don't. Maybe you need that time but if you're ready to like, Okay, I do need to bring this up, I can't take this anymore. That is when you need to be able to have that conversation, right?

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Kelsey Sorenson 17:07

So and a lot of times the thing that might be stopping us maybe it's not even trauma at all, it's just like what we're thinking about it. Like what you said, like I don't want to be a complainer or whatever. And at the end of the day, that is us being like, Oh, I don't want them to see me as a complainer. They might not think that. They might end up feeling terrible about oh, my goodness, I didn't know you were feeling that way. And I might just be like, Oh, my goodness, I should have done this sooner, right.

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Kelsey Sorenson 17:30

And if they do think you're a complainer that's on them, that's not you doing that. You're not causing you to be a complainer. That's what they think about it. And that's at the end of the day, that's their business. What's our business is what we think about it. And if you think I deserve to advocate for myself, or my students need this, or I need this support, and that's where you're coming from, you're not a complainer. So just reframe that you aren't a complainer, you're just advocating for what you need.

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Kelsey Sorenson 17:56

So the big thing to remember is that a lot of times, you and the person that you need to talk to, there are things that you were on the same page about. Or ultimately, like, you know, when it's teaching you the end of the day, they want you and your students to be supported just like you do. So it's not looking at it from a place of like, oh, like, they don't want me to have this or whatever it's looking at, okay, they want us to have this support, maybe they're not aware of the specific needs or whatever. So it's really coming in and starting that conversation.

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Kelsey Sorenson 18:26

And I learned this tool from a book called Crucial Conversations. Have you have you read that book?

C Chris 18:31

I've heard of that. I haven't read it.

K Kelsey Sorenson 18:32

It's really good. And they talk about starting with heart. And it's where you kind of, you start the conversation by being like, Hey, I know you and I both want this. And I feel like that's so powerful, because then you can talk about what it is you both want. First, figure out where you're on the same page. And I feel like that makes it way easier to start that conversation.

K Kelsey Sorenson 18:50

And then from there, that's when you're like, hey, and I feel like there's this sort of disconnect. And there's actually a full like, process to it that it's been a little bit since I read the book, I don't remember what the next step was. But really, overall, it's like, I would recommend that book for one. If you're like, like, when I was preparing for conversation I was really stressed about I read that book. And it was like, Oh, this is exactly what I needed. So I would recommend checking out that book from your library or ordering a copy of it.

C Chris 19:18

I'll find a copy of it and put it in the show notes.

K Kelsey Sorenson 19:19

Yeah put that link down in the show notes. Yeah, it's a good one. Another thing they talked about in that book, too, is the fool's choice is what they call it. And that's when we think that our only options are we can tell the truth, or we can keep the relationship. Like it's one or the other. But the truth is, we can have both we can tell the truth of our situation, and still keep that relationship as long as we don't come at it in a super combative way. Like you can have both. So like if you could have both, why wouldn't you want that? Right?

C Chris 19:51

Right. So it's interesting because the crucial conversations really fits a lot with one of the things I think of which is we make decisions in our classroom based on having the student at the center of the discussion. So we're working with families, we're all coming at it from that same perspective. We may have different other things that that are factoring in. But our focus is, what the students need and what will support them. So that fits perfectly in there with, you know, start with, we both want this, this is what we're all really working towards. These are the tools I think I need to get there. So that's awesome. I really like that approach.

K Kelsey Sorenson 20:30

Kelsey Sorenson 20:10

Those tools have been really helpful and like talking with like, you know, family, when you're like, Oh, my goodness, like, I don't want to like sever relationship there or like people you work with, or like, it's just really helpful.

C Chris 20:43

That's really awesome. I will make sure that that link goes into the show notes for that book. And I will put it on my list to read as well. I know I've heard it, I don't think I've read it.

C Chris 20:53

So I think that people talk a lot about self care. And for a long time, I heard it so much that it just kind of became self care became associated with eat chocolate and get a massage. Massages just stressed me out so that really wasn't very helpful. But and I think it kind of got a bad rap for a long time as a as a term because people really thought it was just some people look at it as I'm being selfish and things like that. But really, we need to make sure that we're addressing the stressors that are causing the problem, and that we are taking care of ourselves, because we can't take care of anybody else unless we're taking care of ourselves.

C Chris 21:34

One of the things I've been talking with teachers about this year is the idea that at some point, there are issues you have to let go, because it's not worth losing a really good qualified teacher over this issue. And if you're burning yourself out, that's what's happening. And that ultimately is worse for our student population as well. So it still comes back to not just not just because you have to take care of yourself, because that's what's good for you. It's also because you can then continue to give back to that population. But if you get to the point where you have nothing to give back, it's really going to be a huge loss.

C Chris 22:11

So I'd love to hear kind of your take on on what self care is and what it looks like.

K Kelsey Sorenson 22:16

Yeah, so first, I want to piggyback off your thought of saying it's selfish. And one thing that is really interesting that my mentor Brooke Castillo brought up in one of her podcasts that I shared on my show, because I was like, woah, this is like, yeah, she like literally read the definition of selfish. And she's like, the definition of selfish is putting yourself before other people. And she's like, I think that's the only way to show up in the world.

K Kelsey Sorenson 22:42

And I was like, wait, what, but it's like, if you don't put your needs first, what you, and it doesn't

and I was like, wait, what, but it's like, if you don't put your needs first, what you, and it doesn't mean like you spend the most time on that. Or that you only, you're not putting yourself ahead of other people at their expense. Like we're not doing that. But it's if you don't take care of yourself, then you can't properly care for those other people, and you aren't at your highest capacity to be able to serve them at the capacity you want to be able to serve them.

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Kelsey Sorenson 23:08

So I think it's really important that like when we're building our schedule, we make sure that we do fit those times in and make that a top priority not be like, Oh, okay, what's left for me? But like, Okay, I'm going to be, and again, it doesn't mean I need to have hours and hours of time for self care. But it is like, where am I going to fit that in because that is a top top priority.

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Kelsey Sorenson 23:08

So that's one thing I wanted to mention is that it's not selfish, because it's actually, like you said, helping to be able to serve your students or your family, all the other places you are in your life too because you're not just a teacher. That's one thing I always like to say as well, you're so many other things.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 23:46

And as far as what self care is, and what it looks like, it's really multifaceted, in my opinion. I feel like that cliché, like you mentioned of like taking a bubble bath or whatever, that's all good. It's not a bad thing. And that can be self care. But it's not the only type of self care that we need. It's not always going to address the situation. Like if you were like in burnout, eating some chocolate is not gonna like, that's like, not even a bandaid in my opinion. That's like, gonna give you a little moment, a little bit of dopamine. But then maybe you might even be like, Oh, I shouldn't have eaten that. And then you're going to use that as another stressor. Exactly.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 24:22

So and sometimes what we're doing when we're like, Oh, I'm gonna, like eat some chocolate too, is like actually, we're just avoiding feeling our emotions. We're like, buffering them away. We're trying to get that hit of dopamine. That's not necessarily self care. It can be if you're like, Oh, this is what like, you know, I'm going out with my friends and we're going out to dessert and this feels good. Like, that's great. But a lot of times what we need is something more. Like maybe I feel like the most important thing is our physical health, our mental health, and our emotional health. And I think you would probably agree with that, Chris.

C

Chris 24:54

Absolutely.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 24:55

And those things don't always take care of all of it like eating chocolate or getting massage. Maybe like so first talking about physical health, maybe we need to eat better or move our bodies and not because we're like, I need to lose weight or anything like that. But just because we're feeling sluggish, or we're tired, or we're feeling a little bit more irritable or cranky than usual, because we're not taking care of our physical body.

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Kelsey Sorenson 25:16

Sometimes either what we're eating, or a big thing is not getting enough sleep. I feel like a lot of us are so guilty of that. Like, if we're not getting our sleep like that is self care. Getting your you know, whatever your body needs, I feel like it's different for everybody. Like, I'm usually okay, with six to eight hours, and I'm fine. But if you need that full eight hours, like, you need to get that. Just know what your body needs.

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Kelsey Sorenson 25:37

And know that if you realize like, Oh, I'm feeling sluggish, I'm feeling this way. Why is that? Is it because is it a physical thing? Is it I need more sleep? Is it I haven't, I'm not drinking enough water. I'm, like dehydrated, and I don't even take the time to realize that? Like, I feel like those things are literally self care. And again, top priority, like taking care of our physical bodies.

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Kelsey Sorenson 25:59

Another thing is our mental health. So we can kind of do what I mentioned before is like, you know, doing a brain dump, seeing what's going on in our minds, bringing that awareness to it. But also, you might need to talk to like a therapist or coach, if you're feeling really burned out.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 26:12

Or you might need to get on talk to your doctor and get on some medication. There's no shame in that. I've been on medication, like there's no shame in that. I feel like a lot of, I feel like it's getting better. But a lot of people still think, oh, yeah, that's great for other people, but for me, no, no way. You know, not for me, like, I can't do that. But you can, if that's what you need. And so you know, doing what you need to take care of your mental and emotional health in that way.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 26:36

And sometimes it's finding yourself again, literally, because you might get so consumed in the role of teacher. And like, that's why like, I've kind of taken on with like, the name Wife Teacher Mommy is you get so into those roles of wife, teacher, mommy, for a lot of our people, or like,

you know, might be like dad or partner, spouse, or neighbor, friend, grandmother, whatever it is, you get so into those roles, how you're helping everybody else, that you completely lose yourself in the process.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 27:05

And some of my members went, but what do you like to do outside of that? And they can't even answer that question. And how sad is that? Like, you know, if you would have asked yourself, when you were like a teenager or a child, you would be able to name off so many things that you love to do. And then when we become adults, and we become so focused on everyone else, that we just completely lose who we are, like, we don't know.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 27:29

Like, you know, for me, I always was singing all the time. I loved that and doing all these other things. And I realized, like, wow, I have not been doing these things for years. And so many of us are like that, like, oh, and I love reading books. And now I'm making sure I do that now. But for years, it was like I was not like reading books just for enjoyment, because it was not making time for that.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 27:48

And it's just what are those things that light you up that have nothing to do with like your job? Or even other people around you? Yeah, we love the other people around us. But what is it that lights you up that makes you, you and really tapping into that again? And maybe maybe it's even different than what it was before like me, like, you know, as we grow, we might have different hobbies, but finding something that is that for you at this point in your life

C

Chris 28:12

Right. No, and I think that's very true. I think it's very easy, especially if you're my age, where you may be taking care of aging parents and kids, and teaching. And it's a lot. And if you don't take the time for yourself, you can't show up for anybody else. I think that's a really, really good point. So thank you for that.

C

Chris 28:34

So I have been planning activities for the summer. I'm trying to balance giving my Academy members the support that they need to go into the new year without adding too much to do on their summer list. Because I very, very much believe that they need to take a break every summer and not just this one, but I also know that for many of them, and it was for me, not knowing what I was going to do or not knowing what my plan was when I walk back into a classroom. I'm one of those people that everything's set up the night before I leave a classroom because I'm not going to be able to think about it. And I will stay up all night thinking about what I have to do first thing in the morning if I don't do that.

C

Chris 29:15

And so I know that a lot of them, we spent some time in the academy setting, working on classroom schedules and things like that in one of our study groups. So what suggestions do you have about how teachers can spend their time in their summer, we can talk a little bit about Educate and Rejuvenate as well. I really liked that title. That to me is what I want for them. So I'd love to know can you talk a little bit more about that and what you kind of foresee what you think they need?

K

Kelsey Sorenson 29:44

Yeah, so I agree with you that really it's like a balance of finding you need that time for rest. Like 100% you need that. And then we also want to make sure we are thinking of our future self as well and like what do they need to like feel like when they start the school year, because if you just spend that whole time, like, Oh, I'm going to completely avoid it, completely avoid it, and then that time comes, then you're going to feel really stressed. So it's like, how can I set my future self who's going back to school up for success.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 30:13

And the way you do that is by doing both of those things. You need to make sure you have that time to rest so you're starting the new school year feeling invigorated and ready to go. But you also like maybe have some new fresh ideas that you're excited about, or you know, some new strategies that will help you cope during the next school year, because you took that time during the summer to learn those things.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 30:32

So that is where like, Educate and Rejuvenate comes in. Because you're taking that time to rejuvenate yourself, rejuvenate your body, take time to rest. Maybe take time, like I just mentioned, to figure out what those things that you want to do outside of teaching are if you feel like you've lost yourself. And there's some of you here who probably are like, Oh, I'm already doing those things, and if so great, but if not, take time to do that too.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 30:55

But also, like you might want to like find some new way. Like if you're thinking about the past school year, like what might I want to do different. Like what, if you know there's a certain subject or certain thing that kept happening management wise in your classroom, the past school year that you're like, I kind of want to figure this out, you can kind of have a goal for figuring that out. Or I've been feeling really stressed, I just need to learn how to manage myself better. I feel like it's kind of a combination of those things like manage my mind and know how to better handle those situations as they come up next year.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 31:24

And that is why we created Educate and Rejuvenate because we have so many incredible presenters who are coming together and teaching about such a huge variety of things that you could want to learn about. And we're also while you're they're going to teach you all of these tools about managing your mind, self care, all of those things, too. So you know how you can educate and learn all these new teaching ideas and strategies and everything. Then you also rejuvenate by learning how to manage your mind, kick burnout to the curb, all those things. And we also just have a lot of fun a built in there, too.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 32:01

Like we brought in some hilarious keynotes. We also have workout. So how we start the day by getting our body moving, and everything it's really like a whole teacher experience. So that is what we've been trying to create with this. There's also the community component of coming together with all these other educators.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 32:18

Last year, like people were making friends there, like it's not just like we're talking at you. But there's a whole community component of like when you get to interact with all the different presenters, but they also just get to interact with each other. And it's pretty incredible when a group of 1000s of educators who all want to do this, they all want to figure out new teaching strategies, and also how to feel less burned out on the next school year and rejuvenate, all of those people come together and that's just a magical thing in itself.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 32:49

So with Educate and Rejuvenate, you're speaking there, which I'm really excited about. And the great thing is you can come in and just have specific goals for what you want to achieve from this event. Like don't feel overwhelmed or think, I have to do everything that every single presenter mentions. I feel like you just come in and like what little nuggets, what is it that I'm focusing on as I'm listening to each of these sessions? Everything else you can come to, okay, that's a good idea for later or whatever, because different things are going to pull out for different people. And just come in and know like, Okay, this is what I'm doing awesome at already this is where I want to grow, and kind of come in with what you already want to get out of it. And then you'll get so much more out of it that way.

C

Chris 33:30

That's awesome. I think there's a lot of really cool things going on with Educate and Rejuvenate, and I am excited because I am presenting. And I always like that opportunity just to share ideas, and learn from everybody else that's there as well. So I think it's going to be a really cool opportunity. Can you tell the audience a little bit about what it is and where they can sign up. And I'll make sure there's a link in the show notes to all of that as well.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 33:59

So yeah, you can educate and rejuvenate is happening on June 27 and 28th 2023. But you can grab your ticket now. So you just have it and you can mark it on your calendar. And we have some like awesome bonuses when you buy your ticket sooner. So be sure to like, whenever you're listening to this, go and check it out. Chris is going to put a link for you in the show notes. So be sure to use that link. And so you can grab that ticket and a little bit more about the event.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 34:26

So we have two amazing keynotes that I'm almost like how did we even manage this? And in how do we even manage this speaker lineup like all these people who are just so incredible.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 34:37

We have Joe Dombroski, who's known as Mr. D. And He is hilarious if you, most teachers tend to know who he is when we say who he is, but he went viral with like an April Fool's Day video where he had a spelling test. And he was doing like fake words or whatever. Have you seen that video, Chris?

C

Chris 34:57

I have not. Okay. I'll have to find that one.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 35:00

You should look it up and then put it in the show notes for anybody who has not seen it because it was hilarious. And his students are like, wait, what like it was like these fake words, but they like uses it in a sentence, you know, like, and then some of them the spelling is like ridiculous when he's like correcting it. It's like hilarious. And he got on Ellen a few times. And he just went really viral. He's been doing stand up comedy since he was eight though that was just kind of his like viral moment. He's a stand up comedian.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 35:24

So he's one of our keynotes. So it's going to be hilarious. But he's also talking about how we can like infuse humor and stuff into our days. And also even talking about like, management a little bit in a session. I believe he is, but it's all with humor. So I think that everybody is going to learn so much from that.

K

Kelsey Sorenson 35:41

And then we have Kristina Kuzmic, who I mentioned, she's the one who had the quote, like give yourself more credit than criticism, more grace than judgment. And the harder the day, the more grace you need to give yourself like she is just so motivating. Have you heard of her before?

C Chris 35:56

I've heard of her. I haven't heard her speak. So I'm excited about that.

K Kelsey Sorenson 36:00

She's amazing. I've been a fan of hers for years. I don't know, I just stumbled on her on Facebook at some point years ago, which I mean, she has 2.9 million followers on Facebook. So just one of many who stumbled upon her years ago. She has over a billion video views. She is just a sensation she like went on a show on Oprah and stuff. She is funny, but also just so motivating. Like you listen to her like I listened to her audiobook is called Hold On, but Don't Hold Still, and you just feel how much she loves her fellow humans. Like she's like, I'm a cheerleader for my fellow humans like that is her job description.

K Kelsey Sorenson 36:36

So she's really just trying to motivate everybody and help us and she's really speaking to us. I wanted to find a keynote because this year, we are also I know you mentioned, you do have some parents in your audience. So we do have kind of some different tracks this year, we have like the teacher track. And we also have a parent track for, because we have start getting more homeschool parents in our community as well. And so Kristina is really gonna be able to speak to both audiences, because she just has a love for teachers. She has some videos about teachers that are incredible. But she also is really relatable to the all the moms out there, because that's like her core audience. So I'm really excited that we have her as well.

K Kelsey Sorenson 37:13

So Joe will be on the 27th, Kristina will be on the 28th, those will be live. And then there will be some live sessions. And then some lives that we will do where we'll invite presenters again, we'll get you this info, Chris, once we have it too. We'd like to do some live panels with some of the presenters too. But then most of the sessions are pre recorded. So you can watch them on your own time. You'll have 10 days to watch as many of them as you would like with a general admission ticket. If you would like longer, there is an option to upgrade. After you check out that's completely optional. That will give you access through December 31.

K Kelsey Sorenson 37:46

So yeah, that's kind of how it works, you get to join the live sessions on the 27th and 28th. But it'll actually open that Friday before to start watching the pre recorded and go through July 3, I believe it is so right until like the July 4 holiday. So you'll have some time to get through.

Because we gave more time this year because we have more speakers because we have the two tracks. So we want to make sure that people have time to watch whatever they want to watch.

C Chris 38:08

That's awesome. Because I know that's one of the things I struggle with sometimes is I sign up for things and then I'm like, I'm supposed to watch that wasn't I. It's like when I sign up for training, I'm like I come live whenever I can, because I'm like, I'm not going to remember to come back. So you kind of have to put it on your calendar.

K Kelsey Sorenson 38:25

Yeah. And we will send emails and on the thank you page, actually, we have like, and I would really recommend this, we have a sign up where you can sign up for text messages. So you can get like text when like the keynotes are going on, or hey, you have access now because they know emails can sometimes just get lost in your inbox. So if you want I mean, that's optional, you don't have to, but if you sign up for the text messages, then you can like make sure you at least don't forget, because you're gonna want to open.

C Chris 38:50

Those are really helpful. Yeah, yeah. And I will definitely make sure that I will share all the links and everything like that. Thank you so much, Kelsey, for being here. I think what you have shared has been really amazing in terms of helping my audience figure out kind of how to just navigate some of the struggles that we've had this year and then be able to move into summer by putting it kind of to the side. But thinking about how going in the next year I can be kind of mentally prepared for it.

C Chris 39:20

I think, educate, rejuvenate, offers a really great opportunity for that as well as a lot of the the tips that you have shared and the philosophies that you've shared, I think, are really a good way to think about the whole thing. And I know that that really helps me I know I always go back my most one of my most stressful times, there have been a number of them but, was when my mom was aging and had Parkinson's and so I always go back to that experience of you know, once I went okay, these are her final years, I'm going to shift my life so that I can spend more time with her. It became a lot easier to handle at that point because I'd made positive action in that direction of just kind of accepting what was and how I was going to cope with it. So I think that's a really, everything you said, I think really fits well with that. Anything else you want to add anything we missed?


K Kelsey Sorenson 40:14

I don't think we missed anything. But I'm just so thankful for you having me on the show today, Chris. And I want to say to all of your teacher listeners, or you know, the parents, anybody

CHRIS. And I want to say to all of your teacher listeners, or you know, the parents, anybody who's listening to this podcast that you are doing so much better than you think. The fact that you're even here, listening to this podcast, all the way to the end of this episode shows that you just care so much about your students, and about yourself and your personal development. And just way to go, you are already doing an amazing job. So just remember that and look at your wins and how amazing that you're already doing.

 Chris 40:46

Thank you, that is a perfect place to end. I think that's a great sentiment to leave all of them with. And I hope that you've really gotten something out of this.

 Chris 40:56

If you have I would love to hear from you in our Facebook group at [specialeducatorsconnection.com](https://www.facebook.com/specialeducatorsconnection). And I hope that you'll be back next week for another episode. Thank you so much for listening.

 Chris 41:14

Thanks so much for listening to today's episode of the Autism Classroom Resources podcast. For even more support, you can access free materials, webinars and video Tips inside my free resource library, sign up at autismclassroomresources.com/free. That's F-R-E-E or click the link in the show notes to join the free library today. I'll catch you again next week.