

Restarting with Intention

Elena: If you're coming back from winter break and you wanna start this next chapter with clarity and calm, then this episode is for you. Hello, friends. Welcome to the Bright Morning Podcast. I am your host Elena Aguilar, and in each episode, you will learn how to lead conversations that build connection and spark change.

Today we're talking about how to restart with intention. Because the truth is, coming back from a break can feel jarring. Your inboxes might be full, your calendars might be packed, and before you've caught your breath, you are back in it. So I wanna offer you a simple but powerful way to restart before you hit the ground running.

Okay? Let's get into it. So when I think about this moment in the school year, I think about a former coaching client who I'm gonna call Ray. So Ray was a school leader. I coached sometime back and after winter break he came into our first session looking surprisingly well rested, and he told me that he had spent the holiday hiking in the desert.

But the first thing he said was, I'm already behind. He went on to list everything he hadn't done. No email to his staff, no PD planning, no responses to the pile of messages that had built up and underneath all of that was a familiar feeling, guilt that he hadn't started strong. That he was somehow already failing.

So I asked him a question that I ask myself all the time, "What does starting strong mean to you?" He paused, and then he said, "It means being aligned with my values, being present and remembering what matters." And that shifted the rest of the conversation because we stopped talking about task lists and started talking about energy and about presence and about who he wanted to be, and by the end of the session he said, I feel like I can breathe again.

That's what intention does. It brings you back to yourself. And that's what I wanna offer you today. So this is a tool that you can use to begin this new chapter with perhaps some more clarity. And I call it the restart ritual. And it takes just 10 to 15 minutes. And you can do it alone. You can do it with a partner, you can do it with your team.

Here's how it works. So step one is reflect, ask yourself, what am I bringing with me from the fall? Now this might be insights, accomplishments, or lessons



learned. It could also be fatigue or grief or disappointment. So just name what's true for you. Step two is release. What do you not want to carry forward?

Now, this could be a limiting belief, could be an old story, or it could be a habit that isn't serving you, and then just let it go, at least for now. Step three is reimagine. Who do you want to be in this next stretch? Choose a word or a phrase that anchors you. Maybe it's steady, open, courageous, or clear, and let that serve as a guidepost.

Step four is recommit. Identify one small action that you can take this week to embody that intention. Make it doable. Make it something that you know you can return to when things get hectic. And that's the restart ritual: reflect, release, reimagine, and recommit. Lemme give you another example. So last year I worked with a team of coaches who used this ritual at their first January team meeting.

In the beginning, people were quiet, but then one coach shared that she was releasing the belief that she had to have all the answers. Another coach said she was recommitting to asking more questions. In her conversations with teachers, someone else chose humility as their guiding word. So this was a 15 minute reflection and it didn't just help to reset their energy.

It actually set a tone of honesty and vulnerability and shared purpose for the rest of that semester. So here is your challenge. This week, do the reset ritual. Take 15 minutes to reflect on what you're carrying and on what you are choosing to carry. Use it to reground in who you are and how you wanna lead.

And if you want more support to start this year strong, you will find it in our Coach learning library and PLC where you will find tools and templates that can walk you through exercises like this one. And you will also find a community of educators who are committed to doing this work with intention and care.

Folks, thanks for being with me today. And if this episode gave you a helpful way to restart, would you share it with a friend or with a colleague? And if you're listening on the podcast, please leave us a five-star rating and review. That helps other people find us. And if you're watching me on YouTube, then give this video a like, and don't forget to subscribe.

All right, folks. This show is produced by LesLee Bickford with sound engineering by Stacey Goodman. Be well, and I'll see you next time.

