

The He(art) of the Matter

A Framework for Educator Well-Being, Connection, and Surthriving

This framework invites you to reflect on connection—to yourself, to others, to your values, to your passions, and to the living world around you. There is nothing to fix and nothing to complete.

CONNECTION

“We are wired for connection.” – Brené Brown

Where in your work do you feel most connected right now? Where do you notice distance or disconnection?

DISCONNECTION & SURTHRIVING

For educators, surthriving is the quiet act of staying connected to purpose, even when the system pulls us toward exhaustion.

What helps you stay connected to your purpose on the days when everything feels heavy?

NATURE

“The land knows you, even when you are lost.” – Robin Wall Kimmerer

Where do you feel most grounded or restored—through nature or a sense of place? What might it look like to bring a little more of that into your everyday life or work?

EARTH — Values & Grounding

“When we know where we stand, we can stand more gently.”

What values help you stand steady when things feel uncertain or overwhelming? Which of those values might need more protection right now?

FIRE — Passion & Purpose

“Do not ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive.” – Howard Thurman

What parts of your work still light you up—even a little? What helps protect that spark rather than asking it to burn endlessly?

AIR — Reflection & Clarity

“The pause is as important as the note.”

Where in your day or your work do you most need a pause right now? What would it feel like to allow that pause, even briefly?

WATER — Emotion & Relationship

“People will never forget how you made them feel.” – Maya Angelou

What emotions are flowing beneath your teaching or work these days?

HE(ART) — Integration

“Teaching is a daily practice of love.” – bell hooks

What does working or teaching with your whole heart mean to you at this moment in your life?

DREAMING FORWARD

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” – Eleanor Roosevelt

What is one quiet hope or dream you still carry for your work, your students, or yourself?