

When Energy is Low and Needs are High

Elena: If you are returning from break and feeling like your energy is low, but the demands are already high, then this episode is for you. Hello friends and welcome to the Bright Morning Podcast. I'm your host Elena Aguilar, and in each episode, you will learn how to lead conversations that build connection.

And spark change. All right. Today we are talking about something that is very real for many of us at this time of year. What to do when your tank feels empty, but the needs around. You haven't paused when the expectations are high, but your internal reserves are low. So let's get into it. January is often framed as a time for fresh starts, and sometimes it is, but for a lot of coaches and leaders that I've worked with, January feels like a wall.

It's cold, it's dark. The sparkle of the holidays has faded, and people are tired. You may be facing pressure from district goals or testing calendars, and you might also be carrying your own exhaustion that's hard to name, but very present. So I wanna take you back to a time when I was in that place.

It was a January morning in Oakland, California, and I had just returned from winter break. And I was standing by the front door of my school. I was greeting students and staff as they came in, and a teacher walked past me and mumbled, let's just get this over with. And I thought, yeah, let's get this over with.

I did not feel ready. I did not feel like I had anything left to give. And so I went into my office, and I sat down and pulled out my journal, and I wrote myself a note. You are here. You are enough. You don't have to have all the answers. Just start with love.

I reread that note before every meeting that week. Kept it in my pocket. It became a tiny anchor in a turbulence, and what I learned that week was this, when your energy is low, your job isn't to push harder; it's to come back to your core, to return to your values, to the part of you that is steady, even when everything else feels wobbly.

And so that's where today's tool comes in. It's the personal leadership mantra. So a leadership mantra is a short grounding phrase that reconnects you to your



purpose and presence. It's something that you can say to yourself in hard moments when your brain is spinning or your heart is heavy, and here's how you create one.

So step one is to identify a truth about yourself that gives you strength. So this could be, I know how to listen, or I keep showing up, or I'm courageous. And then step two is to ask yourself. What do I most need to remember right now? Is it that you don't need to fix everything or that your presence matters?

Or maybe that growth takes time? And then step three is to put this all together into a phrase that you can hold onto. So here are some examples. I lead with presence, trust the small steps. Grounded, open enough. Start with love. Your mantra should feel like a message from your wisest self to the version of you who is just trying to hold it all together.

So let me share another story. Last year I coached a coach who I'm gonna call Janelle. She came to our January session feeling depleted. Her teachers were disengaged, her principal was piling on, and she told me, I'm trying, but nothing feels like it's working. So I asked if we could pause and if she'd like to try creating a mantra.

And she thought about it for a while and she said, I need to remember that my calm matters even when I don't have answers. So she landed on calm is my superpower. She wrote it on a sticky note and she kept it on her laptop, and later that week she told me. That one phrase helped change how I walked into every room, and that is the power of a mantra.

It doesn't solve everything, but it gives you a foothold. It gives you a place to come back to when things feel unstable. So here's your challenge for the week, create your own personal leadership mantra. Write it down. Put it somewhere visible and say it before you walk into a meeting or before you have a hard conversation.

Let it guide you when you feel overwhelmed. And if you need more tools like this that are structured and practical and grounded in compassion, then our coach learning library and PLC is full of them. Okay. From planning templates to emotional support tools to a community that's walking the same path, you will find what you need to sustain yourself and keep showing up in your work.

Let's close today with a breath together. So inhale and exhale.



You don't have to have it all figured out. You just need one true thing to hold onto. Thank you for being with me today. If this episode gave you a phrase or a path forward, then please share it with a friend. And if you are listening on the podcast, leave us a five-star rating and review. And if you're watching on YouTube, then give us a like, and don't forget to subscribe because we are here every week to help you build your capacity as a coach and leader.

All right, friends, this show is produced by LesLee Bickford and Stacey Goodman does the sound engineering. Take care, be well, and I'll see you next time.

