



HILTON COLLEGE

A letter from

The Head

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Dear Parents,

This is an adaptation of my address to the boys last week at Assembly.

There is a technique in the English Language called Juxtaposition.

Juxtaposition is a literary technique in which two or more ideas, places, characters, and their actions are placed side by side in a narrative or a poem, for the purpose of developing comparisons and contrasts.

In literature, juxtaposition is a useful device for writers to portray their characters in great detail, to create suspense, and to achieve a rhetorical effect. It is a human quality to comprehend one thing easily by comparing it to another. Therefore, a writer can make readers sense “goodness” in a particular character by placing him or her side-by-side with a character that is predominantly “evil.” Consequently, goodness in one character is highlighted by evil in the other character. Juxtaposition in this case is useful in the development of characters.

In our world there are many examples of Juxtapositioning: In South Africa this is most evident in the distribution of wealth. Those who have juxtaposed to those who do not have:

- Sandton next to Alexandra
- Mount Edgecombe next to Inanda
- Constantia next to Khayelitsha

The one looks infinitely better against the backdrop of that which is inferior. The world is full of these examples.

I talk about this juxtaposition because you and I have to learn to navigate these juxtapositions in life.

Living in Sandton when a fellow South African lives in Alex is not wrong nor is it your fault, indeed it is your privilege - and you had nothing to do with it - you happened to have been born to the parents you have.

Enjoying the privilege and the good fortune of having certain things is also not wrong, once again, it is your good fortune and your privilege.

So what...

Well, there is a potential challenge: You may very easily fall into the trap of becoming a prisoner of privilege - someone who looks down on someone else who doesn't have what you have, someone who thinks less of those who happen to have been born into poverty when you were fortunate enough to have been born into wealth...

We have to be very careful about this.

A letter from **The Head**

Success in life generally comes from being deliberate at something. Learning a new skill takes time but it also takes determination, focus and energy. You will all know from practising Maths, Sport or Music that there are often frustrations when you try and master a particular stroke, a particular scale or a particular method, but once you get it right you are often set for the next challenge. It becomes quite rewarding. You also then begin to bank these skills into muscle memory and you no longer have to think about them as determinedly as before.

It is with this practise in mind that I want to link the idea of Outreach and service to others. Given my fear of you and I becoming prisoners of privilege, focussed only on ourselves, I believe we need to give more time, focus and effort to outreach and service of others.

Here's the thing - I believe every one of you has the potential for greatness. Greatness is not necessarily measured in material things - the greatest people are actually those who have lived as selflessly as is humanly possible.

At the risk of being disappointed, I am challenging every boy to sign up voluntarily to one of the current outreach programmes even when it is not necessarily the turn of your House. I believe we can begin to wear the label of being the most generous school in the country. I believe each one of you has the potential to give of yourself, given the privilege you have inherited.

A number of projects were begun last year by boys too, and these are to be applauded. Let's not stop there. Let's make the art of giving become our mantra. Let's give even when it hurts. Let's build muscle memory around giving: giving of our time, of our resource, of our person.

Some people may suggest that our efforts in serving may amount to patronizing acts towards those who do not have. I disagree. We become what we practise. Building a nation of givers who will make our world a better place is surely one of the greatest goals of any education worth it's salt.

Can we shift the general negatively perceived label of being one of the most expensive schools in our country to being the most generous school in the country?

The juxtaposition of what we have, in comparison to what our neighbours have, is striking. We are privileged to enjoy this resource - and we can. However, the juxtapositioning will not magically disappear and as such we need to practise the art of giving.

There are various outreach initiatives already on the go at Hilton and many boys participate. I am determined for these initiatives to thrive and to grow. We have great boys from great families able to do great things. What a privilege to lead your sons in this.

Sincerely

George