

Happy Days

Before Town Hall Meeting:

In your writing block or morning work, assign this essay starter:

I'll be happier when...

During Town Hall Meeting:

With permission from the authors, read some of the happiness essays.

Establish a continuum line on the floor of the classroom with numbers one through ten. Ask students, "On a scale from one to ten, with ten being extremely happy, how happy do you feel today?" Have them write that number on a scrap of paper and spend one minute deciding why they feel that way.

At the end of one minute, instruct students to go stand on the number they chose. Spend a few minutes letting volunteers explain why they are happy/unhappy, being careful not to comment too much.

Say to students, "This week a journalist reported that "looking for reasons to celebrate, no matter how small, increases your overall happiness. How many of you had breakfast this morning? Did you know there are children in many countries who would celebrate having something to eat? How many of you think that coming to school will help you grow up and get a better job? Did you realize how fortunate we are to live in a country where basic education is free to everyone?"

In Smartsville, we spend a lot of time encouraging each other, but there are times when we need encouragement and there is no one to provide it. We need to learn to use procedural self talk to encourage ourselves.

From now on, at the end of the day when we assess how we did on our personal goals, we are going to think through our day and find some small reason to celebrate. We will write it in our journal, along with what we did to celebrate. For example, when I thought through my day yesterday, I realized I got all your papers graded and returned. I did not need to take any home with me. I celebrated by having a cup of tea and putting my feet up for awhile before starting dinner.

Your celebration may be for something as small as keeping up with your pencil all day or remembering to write your name on all your papers. The celebration may simply be patting yourself on the back or looking in the mirror and saying, "Way to go!" But, write

it down. Then, maybe we won't have to wait to be happier WHEN...we'll be happier NOW!