

# Maintaining Life-Balance as an Educator



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VC CONNECT



VALLEY CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS™  
*Quest for Excellence*

*"Do it heartily as to the Lord." Col. 3:23*

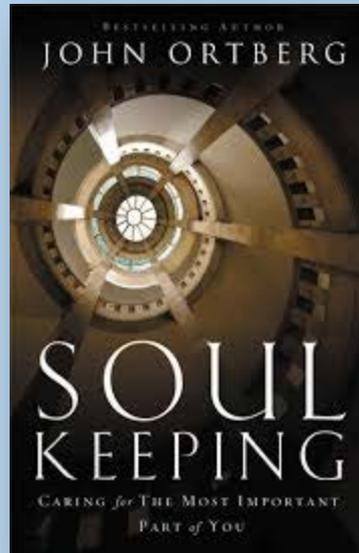
# Attendees will be able to...

- Understand the issues facing all teachers, regardless of school or district.
- Identify warning signs of burnout.
- Evaluate ten steps that research shows to improve life balance.
- Access additional life balance resources that are shared for further reflection.



# Resources Used

- Lipscomb University, Dr. Keith Nikolaos, Brain-based Research
- *Soul Keeping*  
by John Ortberg



# A Coming Crisis

There is a need to hire 300,000 teachers nation-wide each year.

Figure 2. Components of Teacher Demand



Source: U.S. Department of Education, multiple databases (see Appendix A in full report).



# Why are teacher quitting?

- Concerns with administration
- Lack of support
- Lack of input and control over teaching decisions
- Testing accountability pressures
- Dissatisfaction with the teaching career
- Unhappiness with working conditions
- Family or personal factors



# Which teachers are leaving?

Highest Turnover with:

- New teachers
- Teachers in high-poverty schools
- Teachers in the south
- Teachers in urban areas



# Public School Woes: Still Understaffed



# Public School Woes: Pay Strongly linked to Student Test Results



# Getting Closer to Home...



# There's our Stress!

## 46% of K-12 teachers report high daily stress

You might be

Your lunch is portable and be eaten while running to the copy machine

som<sup>ee</sup>cards  
user card

It's all caught up!

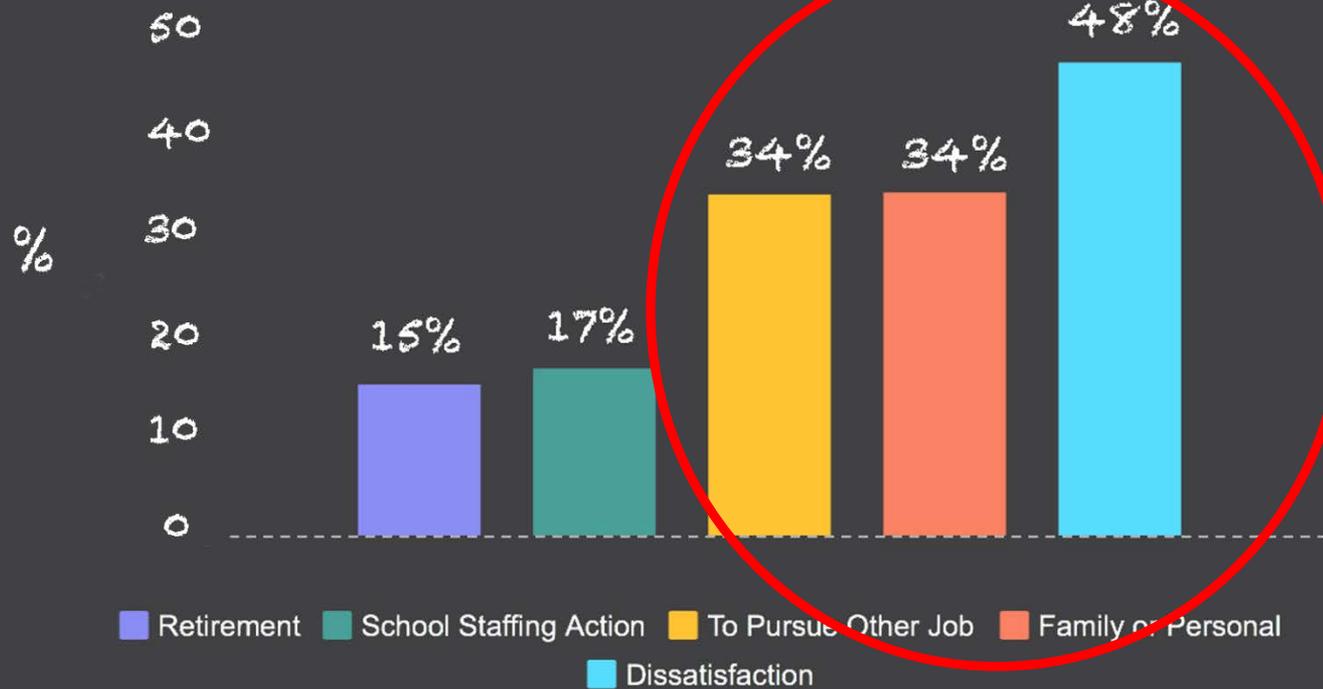


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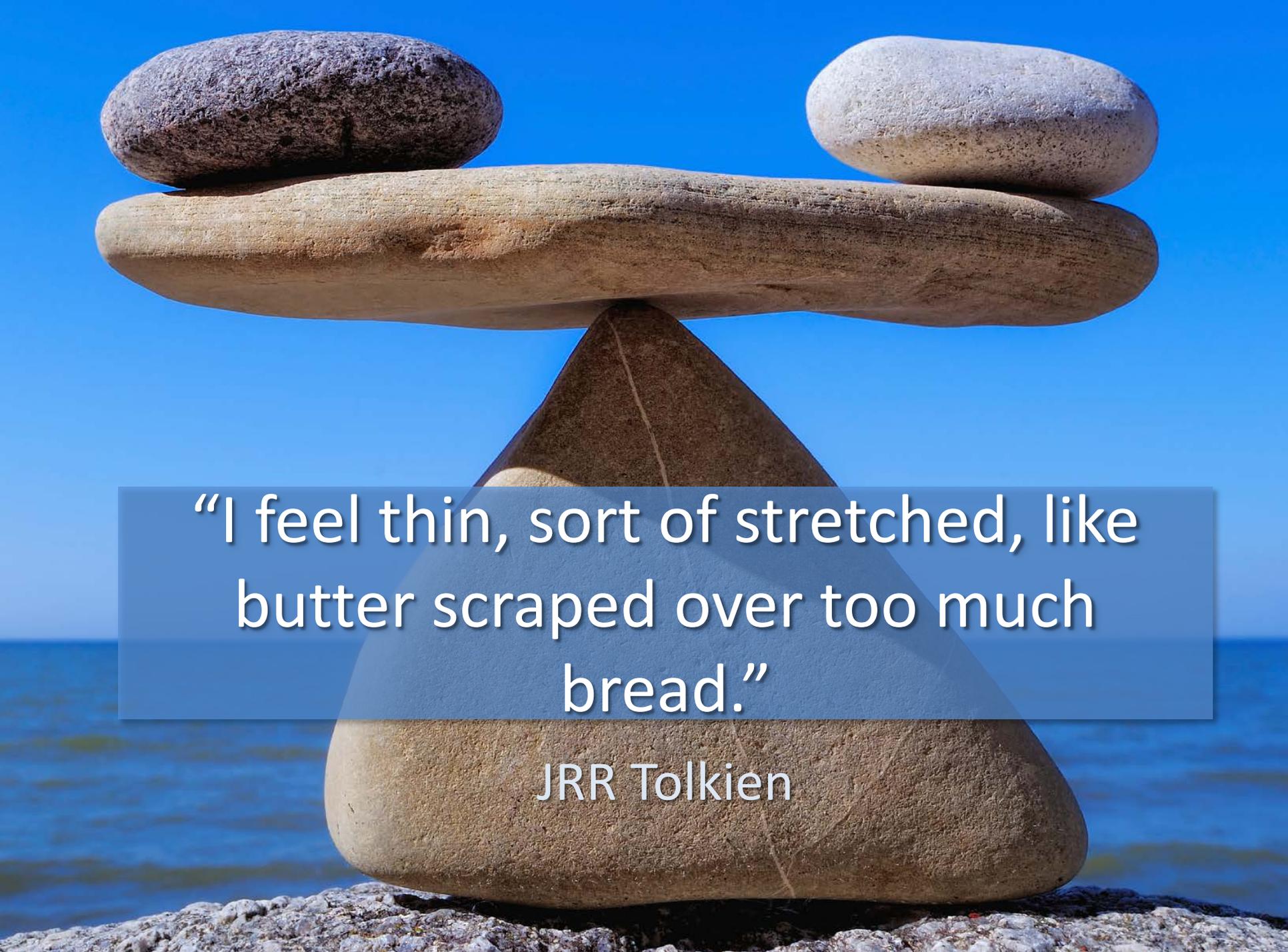
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user card

# Why Teachers Leave



\*Respondents were permitted to give more than one reason

Source: R. Ingersoll & D. Purda, University of Pennsylvania



“I feel thin, sort of stretched, like  
butter scraped over too much  
bread.”

JRR Tolkien

# Warning Signs

- Drained of physical & emotional energy
- Prone to negativity
- Less sympathetic with people
- Feeling misunderstood or unappreciated
- Feeling alone
- Feeling unpleasant pressure to succeed
- Easily irritated
- Job no longer fulfilling
- Feeling of being in the wrong profession
- Feeling that organizational politics & bureaucracy inhibit your ability to do a good job

Cary Cherniss, *Beyond Burnout*





# Principles of Life Balance

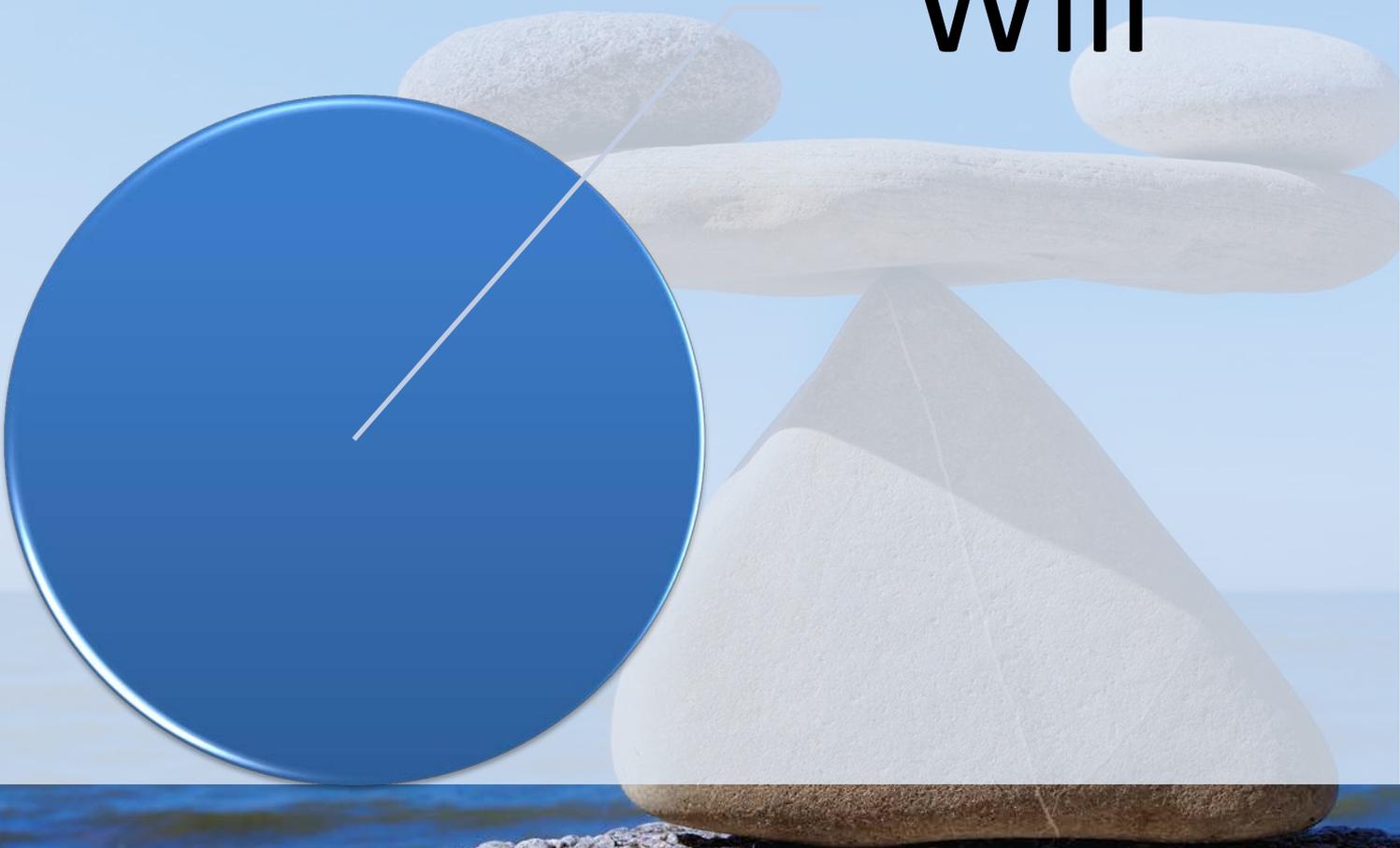
**God marvelously designed us to be human beings not a human doings!**

**Our lives function holistically and maintaining a healthy balance is our responsibility.**

**We need to have an interest in having an interior life.**

# The Operating System of Your Life

**Will**

A stack of smooth, light-colored stones is balanced on a dark rock. A blue circle is overlaid on the left side of the stack, and a white line extends from the center of the circle towards the top of the stack. The word "Will" is written in bold black text in the upper right area of the image.

# The Operating System of Your Life



# The Operating System of Your Life



# The Operating System of Your Life



**Will**

**Mind**

**Body**

**Soul**



# Ten Self-Care Techniques



# 1. Metacognition

**“Think about your thinking.”**

- Your thoughts releases brain chemicals that impact your body
- You have the ability to train yourself to reframe your reality:
  - Worry is negative meditation.
  - Express gratitude. (thankful three)
  - Practice love. (act yourself into feeling)

“...We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”

## 2. Make Time for Relationships\*

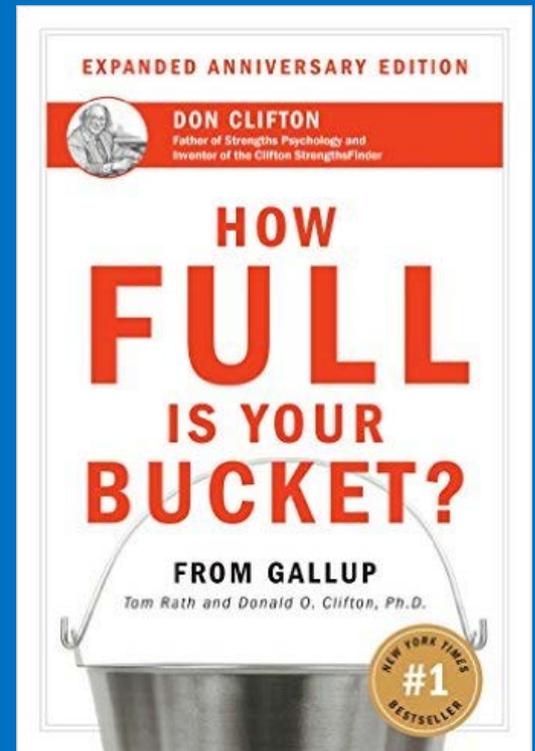
**Every encounter with a human being could be the beginning of a life-changing relationship!**

- We are designed for commitment & connection.
- Invest time with family & friends.
- Be present.
- Listen empathetically.
- Be an encourager who speaks truth in love.
- Express your emotions.

\* Healthy self-care calls for minimizing toxic relationships.

# The Dipper & The Bucket

- We face a choice every moment of every day: We can fill one another's buckets, or we can dip from them.
- It's a choice that profoundly influences our relationships, productivity, health, and happiness.



1:5



# Positive Impact Test

*Let's  
practice!*

1. I have helped someone in the last 24 hours.
2. I am an exceptionally courteous person.
3. I like being around positive people.
4. I have praised someone in the last 24 hours.
5. I have developed a knack for making other people feel good.
6. I am more productive when I am around positive people.
7. In the last 24 hours, I have told someone that I cared about her or him.
8. I make it a point to become acquainted with people wherever I go.
9. When I receive recognition, it makes me want to give recognition to someone else.
10. In the last week, I have listened to someone talk through his or her goals and ambitions.
11. I make unhappy people laugh.
12. I make it a point to call each of my associates by the name she or he likes to be called.
13. I notice what my colleagues do at a level of excellence.
14. I always smile at the people I meet.
15. I feel good about giving praise whenever I see good behavior.

# 3. Minimize Multitasking

***Millennials switch their attention among media platforms 27 times/hour!***

- Lowers IQ 15 points
- Equals the loss of a night of sleep
- Lowers emotional intelligence
- Lessens brain density in areas dealing with cognitive/emotional control



# 4. Mindfulness & Meditation

Let's  
practice!

- Single-tasking, waking state practice in which you are aware of your thoughts & bring your attention back to the now.
- Benefits: improves focus, boosts cognition, relieves stress & anxiety.
- **Breathing**: awareness of breathing; accept distraction; and refocus on breathing.
- **Body scan**
- **Follow your thoughts**: observe thoughts come & go like clouds in the sky.
- **Mindful activity**: be totally present in the moment as you go about a routine daily activity.
- **Here & now**: focus on what you are doing now...engage in it, feel it, and enjoy it.
- **Listen attentively**: music, conversation, or silence.
- **Savor**: beauty, food, or drink.
- **Become an observer**: notice sights, sounds, and smells available in the present moment.

# 5. Margin

Your Load

Your Limit



# 5. Margin

- If we are overloaded we have no margin.
- Most people are not quite sure when they pass from margin to overload.
- We don't have a flashing light to indicate "100 percent full."
- Margin is not something that just happens. You have to fight for it.

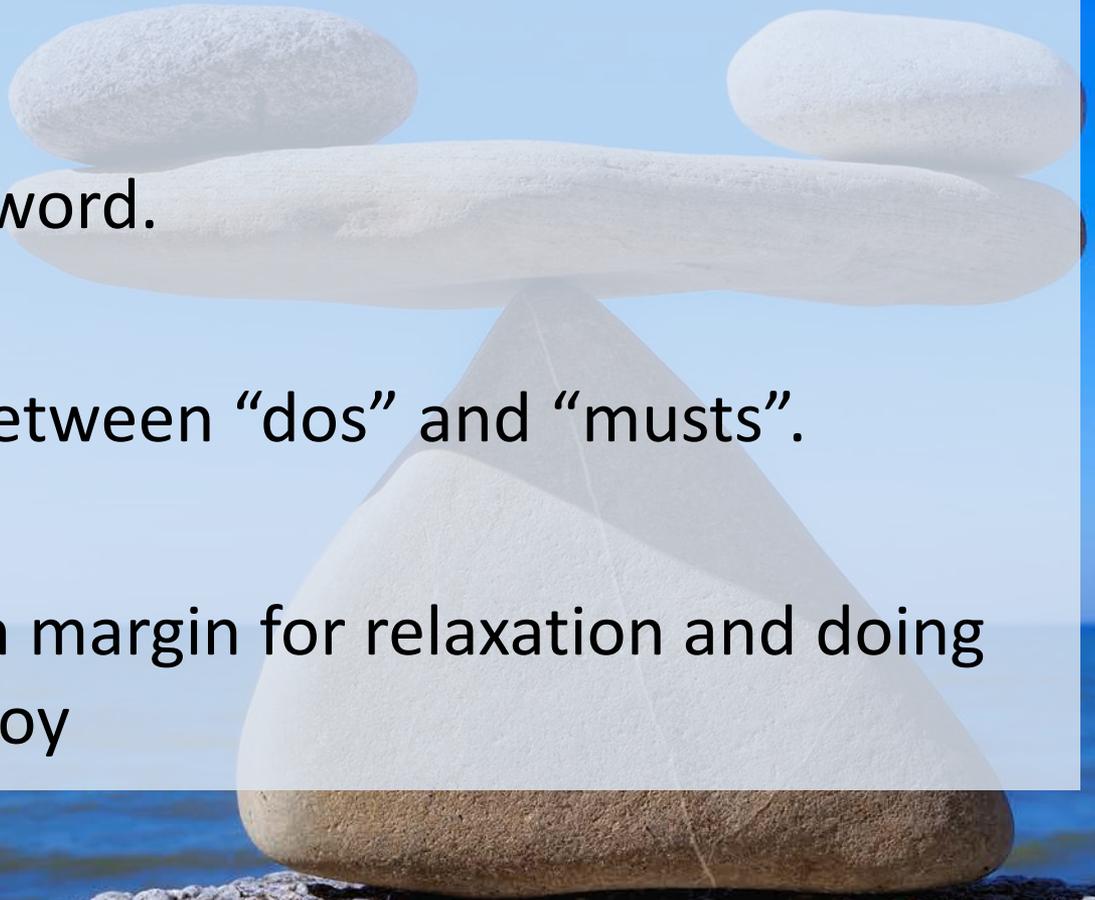
[Margin: Restoring Emotional, Physical, Financial, and Time Reserves to Overloaded Lives](#), Richard Swenson, M.D



# 5. Margin

Let's  
practice!

- Spend enough time internally to identify your limits & stick to them.
- “No” is a spiritual word.
- Daily distinguish between “dos” and “musts”.
- Daily allow enough margin for relaxation and doing something you enjoy



## 6. Mental Challenge

- After age 65, the risk of dementia doubles every 5 years. Over  $\frac{1}{4}$  of those over 85 suffer from dementia.
  - **Build your cognitive reserve!!!**
- Learn new words
  - Mental math
  - Memorize lists (grocery)
  - Make music
  - Play games
  - Puzzles
  - Read the classics
  - Take/teach a class
  - Learn a language
  - Find a new hobby
  - Keep a journal
  - Play ping pong
  - **Try new things!!!**

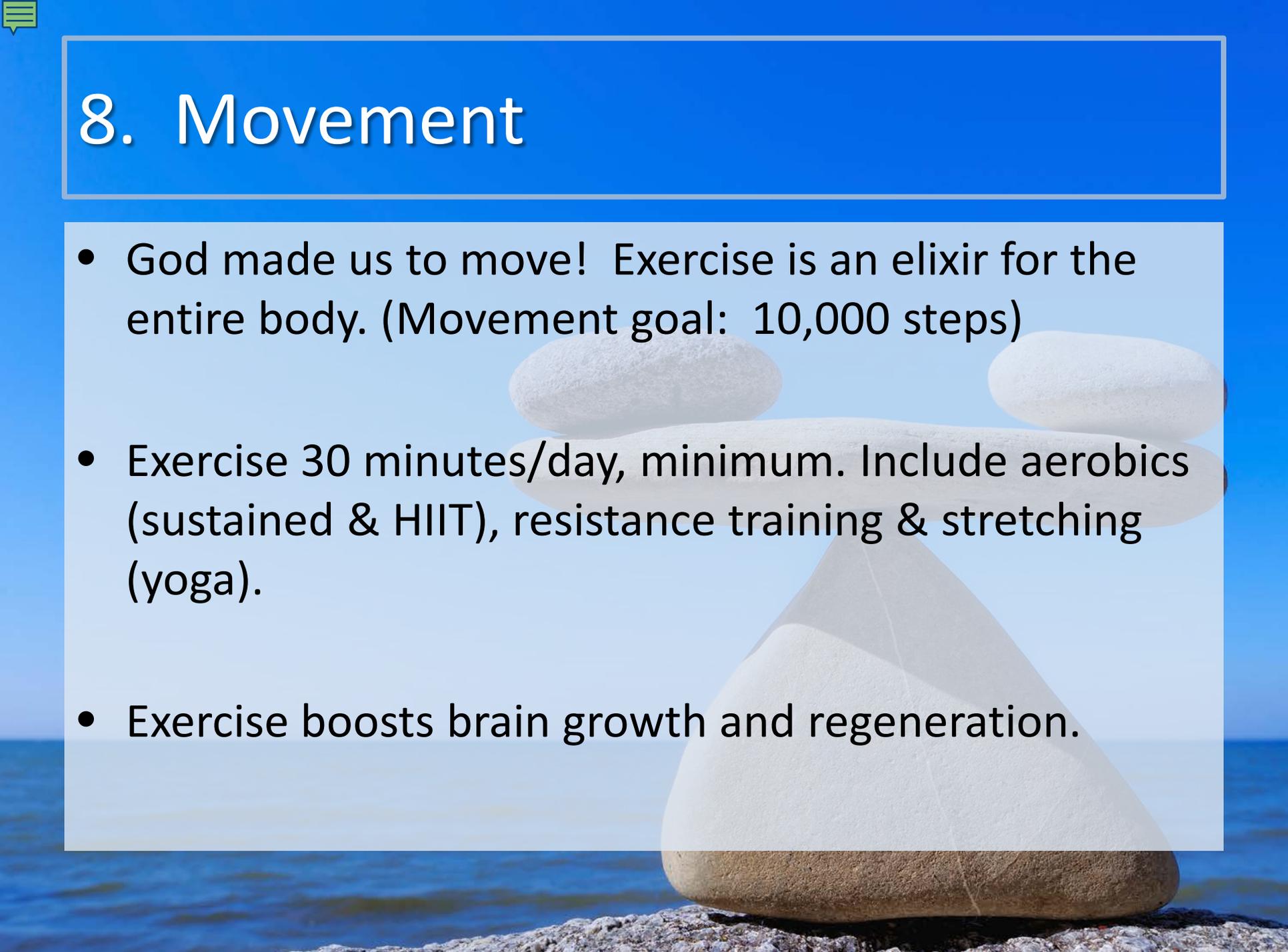


# 7. Menu

- What fuel are you putting into your body?
  - Soy to Manage Your Cholesterol
  - Fiber for Your Whole Body
  - Antioxidant "Superfoods" to Protect Your Cells and Heart
  - Water for Energy and Your Skin



## 8. Movement

- God made us to move! Exercise is an elixir for the entire body. (Movement goal: 10,000 steps)
  - Exercise 30 minutes/day, minimum. Include aerobics (sustained & HIIT), resistance training & stretching (yoga).
  - Exercise boosts brain growth and regeneration.
- 

# 9. Maximize Rest & Renewal

- Sleep well to live well!
- Practice Sabbath days and moments.
- ***“Nature is God’s reset button for our mind, body, and spirit.”***

Michael Hyatt



- Limit screen time.
- Call a friend.
- Journal.
- Play with a pet.
- Work in the garden.
- Take a vacation.
- Read a good book.
- Listen to music.
- Laugh!
- Take a walk.
- Enjoy hobbies.
- Play with your children or grandchildren (strengthens frontal cortex involved with executive function).



# 10. Meet Your Maker Daily

**We were made for spiritual connection with God!**

**Nurture your spiritual life through the practice of spiritual disciplines.**

***"Be still, and know that I am God..."***

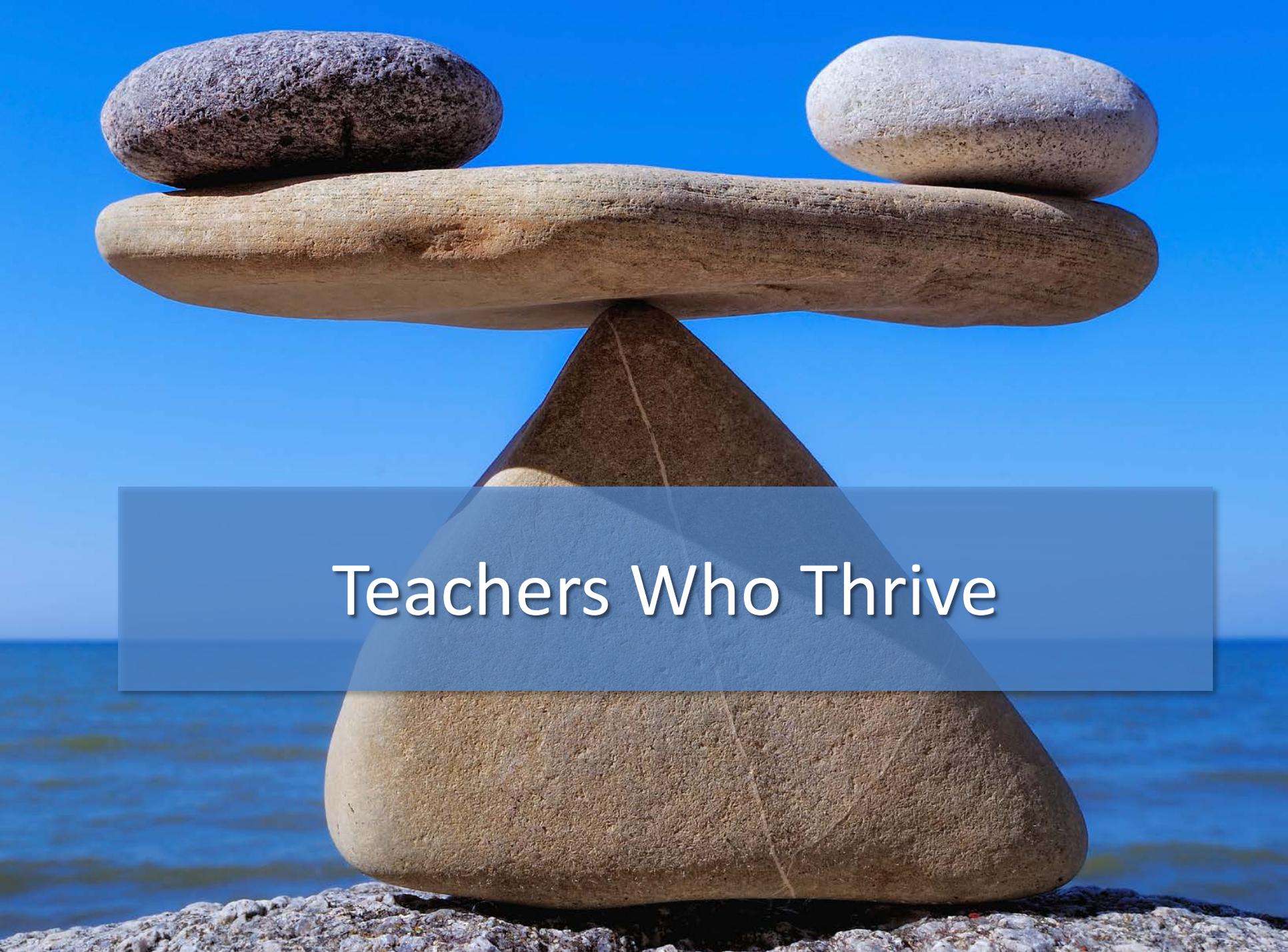
Psalm 46:10



# 10 Self Care Techniques

1. Metacognition
2. Make time for friends
3. Minimize Multitasking
4. Meditate/Mindfulness
5. Margins
6. Mental Challenge
7. Menu
8. Movement
9. Maximize Rest & Renewal
10. Meet you Maker Daily





Teachers Who Thrive

# Which teachers are staying?

- Quality school leadership
- Professional learning opportunities
- Instructional leadership
- Time for collaboration and planning
- Collegial relationships
- Decision-making input



The Q<sup>12</sup> survey measures employees' involvement in, enthusiasm for, and commitment to their work.

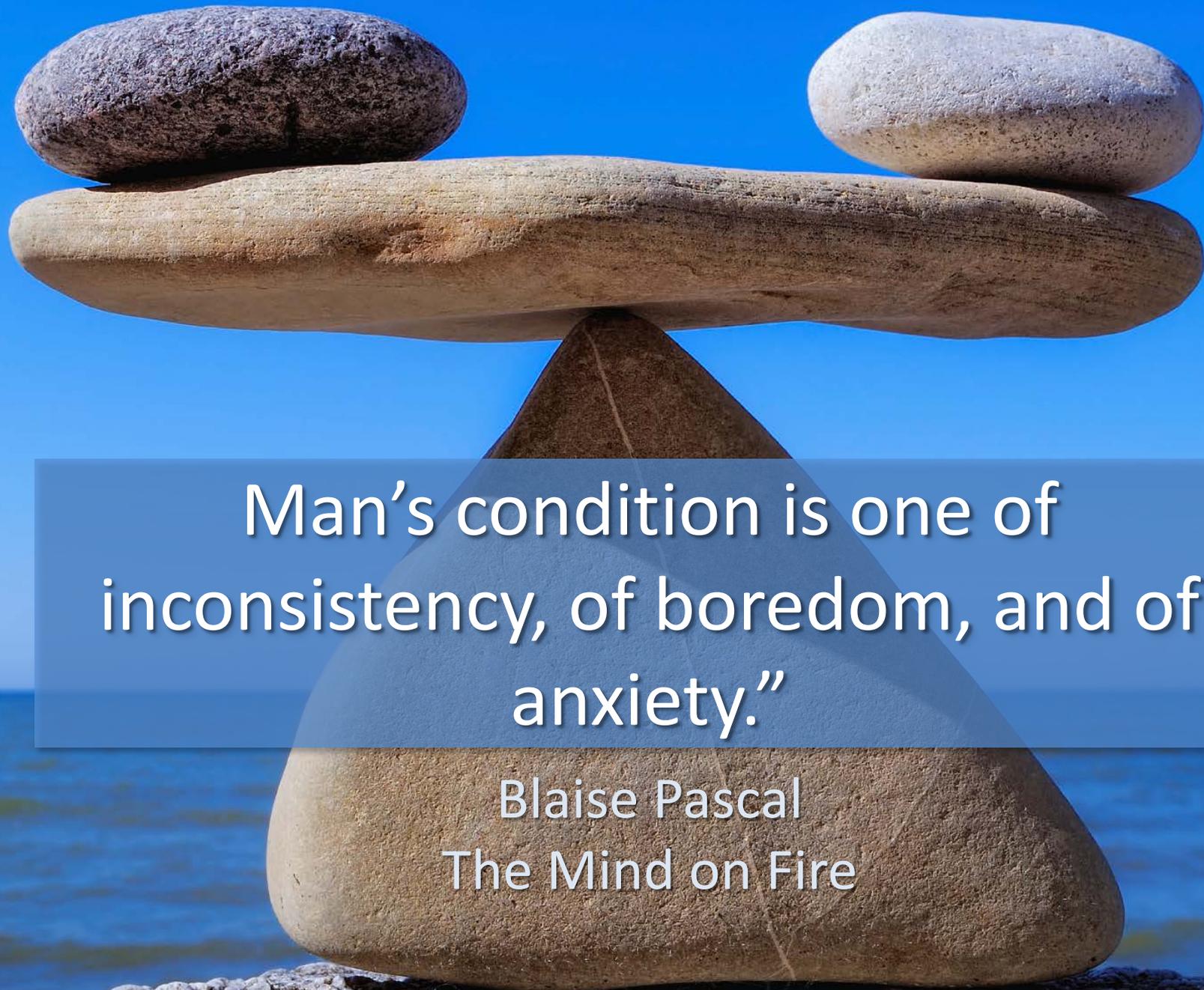
## GALLUP'S Q<sup>12</sup><sup>®</sup>

- 01 I know what is expected of me at work.
- 02 I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.
- 03 At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
- 04 In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
- 05 My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.
- 06 There is someone at work who encourages my development.
- 07 At work, my opinions seem to count.
- 08 The mission or purpose of my organization makes me feel my job is important.
- 09 My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.
- 10 I have a best friend at work.
- 11 In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
- 12 This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

# Partner with Your School Leaders

- You work at an Christian organization that desires to nurture you.
- Consider the Gallup Q<sup>12</sup>: let us partner with you to help make sure your needs as a professional teacher are being met.
- Consider what steps you can take to care for your own soul.





Man's condition is one of  
inconsistency, of boredom, and of  
anxiety."

Blaise Pascal  
The Mind on Fire

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# Your Soul is Waiting



Handout



# Resources

- Gallup (2014). State of America's Schools. <file:///C:/Users/jgriffin/Downloads/Gallup%20Report%20--%20State%20Of%20Americas%20Schools.pdf>
- Ortberg, J. (2014). *Soul Keeping: Caring for the Most Important Part of You*. Zondervan. Grand Rapids, MI
- Marks, T (2014). *Beyond Burnout*. <http://beyondburnout.com>
- Nickolas, K (2016). *Intensives: Maintaining Life Balance*. Brain-Based Research. [keith.nikolaus@lipscomb.edu](mailto:keith.nikolaus@lipscomb.edu)
- Sutcher, L., Darling-Hammond, L., and Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). *A Coming Crisis in Teaching? Teacher Supply, Demand, and Shortages in the U.S.* Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

