

**Subject:** JumpStart Awkward Moments Day  
**From:** Matt, ROE #40 SEL Coach <mweld@roe3.org>  
**Date:** 3/18/2024, 6:14 AM  
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**This week, I'm writing to myself.**

I REALLY don't like awkward moments. Sure, I'm terrible at remembering names, and I tend to think things are funny when no one else does, so I guess it's OK when I'm the one in the Moment. But movies? I will stop watching a movie if the scene is too awkward, and it seems that a lot of recent 'comedy' movies find humor in others' misfortunes, which I find very cringe-y. Maybe I'm just getting old. What about you? How do you feel about awkward situations in movies?

**Every week, expect to find three things in this newsletter:**

1. Weekly message/intention.
  2. Educator resource around mental health/SEL.
  3. Dad Joke.
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**As teachers, we've all experienced Awkward Moments in class.**

...Like the time I bent over to get something off the floor behind my desk, and the drawer was slightly open, so it ripped a hole in my Dockers.

...Like the time a student came to my desk to ask a question, and he'd been collecting his spit by not swallowing all period (yes, I taught middle school), so when he opened his mouth it all came spilling out onto my desk.

...Like the time I had fresh pig guts on a big tray in front of the class, and when I pointed at the gallbladder with the probe, it squirted and hit the girl in the very front row with bright yellow bile.

**When things like this happen, there are some do's and don'ts ([source](#)):**

Do: Pause and think before reacting

Don't: Ignore the problem

Do: Smile and make a joke (if it's appropriate)

Don't: Get judgmental

Do: Admit fault when you've made it awkward

Don't: Apologize if you don't need to

Do: Remember that people might not even notice

Don't: Try to fill the silence

Do: Try to read the room

Don't: Bring up awkward situations when they're over

Do: Act confident (even if you're not)

And last but not least, do remember that this too shall pass

**This week, try this:** The next time your stomach rumbles JUST as you've gotten the kids quiet and working, try one of the strategies above. And in the end, let it go, and laugh at the situation (not at yourself - at the situation). I find a quick moment of humor and then moving on the best response.

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**PODCAST EPISODE: The Cost of Caring: Compassion Fatigue in Education and Healthcare with Crissy Mombela.** (DeFacto Leaders Podcast)

**Crissy Mombela** is the Program Director for the REACH initiative through the Partnership for Resilience in Chicago, and is in charge of the Communities of Practice across the State (and a straight up amazing human!).

**Description:** People working in school or medical settings are in a position to be caring for others in their professional lives; which makes it difficult to leave work at work. When you combine that with relationships outside of work, family responsibilities or having a child with a disability, there's a high risk of burnout. I invited Crissy Mombela to episode 152 of "De Facto Leaders" to discuss this topic because she's had lived experience as a teacher, a school administrator, and as a parent.

Listen

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I hope your week is amazing. Tomorrow is the Spring Equinox, so technically, winter is over! Feel free to respond to this email with comments/questions/suggestions (including your favorite Dad Joke!)

~Matt

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