



How One Educator Found Renewed Confidence and Helped Forge a Better Community

Cassandra Pawling's edupreneurship journey with Educator Dynamics.



Cassandra Pawling, a culinary arts teacher at Desert Pines High School in Las Vegas, has noticed that it's the stressors outside the classroom that have created internal conflict for her much more than the day-to-day stress of teaching.

Pawling's edupreneurship journey with Educator Dynamics has allowed her to face inward, identify her unique strengths, and rebuild the confidence she once had as a young teacher.

"It's really easy to get worn down by other people's pessimism," she explains. "But I've learned that we do have the ability to create our immediate surroundings." Pawling says there's been a disturbing shift over her two decades in education. Today, she says, teachers have to overcome the emotional aspects of dealing with pivotal, sometimes devastating, societal issues, sometimes on a near-daily basis.

She explained that the emotional toll of confronting fears in an era where school shootings, food insecurity and now, the COVID-19 pandemic, can become overwhelming.

"It's really easy to become discouraged, especially when you hear people talking negatively about teachers," she says. "But you know what you're getting into — you know it will be stressful, and people will question you."

"Still," she continues, "you love it, and that's why you chose it. It's not for everybody, but for those of us who are here, programs like this help us to stay strong, despite these issues."

Pawling freely admits that she, like so many of her fellow teachers, began to lose faith in her abilities somewhere along the line. "One of the things that happened to me personally is that my confidence as a teacher started to dwindle, and I used to think it was because I wasn't doing enough," she says.

Pawling's turning point came from working with Sandi Herrera, Founder & CEO of Educator Dynamics. "Working with Sandi, I realized it's not that I wasn't doing enough," she explains. "It was a shame I felt less confident because I wasn't a bad teacher — I was a good teacher. I had just started to question myself."

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Pawling knew that to find her way back to the confidence she'd lost, she needed to dig deep. She said Herrera's program helped her hone in on two of her strengths: passion and a good attitude.

When her school brought in Herrera, Pawling said the shift was dramatic and positive.

"One of the problems we had at our school is that we didn't really have an identity," she says. "We weren't connected."

"We worked together to create a set of values that we shared as a community, including students, teachers, parents and administration," she says. "And it turns out we were actually on the same page all along. We had consistent values; we just weren't communicating them in the same way."

Herrera's guidance and insight fundamentally changed the way Pawling's functions. These days, she says the school's focus on community-level core values shapes the current environment and builds a framework for the future. "As they started to hire new people, the administration would provide them with our core values," she says. "Then, they'd ask them if those values were part of who they were, too."

Herrera's institutional approach informed Pawling's work toward finding inner peace. Now that she feels happier in the environment in and out of her classroom, Pawling has come to recognize her value as a community, and as a teacher. Herrera's workshops have lit a new fire under her.

"Every time I leave a workshop, I just feel really excited," she says. "I feel hopeful for the future." Perhaps most importantly, Pawling says, is that the experience has underscored her decision to enter the field in the first place. "I feel that I made the right choice to become an educator when I leave a workshop," she says. "I'm excited to go to work the next day."

"This program gives you the personal accountability to know what makes you happiest, wherever you are."

Pawling says she's gained a new perspective and a new edupreneurial attitude thanks to Educator Dynamics. "I've realized there needs to be a massive shift to educators taking personal accountability for their happiness," she explains. "We can take personal accountability for making things better as opposed to always looking outside, to other people to make it better, or to look to other people to make it happen."

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What Unique Qualities Empower You to Foster Community?

The Educator to Edupreneur Master Class will inspire you, too, to dig deep and identify the strengths that will power you toward accountability for your own happiness. You'll move forward with renewed confidence in your role as an educator, community member and as a positive driving force in young people's lives.

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