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ST PETER'S GIRLS PREP SCHOOL

FROM THE RECTOR

HELP WITH OLD BOYS ADMIN

We are hoping to find volunteers who can assist with building up the Old Boys database. This would involve contacting Old Boys, updating email addresses and so on. If you are interested and have a little time, please contact Hilary Nothard on hnothard@stpeters.co.za. She will be able to furnish further detail.

Questions for the Rector:

If anyone wishes any further information on any topic, please feel free to contact me at school or at groyce@stpeters.co.za or dradloff@stpeters.co.za.

Greg Royce
(Rector)

FROM THE HEADMASTER

This post written by Ozan Varol, speaks to everything we are trying to achieve at St Peter's, but more importantly, it gives some sound recommendations to parents as to how best to support our philosophy.

A kindergarten teacher was walking around the room to check each child's work as they drew pictures. "What are you drawing?" he asked one student.

The girl said, "I'm drawing God."

The teacher, expecting to hear butterflies and rainbows, was shocked at this deviation from the standard curriculum: "But no one knows what God looks like."

The girl replied, "They will in a minute."

This is the typical juxtaposition: The curious and inquisitive child, and the conformist teacher. Our school systems were designed to churn out compliant industrial workers, not to inspire individuals to dream big and challenge the way things are. School taught us obedience and fitting in, so we could properly operate the assembly line in a dingy factory for six days a week.

The Industrial Age is long gone. This is the Information Age, but our school system is lagging far behind. The workers we're still producing to thrive in the Industrial Age wither in the Information Age.

During a recent speaking engagement, I received a question from a parent on how to undo some of this damage caused by the education system. Specifically, he asked how he could cultivate curiosity and critical thinking in his children. I'm not a parent so, in one sense, I'm underqualified to say anything on this topic. But I'm a professor and, over the past seven years, I've learned a few things for encouraging students to think differently.

What follows is a list of six questions parents typically ask their children. I'll explain why parents should stop asking these questions and what they should ask instead.

1. "What did you learn today?" vs. "What did you disagree with today?"

The cliché question "What did you learn in school today?" reinforces the traditional conception of education: Put your mouth on the spigot of knowledge. Drink deeply and regurgitate it on demand.

Here's the thing: A willingness to question knowledge is far more important than the ability to receive and retain it. Important dates in the Civil War and the capitals of the fifty states will all be forgotten soon enough. Once ingrained, however, the ability to challenge the status quo and to question confident claims—whatever their source—will remain.

2. "What did you accomplish this week?" vs. "What did you fail at this week?"

We live in a society that stigmatizes failure. Growing up, failure got us grounded or put us into the principal's office. As adults, we fear failure to a pathological degree. Behind every canvas unpainted, every goal unattempted, every business unlaunched, every book unwritten and every song unsung is the looming fear of failure.

This isn't an endorsement of failure for the sake of failure. Failure, by itself, isn't enough. You must reflect on it, learn from it, and improve on your next attempt.

3. "Here's how you do that." vs. "How would you solve this problem?"

When a child comes to us with a problem, our initial instinct is to step in to deliver a quick and efficient fix. Resist that instinct. Don't show your hand. Let them find a solution on their own. The process involved in finding the answer is far more important than the answer itself.

When you spoon-feed the solution to your children, you're acting like a personal trainer who "helps" a client by lifting their weights for them. But when you let your children formulate a solution, you're letting them exercise their critical-thinking muscles. And just like muscles, the brain must be exercised through reps and sets to grow and mature. After your children solve the problem, ask them to solve it in a different way. Let them see that there's often more than one way of framing the problem and more than one solution to it.

4. "That's just the way it is." vs. "Great question. Why don't you figure out the answer?"

Children are masters at asking questions. They're moved, not by a desire to impress, but by genuine curiosity. They stare at the world, wrapped in awe, and take nothing for granted. They approach life, not with the assumption that they know (or should know) the answers, but with the desire to experiment and absorb.

Why do we stand still if the world is spinning?

Why does the ground feel cold if the Earth's core is so hot?

Do butterflies poop? (I don't know. Do they?).

These questions annoy many adults who believe that everything important has been settled already (That's just the way it is).

Instead of stifling your children's curiosity, nurture it. Encourage them to ask questions and remain curious about the world. It's this process of open-minded inquiry that has resulted in every major human breakthrough. The longer your children can resist the strong temptation to replace curiosity with complacency, the better off they will be.

5. "You can't do that." vs. "What would it take to do that?"

Don't tell your children that their ideas are crazy or infeasible.

Imagine if a young Einstein had been silenced when he posed this seemingly crazy hypothetical: What would happen if I chased after a beam of light? This question could have been reflexively dismissed as absurd by a busy teacher or an annoyed parent. Its resolution ultimately culminated in the special theory of relativity.

Open up possibilities instead of closing them off. Encourage seemingly crazy ideas by engaging with your children: "What would you need, young Albert, to chase after a beam of light?" "What would the beam of light look like when you arrived?"

6. "Did you make a new friend today?" vs. "How did you help someone today?"

The first question treats school like a superficial networking event (How many business cards did you collect?). The second one encourages forming meaningful connections and developing a spirit of generosity. It sends a far better message: Always be on the lookout for opportunities to help others.

It may have occurred to some of you that this post is a Trojan Horse. These questions are as much for you as they are for children.

Nibe nempelasonto emnandi!

Darrel Webb (Headmaster)

FROM THE JP ACTING HEAD

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

This week, in order to celebrate World Environment Day, the girls enjoyed a day of *Outdoor Classroom*. The girls were encouraged to use their five senses as they explored the natural world, stimulating their imagination and sparking their sense of wonder. Research shows that play is the most effective way for children to learn life-skills and discover their interests and passions. Being amongst nature increases cognitive performance and, at the same time, decreases stress levels.

This opportunity to explore and learn about their natural environment encouraged the girls to think of learning as an ongoing process and something that is not only done in the classroom. It sparked their curiosity and creativity. It encouraged problem solving and critical thinking skills. The girls developed grit when they needed to attempt some things repeatedly, before they could work out a solution to a problem. With support, they learnt how to manage risks and were given opportunities to become self-starters. Maths concepts were covered and they learnt about the natural and physical world, engineering concepts and Art.

There are countless benefits to playing out doors and it is a fundamental part of being a child. The joy and wonder that our Outdoor Classroom provided was a significant part of what makes childhood so magical and was enjoyed immensely by both our staff and girls.

GRADE 2 NETBALL DEMONSTRATION

The Grade 2 Netball Demonstration will take place on Wednesday, 12 June. We look forward to showing the Grade 2 parents the girls' newly acquired netball skills. It will take place at the Girls Prep netball courts at 11:00. Parents may take their daughters home after the demonstration is over. Girls who are not taken home will be supervised until the usual pick-up time. Extra-murals will continue as usual.

'BIRDS AND BEES' TALK

A reminder that Wendy Wentzel, our educational psychologist, will be talking to parents on ways to educate our little ones, appropriately, on the conversations around sex education during our Junior Prep Coffee Morning. This will take place in the Girls Junior Prep Hall at 07:30 - 08:30.

BIRTHDAYS

The following girls will receive their birthday cards next Tuesday at 08:00 in the chapel. Parents of these girls are welcome to attend.

Leano Oliphant, Chloe Freemantle, Gemma Bruinders

Have a wonderful and restful weekend!

Trish Attlee (*Girls Acting JP Head*)

THANK YOU

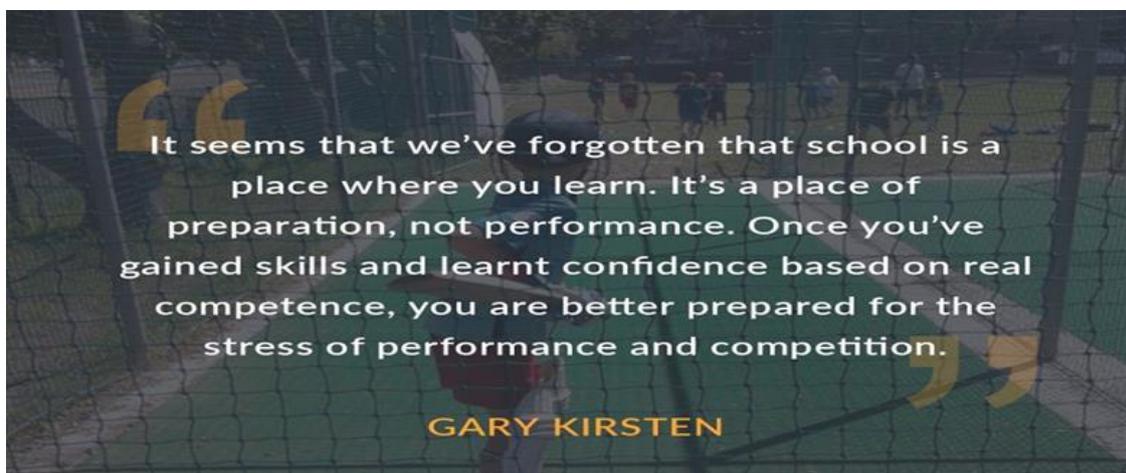
Thank you very much to the St Peter's community for helping my family and I when our home burned down. We really appreciate all the clothes, equipment, groceries, vouchers etc.

God bless you all.

Tebogo Legodi

FROM THE SPORTS DESK

Food for thought . . .



Andrew Steyn
(*Director of Sport*)

REMINDER

If you use the campus to walk your dogs, please remember to pick up the poop!



OUTDOOR CLASSROOM DAY IN PICTURES



