

EQ in your PJs

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Online with R. Keeth Matheny

BOUNCING BACK FROM CHALLENGES

Part 1: Bouncing Rather than Breaking

We can all relate to challenges from COVID risks and restrictions. You may know someone who is suffering from the Coronavirus. You may be sad to go weeks without seeing your friends or extended family. You may have been looking forward to a sports season or prom or graduation or other special events that have been canceled. You and your family may be experiencing serious financial hardship and the stress of uncertainty. These are all very real and significant setbacks.

It's OK to be sad or mad or stressed. Our bodies come with built-in emotion makers. When you experience a threat to your sense of well-being, your brain automatically generates natural chemicals (e.g., adrenaline, cortisol) that signal, "Hey, something is not right!"

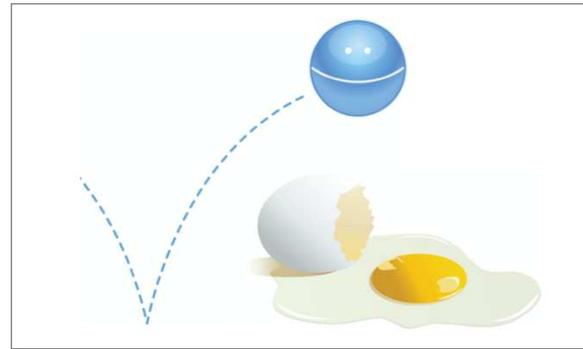
From there, your brain either says, "You're right! Let's get mad!" or "I feel sad." or "I'm scared." Next, your thoughts can escalate: "Let's get even!" or de-escalate: "Wait, give me time to calm down."

The important thing to know is: 1) emotions are not good or bad—they are healthy indicators, and 2) even when things seem out of your control—you *have control* over how you think and ultimately how you feel about challenges in life.

How you think about a situation will directly impact how you feel. You have the power to put a positive spin on a curveball.

How do you bounce back from challenges?

Good question! In the video, Mr. Matheny talked about the egg and the ball. When an egg hits a hard surface—it breaks, but when a ball hits that same surface—it bounces back.



Similarly, when you are hit with a tough situation, you can choose to break or bounce. People who are good at bouncing back share common strategies:

1) Seeing failure as an opportunity to learn and grow (Example: *The season is cancelled, but I can use this time to prepare for next season.*)

2) Learning from role models and mentors (Example: *I can't see my coach now, but I can watch hours of best players on YouTube.*)

3) Increasing their effort and/or changing their approach (Example: *I was practicing two hours after school, but now I work out and practice three hours.*)

4) Using positive self-talk to guide/encourage learning (Example: *"I'd rather play with teammates, but now I can really focus on my techniques."*)

Many great leaders and athletes who have experienced months to years of confinement later attributed that time to crucial mental, physical, and emotional preparation. Nelson Mandela led South Africa out of apartheid after 28 years of imprisonment, and many athletes have emerged from injury recovery and had the best seasons of their lives. What may seem like "lost time" could be just what you need for skill building, goal setting, and preparing for what's next.

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Part 1: Bouncing Rather than Breaking, cont'd.

How has COVID-19 affected you, personally?

How has COVID-19 changed your life lately? What have you lost as a result of school closures and other COVID-related issues?

REFLECTION: How would you rate your "Bouncing Back" strategies/skills? On a scale of 1-10, when faced with a setback how good are you at?...

Seeing failure as an opportunity to learn and grow

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____
No way! I never want to fail or struggle. Actually, I've learned a lot from past setbacks.

Learning from role models and mentors

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____
Who needs a role model? I got it all going on. I know who I can learn from and have learned a lot!

Increasing your effort and/or changing your approach

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____
Forget it! Why bother? I can't get any better at this. The more I try, the better I get.

Using positive self-talk to guide and encourage learning

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____
When I talk to myself, it's usually negative. When I get stuck or discouraged, I can talk myself into a better place.

APPLICATION: List three challenges you've experienced lately (it can be related to COVID-19 or not). How would you respond in each situation if you broke like an egg? Or if you bounced like a ball?



What would you do if you broke like an egg?

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What would you do if you bounced back like a ball?

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List CHALLENGE:

1)

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2)

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3)