



After exams, it's time to restore your equilibrium

Coming back to zero...

In July, once GCSE and A Level exams are over, both students and their families need to take time out and try not to worry about forthcoming exam results – or at least not for a month!

It's a time for "coming back to zero" – for restoring your equilibrium after a tiring and stressful period. It's both a mental and physical cleansing period where we consolidate our energy and focus on being with the people who matter most to us – friends, carers and family.

It's important as you replenish your stocks that you spend time with your energy pumps – by that I mean people who motivate you and make you feel energised and happy. Not energy parasites

A parasite latches onto a host and exploits it for valuable resources necessary for its survival. Some people are incredibly needy and can rob you of emotional strength, time and sometimes money. Surround yourself with people who give you a much-needed boost – not just for the summer, but for the longer term.

Allowing yourself to have times when you truly relax as well as focusing on being physically active over the summer is important. It could be playing a sport you really enjoy but haven't had time to do, cycling or walking over to meet friends or

just walking the dog.

If you're a student, it's essential to have a plan of what you want to do in September – take control. And if you don't get your grades – don't panic! Success is still available to you; you might just have to take a slightly longer route. There is always the Clearing system to find a college place and exam retakes if necessary.

One important lesson to learn if you don't get the results you wanted is what you need to do to differently, as you don't want to end up in

same position.

For parents, this can also be a tricky time – often you're in new territory. You may feel tempted to reward your son/daughter with a new phone, the latest gadget or money. Instead of giving them a material prize, plan on doing a fun activity together – no matter the outcome of the exam results. Your student put in the time, energy and effort into their exams – help them reduce their stress and anxiety by rewarding them with a happy 'experience' that will last longer and be more meaningful than anything material. It can be as simple as spending quality time together, going out for a special lunch or baking their favourite cake. There's also a longer-term reason for avoiding material rewards. Parents who use material goods to reward or punish their children may be setting those children up for difficulties in adulthood, according to a study from the University of Missouri and the University of Illinois at Chicago. Researchers surveyed more than 700 adults on their relationship with their parents and the rewards and punishments they received during several critical stages of childhood. The researchers found that when parents rewarded children with gifts for accomplishing something, gave gifts as a way to show affection or punished children by taking away a favourite toy or video game, the children were more likely as adults to believe that success in life is defined by possessing material goods or that acquiring certain products will make them more attractive. All the students I work with highly value the time their parents spend with them. Try and use this time to talk more, enjoy each other and if communication needs attention then talk about it together. Being honest, while always respecting each other's feelings, can work wonders.

The hard work is over for now – enjoy your summer holiday

Meet **MIRANDA BANKS** – a qualified psychologist and former Olympic performance coach from Petworth, who works across West Sussex – coaching students, sports and business people. She has also developed an interactive exam preparation programme, Smartivate™. Each month, she will focus on how we can fulfill our potential and go from being good to great! Contact Miranda on 01798 300666 or email info@excelinexams.com