



HILTON COLLEGE

A letter from

The Head

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Dear Parents and Boys of Hilton,

Great Teachers

I had three.

I'm not sure how many you may have had, but I had three teachers who left an indelible influence on my life.

What this online experience has exposed is the social aspect of learning that no amount of knowledge and information can ever replace. There are many of us who will espouse the benefits of technology and the opportunities it presents for progress in the education landscape and there is proof of this as seen in the recent weeks; where would we be without our devices, WiFi, TEAMS, Zoom and House Party?

But, as the novelty wears off, the reality of learning in somewhat of a vacuum, away from the real dialogic essence of a classroom, begins to emerge.

The cut and thrust of engaging with others in the learning experience IS the learning experience. Although the technology seeks to replicate this, it simply cannot. We are human and our humanity needs to feel, to touch, to live an experience.

Great teachers get this: they create and recreate, again and again, that space that affords all students the experience of making and remaking their learning; through agreeing and disagreeing; through challenging and accepting; through both silent reflection and through robust debate. Great teachers confront and demand attention and commitment, whilst finding ways to show their humanity by being vulnerable themselves as they are prepared to learn alongside their students.

I had many teachers but perhaps only three great ones. The great ones shaped me; they stretched me, they challenged me, they supported me, they infused a sense of belief in me.

I chose to enjoy their lessons. I enjoyed the cauldron of ideas they presented, I enjoyed their ability to connect with me and others, I marveled at their passion for their subject and for their commitment to helping me make meaning of my journey.

I still remember them.

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At this time of online distance learning, the great teachers are still doing their great work.

But the virtual classroom is less compelling. The human need to feel and to live suggests that the online experience remains a shadow of the real thing in a virtual world.

And so, whilst we make the most of this current virtual time, I believe the sometimes yet oft awkward construct of school as we know it remains a remarkably important place to engage in learning that demands responses from our entire being. The social engagement in the classroom, guided by a great teacher, is a precious experience that is not easily replaced.

I want to salute our great teachers today. These are women and men who infuse hope, who connect with young men in a way that challenges and nurtures. Hilton College is blessed to have many such teachers.

Young men, you may not recognise the efforts of your teachers during every lesson but I urge you to consider their commitment to ensuring your development. Teachers enjoy the reward of seeing you mature into men of stature; it remains one of the privileges of our profession. So, take a moment to consider the efforts made over the past few weeks to deliver lessons in a totally new format and with very little training. Your teachers are rockstars!

One day, when you gather at your reunions, you will reminisce about those teachers who had an impact on your life.

I had three. I remain in contact with them. They taught me how to live and to learn.

I salute our teachers at this time.

Regards,

George Harris
Headmaster