



HILTON COLLEGE

A letter from  
**the Head**

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Dear Parents,

I am a passionate South African. I have the privilege of working with young men who are set to change the world. When asked by contemporaries as to the prospects of our country into the future, I have an easy answer which is resoundingly positive given the phenomenal young people whom I encounter daily. My experience of working in both the developing corners of South Africa and in the more affluent suburbs has reinforced my sense of our promise.

Against the backdrop of all our issues, of which there are many, I - along with many colleagues in education - believe that the future of Africa is exciting (although perhaps a little turbulent) given the energy and expertise many of the young people whom I encounter daily will bring to our collective solution-table.

Our young people are our hope and our promise.

I have chosen to dedicate this chapter of my working life to the education of young men in particular. The energy and peculiarities of young men present an exciting place from which to influence a small sector of society now and into the future. Young men become fathers who can create loving families; loving families can create upright citizens who will work towards a just society with equal opportunities for all... the positive ripple effects of upright young men will travel into every corner of our shared lives.

It is with this in mind that ongoing injustice in our country, in particular, is both disheartening and angering. Our murder rate, at approximately 28 000 people per annum, suggests we are living in a war zone; our rape statistics are unspeakable; our incidents of domestic violence often as a result of alcohol abuse make the label of being South African difficult to wear.

To be sure, we need a change of heart and a rejuvenation of a shared moral code.

The early part of my journey at Hilton has required of me to listen and to learn, two skills I am still developing. My early career experience of working in a South African context outside of my sheltered suburban upbringing taught me the nuance of listening first and challenging second. I think this is a journey we, as South Africans, are all on.

In this listening, I have learnt that there are always many sides to a story; many perceptions and realities to the same event. The Nigerian author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, in her acclaimed TED talk, warns against the *danger of a single story* and it is with this in mind that listening and imagining another's point of view and experience is fundamental to our collective progress and well-being as we work at sharing and building our future in our beloved South Africa.

Your making the inspired choice to send your son to Hilton and to give him the gift that this experience is, may not be taken for granted. It is with this understanding that our educational offering will consistently make calculated demands of your sons to stretch themselves through a variety of experiences - some more pleasant than others - with the express aim of his arriving at an end product prepared for the adult world. At Hilton, our aim is to develop future leaders in civic life, in business, in parliament, in educational institutions, in service organizations. Many of our old boys are testament to this strong tradition.

The construct of school is deliberate.

Here, we do not tolerate prejudice; we do not brush over indiscretion to avoid embarrassment; we do not parade our privilege; we do not shy away from the challenges of growing up in South Africa at this time in our history.

Here, we value and celebrate integrity; we identify with the high calling of service; we revel in sportsmanship; we grow gentlemen who will know appropriate behaviour in appropriate places and at appropriate times.

Here, we draw a distinction between our school construct and that of a tertiary institution. Here the teachers act as parents and role models, guiding your young men towards their promise. Here we require you, as parents, to work alongside us in supporting our maintaining of guidelines to ensure young men of stature and principle emerge at the end of their five years with us.

In the education landscape our nation is being challenged with a number of harsh realities and our level of tolerance for 'otherness' has declined; a truly disturbing picture. We have recently learnt about a number of incidents of racist comments and behaviours at a number of schools in close proximity to ourselves.

At Hilton we have a zero tolerance against racism in any form. As a proudly South African school, we choose to lead our community boldly as an inclusive living example of a promised future governed by our country's constitution.

My promise remains that as a school we will continue to work at educating your sons as broadly and as challengingly as possible to ensure that they will be change agents of their, and our, shared future. We have an extraordinary opportunity of embracing the exuberant energy of young men in our boys' school construct, such that we can develop men of character and principle to tackle the ills in our society as a united 'tribe' of young South Africans with many of the requisite skills at their fingertips to effect the change we wish to be.

Once again, my journey is the richer for your companionship and support.

Sincerely  
George  
Headmaster

..... Deeply Traditional. Refreshingly Contemporary .....

