

Worst Spring Fever EVER! (pt 1/2)

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SPEAKERS

Seth Perler

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Seth Perler 00:01

What is up parents and teachers? By the end of this video, parents and teachers, you are going to understand why this year is the worst spring fever ever. You know, it's March-April 2021, it's been a bizarre year, a challenging year, just a lot of misinformation, a lot of confusion and a lot of conspiracy theories. A lot of people are telling me their perceptions of certain things that are going on in the world and their theories about stuff, and all of this stuff. It's just been a really bizarre year but I will say this is the worst spring fever ever. Let me tell you what spring fever is parents and teachers, I know you know what it is but spring fever happens every year. In fact you might look on my YouTube channel and search for the word 'spring fever' and you'll probably find a couple of older spring fever videos. It'd be interesting to see how those compared to this one. But spring fever happens every year, and in this video i'm specifically referring to not the middle of the bell curve kids but kids who struggle with executive function, who struggle to get things done, who always have missings and late work and zeroes and always catching up and all this stuff. For them this is the worst spring fever ever, and yes there are some kids who are quote 'thriving' who normally struggle for some reason this is working for them. Yes I've heard that, it's not uncommon for me to hear that but that is not the majority. And yes, even though I may sound snarky about teachers or the system or whatever, I love teachers and I appreciate teachers. The vast, vast majority of teachers are heart-centered, dedicated, and working their butts off to do what's right by kids.

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Seth Perler 01:44

So having said all that, spring fever happens every spring. What happens is that we're done. Teachers are done, parents are done, kids are done. We're sick of school. What's happened is we've had fall semester, we've gone through that, we've had a clean slate for spring semester, and then we're going through spring semester. Then around spring break every year the weather gets nice, everybody is just so excited to get outside, they have new energy. Everybody just wants to be jumping. You know, we've just spent winter, I know some of you may be in more warmer climates but we've just had winter and we're coming into spring. Everybody's gotten renewed energy and is ready just to go out there and use that energy and do fun stuff. Summer break can't come soon enough for anybody. I mean teachers are sick of it they're just like burnt out, kids are burnt out, parents are burnt out, everybody is done. Everybody's ready. It's a much needed break. Well that's cool, except that the expectations have not changed for spring fever. Meaning that our kids still need to get their work done and be compliant and conform and do what they're told and jump through the hoops. You know that yes, I value education, yes there are great things about education, but the workload continues to be heavy. They have current work, so let's say spring breaks over for you. They still have their regular current work. If they're one of my kids who struggle with executive function, they still have their late work, missing work, zeros, incompletes, and that stuff. You know, the stuff that they're 'behind' on, whatever that means. But the stuff that they're behind on, need to catch up on. Then they also have what I call PEPR, P-E-P-R, which means they're at the end of the semester and you have final papers or essays, we have final exams, you have final projects, and large reading assignments. So they did that in fall semester as well, you have PEPR at the end of each semester. But for the last three weeks of a semester here in spring fever time, we still have PEPR. The energy for doing their current work, their makeup work, and their finals stuff, the energy is depleted. People are burnt out, they're done.

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Seth Perler 04:06

If you watched my video from last week it was super ranty and I don't usually do them like that, but I think is really important right now because people are suffering a lot, suffering. Our kids are suffering. This spring fever is unlike any I've ever seen. The burnout is unlike anything I've ever seen. The intensity, and when I say intensity, what I mean is the depth of emotion, of frustration, of resistance, of helplessness for kids who just feel like, "How am I going to ever catch up? And if I do get caught up, is it even worth it? Am I going to pass if I put all of this energy into getting caught up?" and all of this stuff. Like, is it worth it for them to put all this energy and they're so tired, they're socially depleted. Our social lives and social structures have fallen apart, our kids are craving real social connection. Our fear is tapped out, we all have different ideas about what's going on. But everybody is frustrated and has some level of fear about something. And we're just like, exhausted from

that. What do they call it? COVID fatigue. We're tired everybody, we're tired. And I want to make this video because I want you to know just my thoughts about it so that you can feel like you feel more empowered to support the kids. When these kids are getting behind, it produces a lot of anxiety during a normal spring fever. And the anxiety is more intense this year. If they're not anxious, and they often are, maybe they're just ignoring it and putting their head in the sand, pretending it doesn't exist, which a lot of my kids do. But their lack of engagement is worse. So they're even less engaged than they normally would be because they're, you know, all the burnout and everything that I just mentioned. There are too many hoops for them to jump through to realistically get caught up for their executive function for a lot of these kids. So that doesn't just mean getting caught up, but it also means the time required to check portals and figure out what's going on. All teachers post their expectations differently on different days, their grades on different days, parents aren't clear on what's going on. Like it's really, really hard.

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Seth Perler 06:35

At this point, I want to mention a very important quote or saying, and I don't know who to attribute it to, I found different people. But essentially, the gist of this quote is this, "Not everything that is measured matters. And not everything that matters is measured." So we have a system where we're measuring certain things, and we typically measure them with data points, called grades or test scores. Those grades, we happen to have chosen the letters A, B, C, D, and F. F means fail. So any of the kids that fail are failing within the context of the way that this system has decided to measure the metrics and say what metrics matter. And okay, so but not everything that matters is measured. So I want to really encourage you, parents and teachers, to really take a step back and look at what matters. When kids are compliant, the data looks good. And we infer certain meanings from that, like they're getting a good education, they're going to be okay in life. Well, we need to really look at, do we really believe that? Now again, I love teachers, teachers are amazing. Teachers are working so hard and there's so much value in education. But when these kids are burnt out like this, and we continue to have the system the same... (cont'd in part 2)