



## May I Have a Word Please?

I have been looking for a word or concept that says what people need to hear right now. A word that gives relief, comfort, permission, hope. A word that can help us in this phase of the pandemic when it feels like it's gone on way too long and that life will never be normal again. A word that will help make sense of the challenges of month 21 of the never-ending pandemic. A word that will help educators deal with a very different set of challenges with in-person schooling. A word that will help teenagers hold on a bit longer for help with their anxiety. A word for parents who are trying to help a child who's lost interest in school. A word for all of us to grasp and hold, as we search for tools to deal with one more mysterious COVID variant and a world that seems to be in a state of chaos and change.

Here it is. The word I've been looking for.

# enough

It's a very simple, ordinary word that you might scoff at when we're still in a state of uncertainty when emotions are high, moods are dark, needs are huge, and problems—are many. And a time when many people feel that what they are doing is not enough . . .

- I'm not giving my students enough.
- I'm not giving my children, my spouse, my parents enough.
- I'm not doing enough to combat . . . racism, global warming, gun violence.
- I'm not exercising enough.
- I'm not keeping up with my housework the way I want to.
- I'm not doing enough for (fill in the blank) \_\_\_\_\_

### But—

What if at a time like this, what we are doing is enough? What if we remove the word “not” and reframe our thoughts?

- What I'm able to give my students right now is enough.
- What I'm able to give my children, my spouse, my parents is enough.
- What I'm able to give to combat racism, global warming, gun violence is enough right now.
- The amount of exercise I'm able to do right now is enough.
- My house is clean enough.

Our capacity for action and interaction might be limited right now. Our internal battery may be running on empty. Perhaps if we focus more on what we can do, instead of all the things we cannot do right now, we will see that what we are doing is enough under the current circumstances. Focusing on “cannot” leads to burn-out, anxiety, and stress and helps no one. But each of us can do our small part. When we focus on what we can do, what we're able to do multiplies.

One high school history teacher shared that she decided to relax some requirements for her students this fall. She is focusing more on interaction, social engagement, and what's most important in the curriculum—and fun. She finds she is more relaxed and less anxious and so are the students. She sees less tension in their bodies and more willingness to engage in learning. This caring environment is exactly what the students—and their teacher—really need right now.



“Enough” is not about giving up or dumbing down. It's recognizing the best that can be done in this particular situation. Accept what is. You can still do a good job at those things. Give up on what you thought this year would be or should be. Focus on what matters most. See others as sensitive, stressed, and valuable people who are doing their best, too. “Enough” might be showing up for someone who is struggling and demonstrating that you see them and hear them. You don't have to fix anything, just show up with kindness. That is enough.

Decide on what is “enough” for you and let go of the rest. Set boundaries and don't get pulled into thinking you need to solve the whole grand situation around you. There is beauty and compassion in simplicity. There is calm in focus and releasing. And sometimes when we release all the tension and anguish inside ourselves—we become more than enough.

It's the word for 2022 . . .

Enough really is enough.

Diana Nielsen  
General manager, and scheduler  
Far West

**"Whatever you're doing for others is enough. We are constrained by an inconceivable set of circumstances. Although none of us alone can do enough to make the difference, together we are all doing enough to make a difference. And for now, that's what we can do."**

**Cheri Lovre, Crisis Management Institute**