

# REFRAMING:

## The Power Of Positive Language

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# Objectives

- Introduce reframing and its relevance to teaching and learning
- Give some background on related information regarding how we learn best
- Practice with reframing
- Look at lessons that encourage positivity
- Share resources

# Where can we use reframing?



In the classroom



With friends and family

+

- Which of these words are positive?
  1. patient
  2. impatient
  3. can
  4. can't
  5. crisis



- When you think about the atmosphere in your classroom, which of these words best describe that atmosphere?
- Positive
- Negative
- Neutral
- I'm not sure.

- If you took a 50 point exam and got 40 correct answers and 10 incorrect answers, would you rather see your score as:
  - +40
  - OR
  - -10

# What happens in our brains when we are learning?





The human brain is a wonderful thing. It starts working the moment you are born, and never stops until you stand up to speak in public.



**SNARKECARDS**

# What stops us from learning?



stress  
anxiety  
embarrassment  
anger  
etc. (negative  
emotions)

- So... what can we do?



- What do you think of when you think of the word “crisis?”
- It has been said that in the Chinese language, the symbol for “crisis” includes the word “opportunity.”

# Changing words, changing minds

EXAMPLE	REFRAMED
problem	

EXAMPLE	REFRAMED
problem	challenge

# Changing words, changing minds

EXAMPLE	REFRAMED
mistake	

EXAMPLE	REFRAMED
mistake	lesson

# Changing words, changing minds

EXAMPLE	REFRAMED
disruptive	

EXAMPLE	REFRAMED
disruptive	enthusiastic/energetic/lively

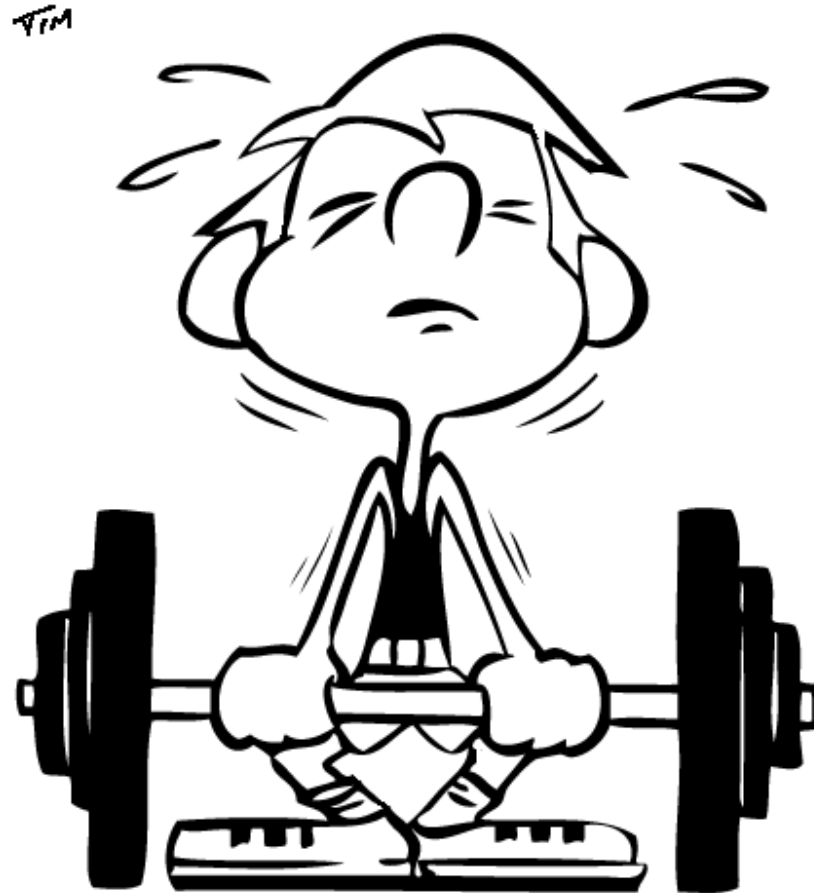
# Changing words, changing minds

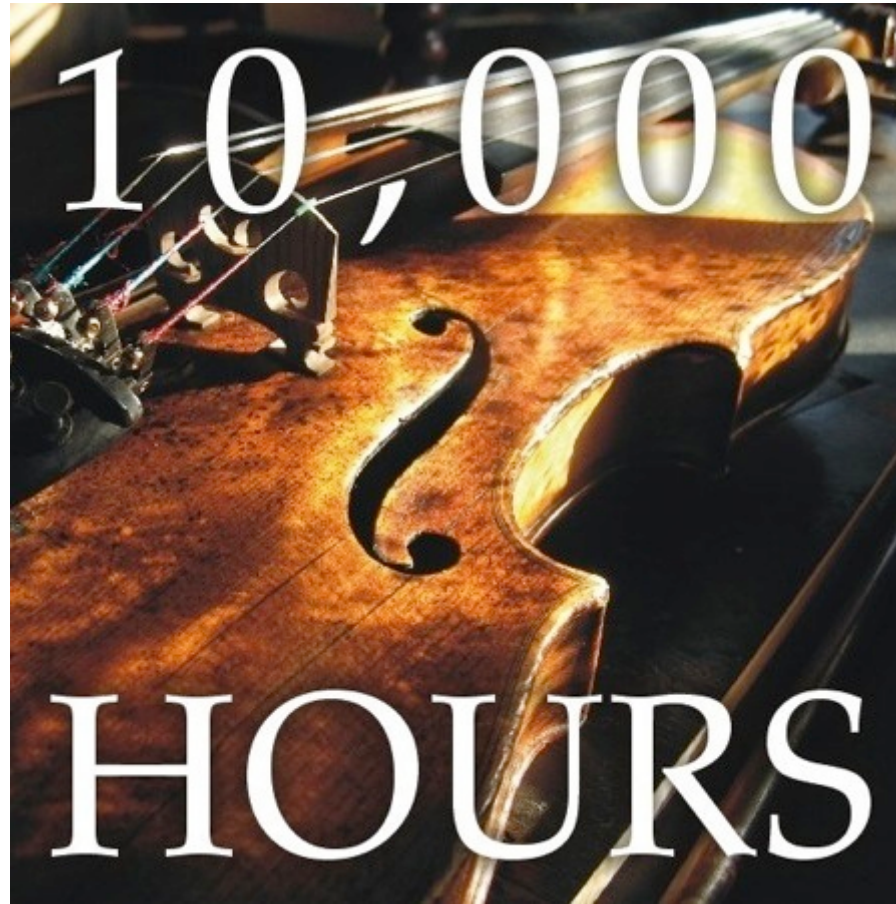
EXAMPLE	REFRAMED
impatient	

EXAMPLE	REFRAMED
impatient	Keen, eager, excited



# “Weak” student?







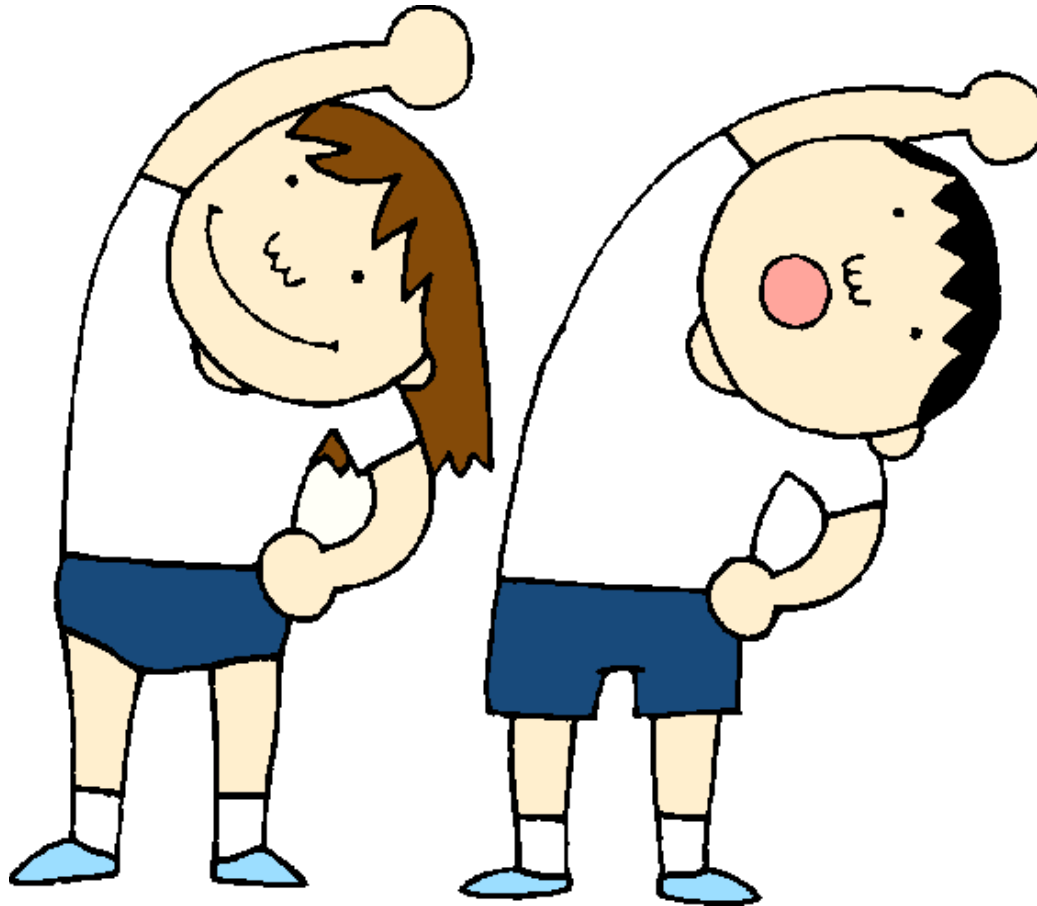
# Reframing: Matching

Original Statement	Reframe
1.Student: My classmate is too disruptive.	a. Teacher: That means you have a big chance to learn.
2. Student: This class is a real problem for me.	b. Teacher: You are simply cautious.
3. Student: I made a big mistake.	c. Teacher: You are being thorough.
4. Student: I'm way too slow.	d. Teacher: I can see he has a lot of enthusiasm and energy.
5. Student: I'm such a coward.	e. Teacher: This can be a useful challenge.

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# STRETCH!!!!



# Let's reframe:

- ▶ I'm hopeless at remembering phrasal verbs.
- ▶ I need more practice with remembering phrasal verbs.
- ▶ I need a good strategy for remembering phrasal verbs.

# Let's reframe:

- ▶ I don't get enough attention from the teacher.
- ▶ The teacher trusts me to do my work.



# Let's reframe

- *My questions are holding everyone up.*

# Let's reframe:

- ▶ I'm too old to learn English.

# Reframing brainstorm

1. Think of something negative you have thought, or that you have heard a teacher or student say or write, related to a class or a learning experience.

# Reframing brainstorm

1. Think of something negative you have thought, or that you have heard a teacher or student say or write, related to a class or a learning experience.
2. Now, reframe the negative statements with your ideas.

- Are you feeling more positive now?



# LESSONS TO ENCOURAGE JOY AND A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT



# SMILE!

- Walk around and greet people with a BIG smile
- When someone greets you, answer:  
*I'm great!      Wonderful!      Super!*  
*Excellent!      Fantastic!*



and give a BIG smile back!

# Circle of Compliments!

1. In groups, think of one true compliment for each person. For example:

*You've got a beautiful smile!*

*That's a really nice scarf.*

*I like your shoes.*

*Cool jacket.*

*You're always on time.*

*You're so nice.*

*You are really creative.*

2. Compliment each person.

- When you receive a compliment, you say, “Thank you.”

3. When you finish, remember and report each compliment.

- *Zarina said I look great today.*
- *Murat said I ask good questions in class.*





# My family

1. Draw a simple picture of your family.

As you draw, think of one nice thing about each person.



*This is my mom. Her name is Anna. She is a kind person.  
This is my brother. His name is Erik. He is a talented musician.*

2. Tell a partner about your family and listen to your partner talk about his/her family.
3. Look at your partner's picture, repeat the information back to him/her, and ask questions.
4. Change partners and continue learning about each other's families.

# Good things, right now

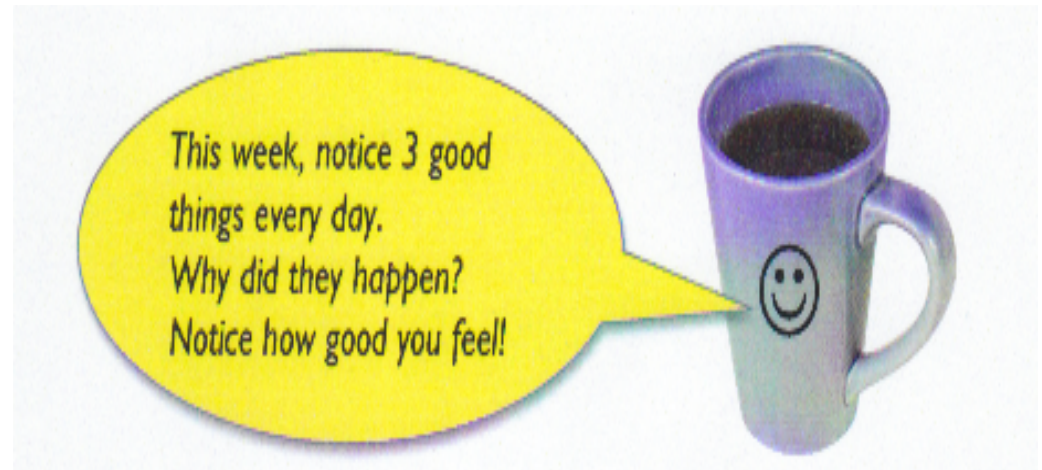
What are three good things in your life right now?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

*(It is sunny today! I'm meeting my sister after class. I feel great today!)*

Share your sentences with a partner and comment on each other's good things.

Change partners and keep sharing the goodness.



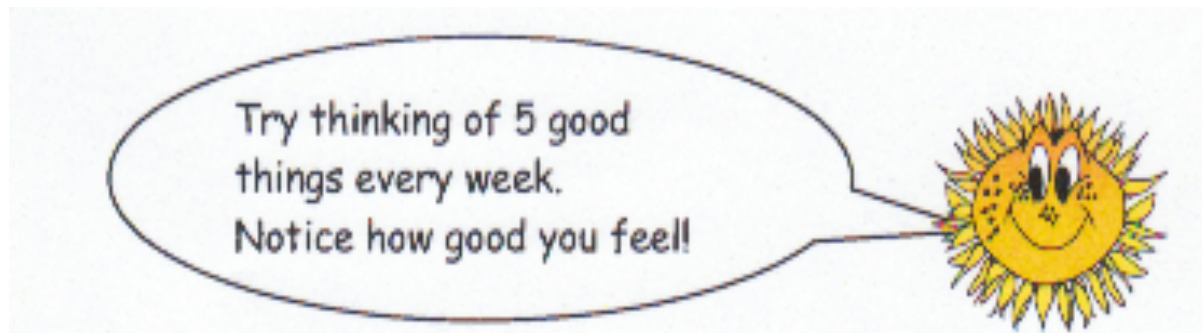
# My top five

What have been the five best things in your life this year?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Share with a partner and ask each other questions about the things you did, people you spent time with, things you learned, etc.

Change partners and keep sharing.



# Positive questions

- Purpose: to encourage students to focus on the positive things in life.
- 1. In groups, students come up with and write positive, empowering questions.
  - *What was special about today?*
  - *What am I really good at?*
  - *What am I looking forward to?*
- 2. Students look at all of the questions and individually write down the ones that most appeal to them, and share answers with the group.



Language Focus: creating questions - past, present, future

# Five things in common

- Purpose: to help learners raise awareness of the many things they can already do and reinforce their beliefs in their abilities.
1. Students make a list of all the things they can do – anything!
    - *I can skateboard.*
    - *I can cook lentil soup.*
    - *I can read a book in English...*
  2. In groups, students try to find five things in common that they can all do, and then they shout it out, “We can all play chess!”



Language focus: can

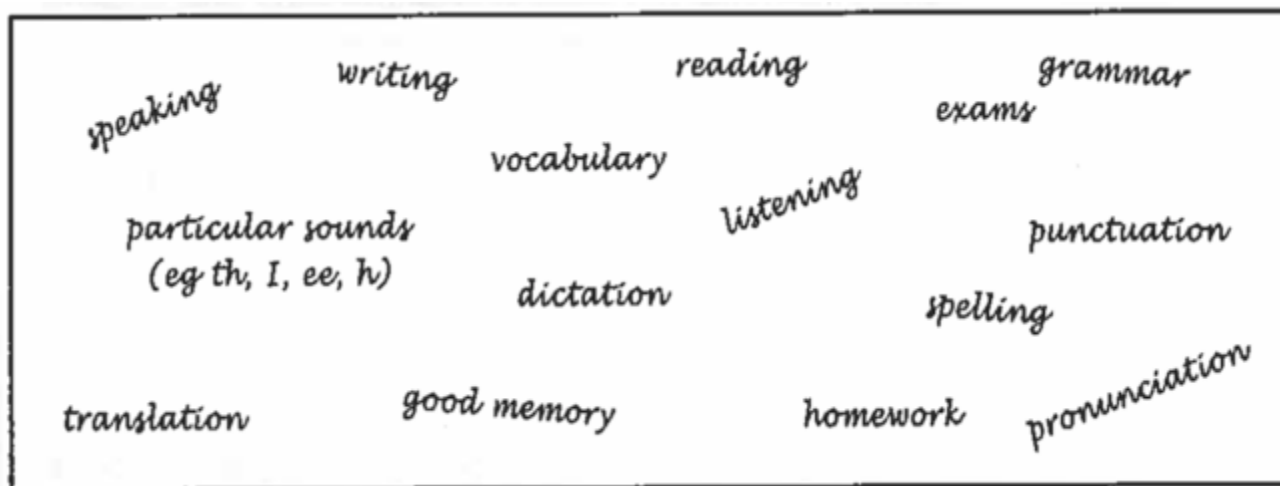
# Language learning strategies

Purpose: To help students become aware of their strengths as learners of English, and to give students new strategies for learning.

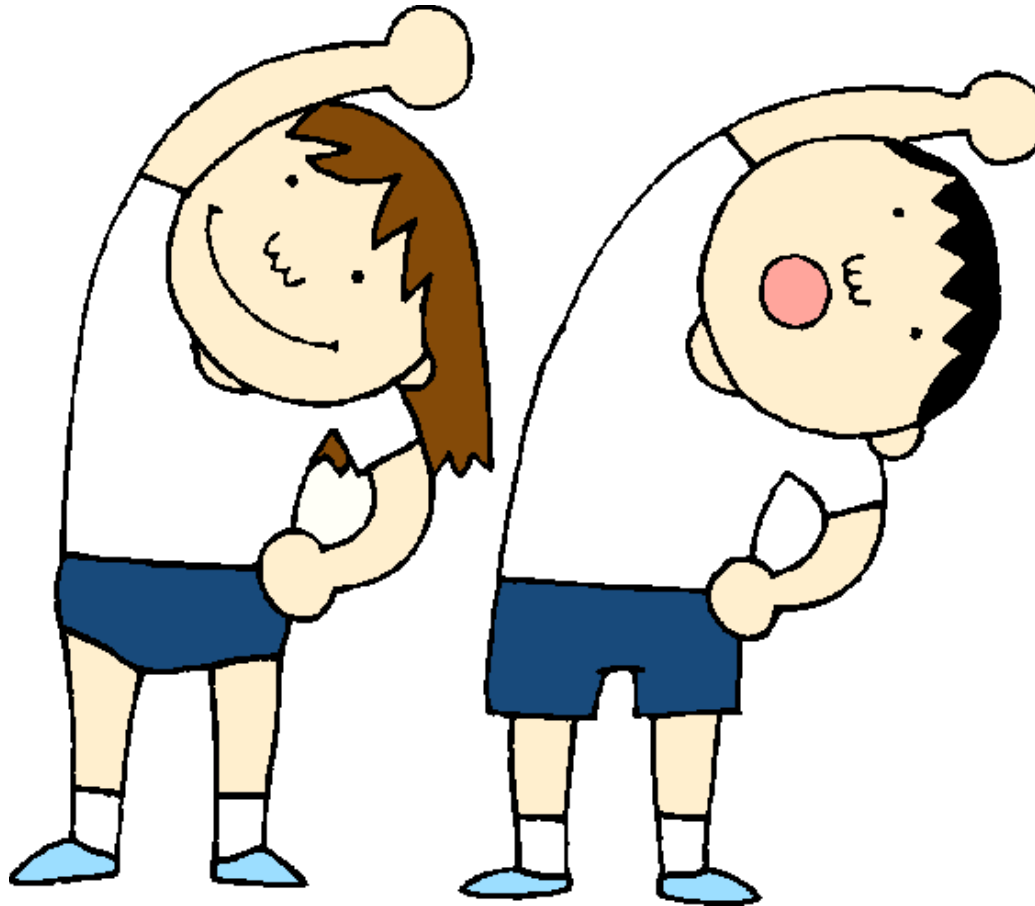
1. Brainstorm aspects of learning and using a new language (example below).
2. Individual students choose two or three that they are good at and make notes about why they are good at those things.
3. Students find others who share the same skill strengths and discuss strategies, learn from each other, then share with the whole group their strategies.



Language Focus: describing strategies, good at ...*ing*



# STRETCH!!!!



- “Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right.”

- Henry Ford



# Beliefs

- **Are important**
- **Determine your possibilities**
- **May become habits**

# Asclepius and the two travelers

Once Asclepius was walking in the countryside outside Athens when he met a traveler.

“Excuse me,” said the man, “I’m going to Athens and I’ve never been there before. Have you any idea what it is like?”

“Where have you come from?” asked Asclepius.

“Piraeus,” said the traveler.

“Well, what is it like there?” asked Asclepius.

“Oh, it’s a dreadful place,” said the man.

“Well, I expect you’ll find Athens just the same,” said Asclepius.

“Oh dear,” said the man, and he went on his way.

A short time later, Asclepius met another traveler.

“Excuse me,” said the second man, “I'm going to Athens and I've never been there before. Have you any idea what it is like?”

“Where have you come from?” asked Asclepius.

“Piraeus,” said the traveler.

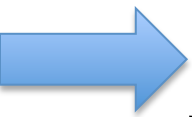
“Well, what is it like there?” asked Asclepius.

“Oh, it's a wonderful place,” said the man.

“Well, I expect you'll find Athens just the same,” said Asclepius.

“Oh good,” said the man, and he went on his way.

# Limiting beliefs -> liberating alternatives

- Purpose: to help **students** explore more positive alternatives to negative language.
  - 1. Remind students about Henry Ford's quote.
  - 2. Have students match the “limiting beliefs” with the “liberating alternatives.”
-  Language focus: using emphasis and stress to qualify what someone has said

# Limiting beliefs -> liberating alternatives

- My pronunciation is so bad.
- I need to work on my **overall** pronunciation. I do pronounce **some** things well.
- I'm stupid.
- I've made some mistakes and that's **part** of learning.
- I can't write essays.
- I'm still **learning** to write essays. I get better with every draft.
- I'm not good at grammar.
- I didn't understand **that** concept so I struggled with that exercise. I can get help and improve.

FAILING

...forward!

Approximately how many times did Thomas Edison fail before succeeding with the light bulb?

- 1?
- 10?
- 100?
- 1000?



# Famous “failures”

- Purpose: to reassure students that failure is a natural part of reaching success.
1. Write the names and/or display pictures of these people on the board:

Albert Einstein    J.K. Rowling  
Thomas Edison    Nelson Mandela
  2. Students say as much as they can about them and why they are/were famous.



# Famous “failures”

3. In groups, students match each of these statements with one of the people.
- A. This person spent 26 years in prison.
  - B. This person failed approximately 1000 times before his invention succeeded.
  - C. This person’s math teacher thought he was useless.
  - D. This person’s book was rejected 12 times before being accepted by a publisher.

Albert Einstein   J.K. Rowling   Thomas Edison   Nelson Mandela

# Famous “failures”

- Ask students if they can think of other successful people who might have failed on their way to success.
- Ask students what they might be able to learn from these examples.
- Ask students if they can relate these examples to their own lives, and if so, how.

# Classroom communication

- Can't... yet!
- Underline the words you DO know!
- Giving instructions

- If you want your students to stop talking, what would you normally say to them?
  - Don't talk
  - Be quiet

# Instead of:

Don't be late

Be on time.

Don't look

Close your eyes.

Don't fidget

Be still.

# Questions to think about...

- What are the benefits of using positive language in the classroom?
- What do you think about the idea of pointing out strengths rather than weaknesses?
- How can these ideas apply to error correction?

- We have spent some time together today with a focus on being more positive in our lives and in our classrooms, especially through language.
- Now that our time is over, how can we reframe “the end” to give it a positive twist?

# Here's to new beginnings...

THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR PARTICIPATION!  
STAY POSITIVE!





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