

STORY HIGHLIGHT

ANCA CASTILLO'S "WHY WELLBEING IS IMPORTANT TO ME" STORY



Anca Castillo is a Co-Founder and Co-CEO at [DesignConvo](#) and has been providing design and collaboration support to the Wellbeing Collaborative for the past 2 years. As a storytelling facilitator & coach, Anca is hosting the Story Circles where she has been asking “how and why did wellbeing become important to you?” This is her story.

This can't be it. Can it?

So there I was, laying in bed at 1:30am starting at my ceiling whispering to myself, “**This can't be it. Can it?**”

My job included administering a portfolio of 40+ education programs. **I was a team of one. Just me.** I had entered the role full of passion, ambition, and big ideas along with the promise from leadership that if I did well, I could have additional support.

So...eager and full of faith, that is what I did. **I did everything in my power to do well:** I implemented new initiatives with the strategy of providing a personal human touch. I developed a whole set of 100+ webinar series, I built a summer research program and raised \$300,000+ to fund it, and I optimized a crucial scholarship process. **But, all that effort, time, and energy came with a cost.** And the cost was my wellbeing.

I was working 8am-5pm, would come home to be a mom to my young kids (*which is a whole other job*), and would continue working after they went to sleep until about 1am. Many times, I would wake up at 6am to take an international meeting or host international webinars before going into the office. *I never had time to workout or be active. I would forget to eat and skips meals. I had no time for the things that I loved like reading and baking. I was sick more often than I could remember (yet still working) and would find myself just feeling “blue” for no reason.*

Until one night, after closing my laptop at 1:30am, I found myself staring at my ceiling asking “**This can't be it. Can it?**” What I was asking was...**This can't be how life is supposed to be. This can't be how I am supposed to be feeling every day. This can't be what I want.** And it was in that moment that I realized how **NOT OKAY** I was; how burned out, tired, exhausted, unmotivated, and uncared for I was.

So the next day, in my meeting with my boss, (*we'll call him Mark*), I told him “**I am not okay and I cannot continue like this**”. I reminded Mark how much I was doing and how much I had accomplished, and explained to him how much it was affecting me. And with a lump in my throat I asked...“**Can I get some help?**” Now mind you, Mark was a really fantastic boss. He had always listened and supported my crazy big ideas. So imagine my surprise when Mark said “*You are a rock star and you are doing such a great job, but I won't be able to get you extra help.*” I was heartbroken. Because I knew that Mark could not do anything and because that meant that I had to do something. And for me that something was handing in my resignation 2 weeks later. *For me that was realizing how important my wellbeing was and choosing myself.*

There are many leaders like Mark out there. Leaders that care, that listen, and that try to create supportive work environments for their employees. **And when it comes to burn out and the idea of losing great employees, there are many leaders like Mark that don't have ways to address that.**

Which is why I am so excited for the work that the Wellbeing Collaborative is doing with Dr. Stephen Swensen with the upcoming [Leading with Kindness](#) program. Because I want to see leaders be empowered with strategies and tools to help make wellbeing a “yes, and” conversation.

Because I want to see a different ending to stories like mine.

[Join our upcoming Story Circles](#) to connect with others and share your story of wellbeing!

- Friday 4/19 1:00pm-2:30pm
- Thursday 4/25 10am-11:30am