

# Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence for Educators and Leaders: Strong Pillars in Education to strengthen Mental Health of this Generation

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**Abstract**—Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence are becoming the key factors in the new generation with advanced developments. It is necessary for educators and leaders possess these qualities for the overall growth and support to students. Mindful and Emotionally intelligent educators can actually understand the complex issues that students face. At a crucial age, most of the students hesitate to share it, so the emotional intelligence of educators work as Ice-breaker. With availability of Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence, educators and leaders can build a safe atmosphere where learning feels pleasant and when doubts arise, they are understood and solved maturely. These qualities help to change the perspective of education in youngsters as they feel motivate to gain real knowledge around these educators. Here, educators and leaders are not only their academic teachers but also play the active role as their guide. This shift towards mental health can provide a great backbone to the new generation who has access to all the latest gadgets but lacks the emotional support in life.

**Index Terms**— Mental Health, Understanding, Support, Emotional Intelligence, Safety, Connection

## I. INTRODUCTION

Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence lead towards creating a healthy environment. It provides a safety especially to the students around their educators and leaders. It's a state of mental health that motivates for regulation. These qualities suit the best for the growth of students who find that warmth around them to trust enough to share their vulnerability, their issues, their challenges. It increases importance of Mental Health and how everyone should focus to maintain it. A healthy mental state for the students can be provided by understanding their basic needs. It's more important

to realize their state than to preach them for maturity. Focusing on the betterment of their mental health, maturity can come along. Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence of educators and Leaders work as an assurances for students over all personality growth. It's observed that most of the students feel comfortable around the educators who understand the ambitions of students. When students feel heard, seen, that feeling of safety evolves the mental health. Here, mindfulness and emotional intelligence for educators and leaders play important role of mental health awareness not only for children but also for parents. How depression, anxiety, trauma looks like and how it can be managed with gentle yet warm support. Therefore, it is very essential for educators and leaders to possess and develop mindfulness and emotional intelligence.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The focus of this research is on a novel called 'Heartstopper' by Alice Oseman. It is a British Graphic novel published in 2019. It has total 5 volume of series. The 6<sup>th</sup> and the last volume of this graphic novel series. It has also been adapted into a web series with the same name as 'Heartstopper' and there are 3 seasons of this web series. Both the novel and web series focus on the mental health of the protagonist : Charlie Smith. Charlie is a high school student and faces a lot of bullying in school just for being a gay. And this affects his mental health so adversely that he falls really sick. His confidence drops severely, but he is supported by his Arts teacher : Mr. Ajayi. He is also a gay so he can understand what Charlie is going through. When Charlie gets a very supportive boyfriend still those wounds of judgement and bullying don't get healed

easily. And his mental health deteriorates and he is diagnosed with an eating disorder. He goes to a clinic for treatment for more than 1 month. He begins his journey of recovery there and even the leaders at that clinic also encourage Charlie a lot to fight against his thoughts against food. His forever support Mr. Ajayi also keeps supporting him to come out of this with a healthy mind set.

### III. OBJECTIVES

This research paper will focus on the aspects of mindfulness and emotional intelligence for educators and leaders. As they together create an impactful effect on student's lives :

- The main objective of the study is to analyse how mindfulness and emotional intelligence for educators create a safe atmosphere for students.
- The research will also focus on mental health of students in this fast advanced world.
- Through this study, the researcher will also examine how mindful support of an educator can comfort and encourage a student to open up freely.
- The emphasis of the present study is to ensure availability of emotional intelligence in educators and leaders for overall personality growth of students.
- The current study will also solidify the importance of understanding between educators and students so the challenges faced by students can be managed in a better way.

### IV. METHODOLOGY

The researcher will apply Qualitative Research Methodology for the present study. As it will focus on mental health aspects. The aim is to analyse the importance of mindfulness and emotional intelligence for educators and leaders. Their emotional intelligence and awareness can't be measured as only can be felt as safety, growth and good mental health of students. The subject analysis will be around the mental health of students based on mindfulness and emotional intelligence of educators and leaders. Ultimately, the focus of analysis in this research is non-numeric data like feelings, mental health, awareness, mindfulness and emotional intelligence which can be significant for students' development in a long run.

### V. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the significance of mindfulness and emotional intelligence in the educators and leaders?
- How important it is to understand the mental health of students ?
- What are the ways to create an atmosphere of safety where students can open up ?
- When someone gets bullied in school at such a tender age, how does their mental health gets affected with those constant judgements ?
- How the support, encouragement along with mindfulness and emotional intelligence can be created for the better growth of each and every student ?
- How people belonging to a different sexual identity is judged and bullied at the academic places ?

### VI. FINDINGS

This research is emphasizing the importance of mindfulness and emotional intelligence in educators that can impact to secure mental health of students. How educators can create a safe atmosphere for students where they don't feel judged. Mindfulness and emotional intelligence are the essential qualities for educators still rare as around them students can open up where real education with healthy discussion can establish. When students are given this warmth to open up they feel seen, understood and cared not only for their academic requirements but for their personal growth too. Especially at the academic places where students are judged for their personal life like appearance, choices, background, or at a larger scale bullied for different sexuality, presence of emotional intelligence of an educator works like a safe place for those students where they are not judged for who they are. They no longer have to hide their real emotions and personality because they finally get the validation and understanding around their educators and leaders. The following points will discuss how mindful and emotionally intelligent educators actually created a supportive and motivating environment for a teen age student when he was bullied for being a gay in his high school and how their warm presence changed his confidence.

1) Providing safe atmosphere:

The focus is on safety provided by an educator to a teen age student : Charlie Spring when he was bullied for being a gay in his high school. He was supported by his art teacher Mr. Ajayi. When Charlie felt demotivation to come to school it was his art teacher being mindful around him to make sure he doesn't collapse into this discomfort. When Charlie struggled to eat his lunchbox, Mr. Ajayi used to motivate him to come to his art class and eat there peacefully where no one will judge him. Charlie loved art and music so his art class was a comfort place. No other students were allowed there during break to eat but Mr. Ajayi showed his emotional intelligence not to run behind rules but to understand vulnerability of Charlie and making sure this tough phase doesn't affect his health much. When a student gets seen and supported during such a tough phase by an educator, he feels naturally safe because he knows there is someone who backs him.

2) Understanding the inconvenience :

Mindfulness and emotional intelligence of educators and leaders allow them to understand the students not only in academic sessions but also in their personal life challenges. Mr. Ajayi was an excellent art teacher but what makes him special is his understanding of Charlie's stress when he was constantly bullied by his classmates and even by his seniors in the school. Mr. Ajayi acknowledged the fear of that child within Charlie who just wanted a little safety when everything around him felt so suffocating. He became that solace for Charlie where he came to relax where he felt a familiarity, no risk zone. This quality of Mr. Ajayi makes him unique from the rest of many educators who just focus on academics but sometimes forget to understand the discomfort or inconvenience of students around them. But an emotionally intelligent educator and leader always focuses on the over all growth of the student with good mental health.

3) Validating the needs of students

A mindful and emotionally intelligent educator focuses on to validate the needs of students. A validation that shows students that they are seen and understood, they are not too much for feeling the pain. Mr. Ajayi validated Charlie's fear of not coming to school and when he came, he made sure Charlie feels safe that he eats his lunch properly if not around other

students on ground then in the peaceful isolation of the art class. Because at that time, Charlie needed a person and a place that feels safe and secure, not judging him for being in his true identity. Mr. Ajayi acknowledged that need of safety and even kept talking to him once in a while. Charlie was able to share his fears, thoughts with Mr. Ajayi. It's a great success for an educator if a student can share about his deep fears or traumas with him because that requires a lot of trust and comfort. Moreover, by understanding this state, an educator can help the student which Mr. Ajayi did by being in touch with Charlie, providing him that warmth of validation that it's totally fine to be different, because that's his real identity.

4) Motivating students towards growth

Emotional Intelligence of an educator is in motivating the growth of students. The challenges, obstacles will always be there, but support of a teacher can assure student that he is not alone in facing those challenges. When Charlie was going through the worst, he knew there is Mr. Ajayi who will back him at school. Mr. Ajayi motivated Charlie towards drawing, his musical band and even when Charlie's crush Nick Nelson had asked him to join Rugby, Mr. Ajayi had motivated Charlie for that too. And after Charlie's fight against his mental illness and eating disorder, he had got strong with support of his family, friends and Nick – now his boyfriend. But Mr. Ajayi saw more potential in him, so he asked Charlie to put his own name for the next year's Head Boy election. Charlie wasn't sure if he would be able to justify the role, but Mr. Ajayi and Mr. Farooq : Another mindful educator of Charlie's school and Mr. Ajayi's boyfriend. They both motivated Charlie to believe in himself that his softness, empathy, and fighting spirit can be helpful for other students too. They motivated Charlie to take a stand not only for himself but for each and every student who faced any struggle.

5) Identifying the real talent of students

Mindfulness of educator and leaders work not only in the academic sector but also in identifying the real talent of students around them. Talent beyond academics need to be cherished so that each student can proudly have different identities. Charlie had always been so good in music, especially with the drums. So Mr. Ajayi had motivated Charlie to keep

himself rooted to music, to drums while he was facing bullying from all the sides. If that way was not introduced, Charlie might have got more affected by the constant bullying. Mr. Ajayi encouraged him to follow his passion of music and even arts too. So that Charlie could bring out those suppressed emotions through playing drums and evolving through arts. Majority of students made fun of him for being gay, saw him as useless but it was Mr. Ajayi who actually identified his real talent and pushed him towards it to pursue it in a better way. It kept Charlie distracted and helped to loosen up those harsh judged thoughts. He was shown a direction of growth, of a journey for identity, a journey to find his suppressed voice, to find his real identity. Mr. Ajayi identified not only Charlie's real talent but also his true potential and guided him to walk on that path with confidence.

#### 6) Becoming a Mirror figure

As the mirror shows reflection of the reality, the same way a mindful educator shows reflection of the actual personality of his student. He helps the student to recognize his abilities and flaws too so that he can go through the actual personality development. Here, when Charlie was so broken and avoided going to school, or having breakfast, Mr. Ajayi noticed it and reflected this reality to Charlie as him running away from truth. He made him understand that running away from discomfort can't change it into comfort. Moreover, he reflected Charlie's true potential of art and even to become a head boy. He also showed Charlie where he lacked a little in confidence. He made sure that Charlie doesn't fall into self-blame and grow through this situation by understanding that it's not his fault if people around him are narrow-minded and can't accept real identities.

#### 7) Protecting students from future threats

A mindful educator does not only prepare but also protect student from future threats. As he feels himself obliged to guide students on the right path and away from any particular threats. Mr. Ajayi played the same role when he felt one of a senior student was trying to misuse Charlie's innocence. Mr. Ajayi felt that Charlie was feeling uncomfortable around that guy's presence and he is trying to play with pure intentions of Charlie that made him protect Charlie from the future harm. He advised Charlie to stay away from that guy who

didn't understand his value and had bad intentions with Charlie. Therefore, even when Nick waited for Charlie in the art room for lunch, Mr. Ajayi misjudged Nick for that other guy and kept staring at Nick to warn him for being safe with Charlie. Later he got to know that Nick had good intentions so he accepted the couple with all happiness.

#### 8) The role as a guide

An emotionally intelligent educator and leader understands his role as a guide. His guidance can lead students to the right and sustainable paths. When Charlie felt lost, messed up around all the negativity, his Sir Mr. Ajayi stood behind him like a rock. He guided Charlie towards slow stability. His constant guidance again made Charlie believe that apart from his family, at school too there is someone on whom he can trust for his safety. There is someone who won't judge him for his truth. And that trust made Charlie follow Mr. Ajayi's guidance to live a normal life again. He could overcome his mental trauma, eating disorder, and in all that there was constant support of Mr. Ajayi because he played his role as a guide in the best way for Charlie.

#### 9) Showing trust on the ability and potential of students

The best encouragement for a student is the trust of his teacher over his ability and potential. That quiet assurance keeps him motivated to move forward with confidence. Charlie knew he had interest in music but his shut down after bullying had made him distant from his passion of music. But when Mr. Ajayi encouraged him to reconnect to music classes in school

And at that moment, he realised how being encouraged feels like as someone finally saw his ability and put trust on his potential. He even motivated Charlie to join Rugby with Nick as it would help him to be active and away from any negativity. When Charlie got diagnosed with mental illness specifically with an eating disorder, Mr. Ajayi assured him that he can fight with this too. He believed on Charlie's abilities once more. And after Charlie returned from clinic, feeling gradually better, Mr. Ajayi marked this change in his personality. This led Mr. Ajayi to suggest Charlie to be the head boy of their school in the following year. He always showed that complete trust in potential of

Charlie and that led Charlie to conquer all the obstacles with his will power.

## VII. CONCLUSION

An educator and leader with mindfulness and emotional intelligence plays role of guide and companion of the students. With their conscious efforts, they create safe and secure atmosphere for all the students where they feel seen and understood. In their presence, students understand that vulnerability is not weakness. Students realize that they can be clueless at times because their teachers are there as their backbone to support and guide them. They don't need to be under constant pressure to know and figure out everything as learning is a process not a timer to follow. Each student has different style to learn which only a mindful and emotionally intelligent educator can recognize and motivate students with their own style to move ahead.

A mindful and emotionally intelligent educator shapes the bright minds of students. Educators are called second parent of children so the natural affection is present in their behaviour towards the students. They feel the responsibility for students not only on the academic level but also for the overall development of students. They guide students on the right path for their bright futures. They recognize the real talent of students and motivate them to grow with confidence. This support encourages students to work even harder because when they are appreciated, it creates a positive atmosphere for students to move ahead with better mind set. Trust of an educator is so motivating for students that they move all the obstacles to prove their actual potential and to be grateful that when no one trusted them, it was their teacher who showed trust in their potential. And that creates a deep gratitude for lifetime. There are many teachers in the whole world, but only mindful and emotionally intelligent educators and leaders are remembered and celebrated for generations.

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