



Dear Parents,

***HOW TO RAISE CHILDREN WHO CARE ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE – HuffPost, June 2018***

***Empathy is a skill parents can cultivate***

As deep-seated divisions, vitriol and disturbing news fill headlines, many people are wondering what happened to the qualities of empathy and kindness in our society.

In the same vein, many parents are wondering how to raise children who will be a force for love and goodness in the face of bitterness and hate.

HuffPost spoke to psychologists, parents and other experts about how to instil empathy in children.

***Talk About Feelings***

“The gateway to empathy is emotional literacy,” said Michele Borba, an educational psychologist and the author of numerous parenting books, including [UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World](#).

A simple way to foster emotional literacy is by promoting face-to-face communication in the age of texting and smartphones. “Digital-driven kids aren’t necessarily learning emotions when they pick emojis,” Borba said. “Make it a rule in your house to always look at the colour of the talker’s eyes because it will help your child tune in to the other person.”

Another key aspect is teaching children to identify their own emotions early on. “Use emotional language with kids. Say things like, “I see you’re really frustrated,” or, “I see you’re really mad,” Laura Dell, an assistant professor at the University of Cincinnati’s School of Education, told HuffPost.

“Before children can identify and empathise with other people’s feelings, they need to understand how to process their own feelings,” she continued. “Once they can identify their own emotion, they’re better able to develop those self-regulation skills to control their own emotions – and then take the next step to understand the emotions of others.”

Ravi Rao, a paediatric neurosurgeon turned [children’s show host](#), believes parents should teach feelings as much as they teach things like colours and numbers.

“You’ll see parents walking through the park and taking every opportunity to ask, “What colour is that man’s jacket? What colour is the bus? How many trees are there?” he explained. “You can also practice emotion by saying things like, “Do you see the woman over there? Does she look happy or does she look sad?”

Rao also recommends playing a “guess what I’m feeling” game at home by making happy or sad faces and asking your children to identify the emotion. “You just get their brains in the habit of noticing the signals on other people’s faces.”

Once children have a better sense of emotions and how things make them feel, you can ask them about the emotional perspectives of others. “You can ask things like, “How do you think it made Tommy feel when you took his toy?” or, “That made Mommy really sad when you hit me,” said Borba.

***Use Media To Your Advantage***

Watching TV or reading books together present another great opportunity to cultivate empathy, according to Madeleine Sherak, a former educator and the author of [Superheroes Club](#), a children’s book about the value of kindness.

“Discuss instances when characters are being kind and empathetic, and similarly, discuss instances when characters are being hurtful and mean,” she suggested. “Discuss how the characters are probably feeling and possible scenarios of how the situations may have been handled differently so as to ensure that all characters are treated kindly.”

***Set An Example***

Parents need to walk the walk and model empathy themselves, noted Rao. “Children will pick up on more things than just what you say. You can say, “Pay attention to other people’s feelings,” but if the child doesn’t perceive or witness you paying attention to people’s feelings, it doesn’t necessarily work,” he explained.

Rao emphasized the importance of parents using language to convey their own emotional states by saying things like, “Today, I’m really frustrated,” or, “Today, I’m really disappointed.” They can practice empathy when role-playing with dolls or action figures or other games with children as well.

It's also necessary for parents to recognise and respect their children's emotions, according to Dell. "For children to show empathy to us and others, we need to show empathy to them," she explained. "Of course it's tough as a parent trying to get multiple children to put on their clothes and shoes and get out the door to go to school in the morning. But sometimes it makes a difference to take that pause and say, 'I see it's making you really sad that we can't finish watching 'Curious George' this morning, but if we finished it, we wouldn't be able to make it to school on time, and it's really important to get to school on time.'"

"It doesn't mean you have to give in to their wants all the time, but to recognise you understand how they feel in a situation," she added.

### ***Acknowledge Children's Acts Of Kindness***

"Parents are always praising children for what grades they got or how they did on a test. You can also boost their empathy by letting them know it matters to develop a caring mindset," said Borba, noting that when children do things that are kind and caring, parents can stop for a moment to acknowledge that.

Say, "Oh, that was so kind when you stopped to help that little boy. Did you see how happy it made him?" explained Borba. "So your child realizes that caring matters, because you're talking about it. They then begin to see themselves as caring people and their behaviour will match it."

### ***Expose Them To Differences***

"Parents have to help their children grow up and thrive in a diverse society through education about and exposure to others who are different, whether culturally, ethnically, religiously, in physical appearance and ability or disability," Sherak said.

There are many ways to expose your children to the diversity of the world – like reading books, watching certain movies and TV shows, eating at restaurants with different cuisines, visiting museums, volunteering in your community, and attending events hosted by various religious or ethnic groups.

"It is also important to follow up such visits and activities with open discussions and additional questions and concerns, if any," said Sherak. "It is also valuable to discuss differences in the context of our children's own environments and experiences in the family, at school, in their neighbourhoods, and in the larger community."

"We also just have to eliminate jokes about race and culture from our homes," he added. "Maybe back in the day making jokes about race like Archie Bunker seemed acceptable and part of what the family did when they got together on holidays. But that actually undermines empathy if the first thought a child learns about a race or group of people is something derogatory learned from humour. It can be very hard to then overcome that with other positive messages."

### ***Own Up To Your Mistakes***

"If you make a mistake and behave rudely toward someone who messes up at a store checkout, for example, I think you should acknowledge that mistake to children," said Dell. After the bad moment, parents can say something like, "Wow, I bet she had a lot on her hands. There were a lot of people at the store right then. I should've been a little kinder."

Acknowledging and talking about your own lapses in empathy when your children are there to witness them makes an impression. "Your child is right there watching, seeing everything," Dell explained. "Own up to moments you could've made better choices to be kinder to the people around you."

### ***Make Kindness A Family Activity***

Families can prioritise kindness with small routines like taking time at dinner every night to ask everyone to share two kind things they did, or writing down simple ways to be caring that they can all discuss together, said Borba. Playing board games is another way to learn to get along with everybody.

Borba also recommended volunteering together as a family or finding ways that your children enjoy giving back.

"If your child is a sports guru, then helping him do arts and crafts with a less privileged child might not be the best match, but you can find other opportunities for face-to-face giving that match their interests," she explained. "Help them realise the life of giving is better than the life of getting."

Lickona, a development psychologist, recommended holding everyone accountable to the family values at weekly family meetings centred around questions like, "How did we use kind words this week?" and, "What would help us not say unkind things even if we're upset with somebody?"

"When children slip into speaking unkindly – as nearly all sometimes will – gently ask for a 'redo,' he said. "What would be a kinder way to say that to your sister? Make it clear that you're asking for a redo not to embarrass them, but to give them a chance to show that they know better. Then thank them for doing so."

Another piece of advice from Lickona: Just look around. "Even in today's abrasive, angry, and often violent culture, there are acts of kindness all around us. We should point these out to our children," he said. "We should explain how kind words and kind deeds, however small – holding the door for someone, or saying 'thank you' to a person who does us a service – make a big impact on the quality of our shared lives."

### **GRADE 0 NATIVITY**

On Tuesday our Grade 0 boys delighted the audience members with their African Christmas Nativity. Tonight they will be performing for their parents and siblings. I am positive this audience will enjoy every minute too. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sandra van Wyk and the Grade 0 team for the time and effort they have put into this lively production.

### **GRADE 0, 2019 ORIENTATION MORNING**

On Saturday morning we welcomed a new 2019 intake to St Peter's. The boys thoroughly enjoyed their morning and I have heard that many have refused to remove their "I am a St Peter's boy" badges – even wearing them to bed! Thank you to Zoe van Onselen and her team of moms who helped to make our new families feel welcomed.

### **GRADE 2 VISIT TO SUMMERFIELD RETIREMENT VILLAGE**

On Friday, 16 November our Grade 2 boys will be bringing Christmas cheer to the elderly at Summerfield Retirement Village. This is always a lovely outing which the old folk thoroughly enjoy. A detailed letter will be sent home with the Grade 2 boys.

### **THANK YOU**

I am sure many of you have noticed our beautiful Christmas Tree in the foyer, as well as the decorations which give our school a real festive feel. Special thanks are extended to Felicity Vieira and her sisters, Gretty and Bronté, for offering to set this up for the Boys JP this year.

### **LIBRARY**

Next week the boys will have their last library lesson for the term. Please return all library books so that I can do my annual stocktake. Many thanks.

**Annette Strouthos:** Librarian

### **GOLDEN MOMENT**

While teaching her class a Grade 0 teacher sat down on one of their small chairs, which creaked. A boy immediately said: "Don't sit on that chair, you are too big, and it's going to break!"

I am so looking forward to our Nativity tonight. It really is the best start to a festive season.

Warm regards,

**Kenda Melvill-Smith**

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### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Monday 12 November</b>            |  |
| <b>Tuesday 13 November</b><br>No DCS |  |
| <b>Wednesday 14 November</b>         |  |
| 7:15                                 | Grade 2V boys to attend Senior Prep Chapel Service |
| 8:00                                 | Chapel (birthdays 12-18 November)                  |
| 13:00-13:30                          | Grade 2 Choir                                      |
| 18:30                                | PA meeting   |
| <b>Thursday 15 November</b>          |  |
| 13:00-13:30                          | Grade 1 Choir                                      |
| <b>Friday 16 November</b>            |  |
| 9:00-11:00                           | Grade 2 boys visit Summerfield Retirement Village  |

**LIGHTNING CONDITIONS**

During lightning weather conditions, a warning siren will sound - to signal lightning strikes within our area radius. When this occurs, pupils have enough time to go into the nearest building. They are to remain undercover until the 'all clear' siren sounds.

**Remember Rabali** (Head of Admin & Health and Safety)



**PA NEWS**

**HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP IN 2019?**

St Peter's is proud to have a thriving Parents Association and parent body who are always willing to assist in organising and participating in the various PA and school events.

Should you wish to volunteer for a school or PA initiative next year please click on the link:

<https://goo.gl/forms/qxKDr35N8hpGNuRp1>

We look forward to hearing from you

**St Peter's Prep Schools PA**

**SUNSET CAROLS – SATURDAY, 1 DECEMBER**

**A TASTE OF SOME OF THE CHRISTMAS MARKET GOODIES THAT WILL BE ON SALE!**

**OLD BOYS NEWS - LEADERSHIP POSITIONS FOR 2019 FROM THE GRADE 7 CLASS OF 2014**

Congratulations to the following boys:

**St Peter's College**

**Kosmas Joannou** - Head Boy

**Mario Joannou** – Prefect

**Mfumo Baloyi** - Prefect

**Yuvish Premlall** - Prefect

**Pretoria Boys High**

**Justin Cross** - Head Boy

**St John's College**

**Luke Sawkins** - Head of Hodgson House; Captain of 1<sup>st</sup> Team Water Polo; Captain of Swimming; Dux Scholar award for Grade 11; Academic Honours

**Tad Sithole** - Captain of 1<sup>st</sup> Team Basketball

**St Stithians College**

**Andrew Jackson** – Head Boy, Captain of 1<sup>st</sup> Team Basketball

**Tim Basson** - Head of Committees

**Ben Servant** – Head of Projects and Public Relations

**Michaelhouse**

**Gomo Mangena** - House Prefect - Founders

**Gareth Warburton** - House Prefect- East

**Hilton College**

**S'bonelo Phungula** - Head of Spirituality

**Jeppe**

**Dylan Fenthum** - Cross Country Captain; Prefect for 2019

**KES**

**Ethan Hughes** - Head of Sport Robinson House

**St Alban's College**

**Kian Turner** - Head of Osche House

**Brad Hooker** - Captain of 1<sup>st</sup> Team Water Polo

**Rhys Fulford** – Prefect; Co Head of Discipline; Co Captain of 1<sup>st</sup> Team Water Polo

**Brad Leonard** - Deputy Head of MacRobert House; Head of Academic Support (Boarding)

**\*Please note that there may be other Leadership positions that have not come through to us yet but St Peter's Boys Prep is sharing the exciting news that we have received so far.**