

WELLNESS AT HOME

Counselor's Corner

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Dear Parents,

I'll start by praising you and your children. You've hastily adjusted your worlds to accommodate virtual learning and, likely, also working from home. In only a matter of days, your family has become adept at sharing space and schedules without reprieve. The adaptability of our school community is a testament that we can do hard things. Try to internalize that mantra as frustration and anxiety sporadically mount. We are doing what would have been previously believed to be inconceivable.

Perhaps the most difficult thing to maintain during change is a positive attitude. Even writing that sentence sounds, admittedly, trite. The truth is that our brains are programmed to be hypervigilant, meaning that they gravitate toward and embed the negative. This tendency attests to our survival skills so that we "remember" the bad in an effort to circumvent it. Unfortunately, it can keep us stuck in fear.

During this time, I encourage you and your children to actively seek the good. When I was running yesterday, I paid attention to the flowers and birds chirping, proof of the constancy of nature and that spring is undeterred. Help your children notice what is still reliable and positive. That is not discounting their fears, but overriding them.

Be well,

Cindy Frederick, MS
Upper School Counselor

POSITIVE READING:

- [How To Keep the Greater Good in Mind At This Time](#)

This article from UC Berkeley reminds us that altruism is a human reaction to tragedy.

- [From the Washington Post: An AP Teacher Writes Letter To High School Seniors](#)

This letter aptly articulates the heartbreak of high school and college seniors. It also provides empathy and solidarity to the youth who lost their last semester together.

PRACTICING GRATITUDE



Gratitude is a key way to cultivate what psychologists call "Learned Optimism." We can train our minds to seek what gives us joy and peace. Challenge yourself and your child to identify **100** things you're each grateful for. The more creative and specific you are will yield to a greater boost of happiness.

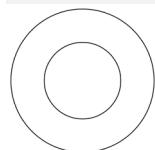
Better yet, keep a daily gratitude journal of **3 Good Things**.

A QUICK BOOST:

I HIGHLY recommend this short film by Louie Schwartzberg!

[Gratitude: A Short Film](#)

IDENTIFYING CONTROL



A quick exercise that I use with students to mitigate anxiety is the "Circle of Control." Fill the outside ring with worries that are ultimately outside of your control. The inside ring allows you to concentrate on concerns that you CAN control. This visual tool will help you clearly divide the two and *let go* of what's out of your realm.