



THE RIDGE SCHOOL



From the Headmaster's Desk

February 2018 #3

Dear Parents

During the past few weeks, we have been reminded of what primary school sport is really all about. When all too often emotions run high and common sense and even common decency can be lost in the heat of what is, after all, just a 'little boy moment', it is so gratifying to know that respectful etiquette and manners, good sportsmanship, collegial consideration and gracious hospitality can still be the order of the day.



In this context, it was a real pleasure for us to receive two emails from Pridwin parents complimenting The Ridge boys, our parents, coaches and hospitality staff teams on all that was just so 'right' between the two schools as demonstrated on and off the field of play during recently contested cricket matches.

To quote one of the parents, "My son was really moved by your boys' show of sportsmanship and it made a profound impact on him. He even asked if the Ridge had a high school that he could attend as they were so nice! Pridwin lost the game to The Ridge, and still it has gone down as the 'best match ever' in my son's mind. I give full credit to your boys for the great kindness, sportsmanship, maturity and determination they showed. It was a wonderful Saturday. Thank you."

Still with cricket but along slightly different lines, it was a special joy to see our Rose Field absolutely wall to wall with eager Grade 0, 1 and 2 boys, and their equally enthusiastic dads (and quite a few mums) during the early part of the same Saturday morning. The fact that they arrived at 07.00 was in itself impressive but it was the sheer delight on the faces of these little chaps that captured again so much of what the early introduction to games of this nature ought to be all about.



13 Things Mentally Strong Parents Don't Do

The following article was sent through to me a while back and serves as an interesting prompt on the subject of modern day parenting and being alert to what needs doing as we equip and empower our precious children.

Amy Morin is a psychotherapist and the author of *13 Things Mentally Strong Parents Don't Do*.

"Raising mentally strong kids who are equipped to take on real-world challenges requires parents to give up the unhealthy — yet popular — parenting practices that are robbing kids of mental strength.

Of course, helping kids build mental muscle isn't easy — it requires parents to be mentally strong as well. Watching kids struggle, pushing them to face their fears, and holding them accountable for their mistakes is tough. But those are the types of experiences kids need to reach their greatest potential. Parents who train their children's brains for a life of meaning, happiness, and success, avoid these 13 things:



1. They Don't Condone A Victim Mentality

Getting cut from the soccer team or failing a class doesn't make your child a victim. Rejection, failure, and unfairness are part of life. Rather than allow kids to host pity parties or exaggerate their misfortune, mentally strong parents encourage their children to turn their struggles into strength. They help them identify ways in which they can take positive action, despite their circumstances.

2. They Don't Parent Out Of Guilt

Guilty feelings can lead to a long list of unhealthy parenting strategies — like giving in to your child after you've said no or overindulging your child in the holidays. Mentally strong parents know that although guilt is uncomfortable, it's tolerable. They refuse to let their guilty feelings get in the way of making wise choices.

3. They Don't Make Their Child The Centre Of The Universe

It can be tempting to make your life revolve around your child. But kids who think they're the centre of the universe grow up to be self-absorbed and entitled. Mentally strong parents teach their kids to focus on what they have to offer the world — rather than what they're owed.

4. They Don't Allow Fear To Dictate Their Choices

Keeping your child inside a protective bubble could spare you a lot of anxiety. But keeping kids too safe stunts their development. Mentally strong parents view themselves as guides, not protectors. They allow their kids to go out into the world and experience life, even when it's scary to let go.

5. They Don't Give Their Child Power Over Them

Kids who dictate what the family is going to eat for dinner, or those who orchestrate how to spend their weekends, have too much power. Becoming more like an equal — or even the boss — isn't healthy for kids. Mentally strong parents empower kids to make appropriate choices while maintaining a clear hierarchy.

6. They Don't Expect Perfection

High expectations are healthy, but expecting too much from kids will backfire. Mentally strong parents recognize that their kids are not going to excel at everything they do. Rather than push their kids to be better than everyone else, they focus on helping them become the best versions of themselves.

7. They Don't Let Their Child Avoid Responsibility

You won't catch a mentally strong parent saying things like, "I don't want to burden my kids with chores. Kids should just be kids." They expect children to pitch in and learn the skills they need to become responsible citizens. They proactively teach their kids to take responsibility for their choices and they assign them age-appropriate duties.

8.They Don't Shield Their Child From Pain

It's tough to watch kids struggle with hurt feelings or anxiety. But, kids need practice and first-hand experience tolerating discomfort. Mentally strong parents provide their kids with the support and help that they need in coping with pain so their kids can gain confidence in their ability to deal with whatever hardships life throws their way.

9.They Don't Feel Responsible For Their Child's Emotions

It can be tempting to cheer your kids up when they're sad or calm them down when they're angry. But, regulating your kids' emotions for them prevents them from gaining social and emotional skills. Mentally strong parents teach their children how to be responsible for their own emotions so they don't depend on others to do it for them.

10.They Don't Prevent Their Child From Making Mistakes

Whether your child gets a few questions wrong in his math homework or he forgets to pack his cleats for soccer practice, mistakes can be life's greatest teacher. Mentally strong parents let their kids mess up — and they allow them to face the natural consequences of their actions.

11.They Don't Confuse Discipline With Punishment

Punishment is about making kids suffer for their wrongdoing. Discipline is about teaching them how to do better in the future. And while mentally strong parents do give out consequences, their ultimate goal is to teach kids to develop the self-discipline they'll need to make better choices down the road.

12.They Don't Take Shortcuts To Avoid Discomfort

Giving in when a child whines or doing your kids' chores for them, is fast and easy. But, those shortcuts teach kids unhealthy habits. It takes mental strength to tolerate discomfort and avoid those tempting shortcuts.

13.They Don't Lose Sight Of Their Values

In today's fast-paced world it's easy to get wrapped up in the day-to-day business of homework, chores, and sports practices. Those hectic schedules — combined with the pressure to look like parent of the year on social media cause many people to lose sight of what's really important in life. Mentally strong parents know their values and they ensure their family lives according to them.

Dates to Diarise

We are delighted to bring to your attention that we have secured two very exciting guest speakers to join us here at The Ridge during the month of March.

- Michael Charton will be sharing his *My Father's Coat* story in our Nicholson Hall on the evening of Thursday 5th April. The evening will start promptly at 18.00 and will last for around two hours. "Michael tells the South African story as it has never been told before: An emotional and provocative story tracking two hundred tumultuous years through the eyes of five, inter-connected and controversial protagonists: Mzilikazi, Kruger, Rhodes, Smuts and Mandela. A beautifully crafted story providing new order and meaning to our notoriously complex past, at a time when our history has never been more relevant."
- Nene Molefi will be addressing a Ridge audience in late March / early April (TBC). We are looking forward to filling the Nicholson Hall between 07.15 and 08.15 as she shares about her book, [*A Journey of Diversity and Inclusion in South Africa*](#). "Over the past two decades, Nene has gained a reputation both locally and internationally as a thought-leader in diversity and inclusion, values-driven leadership and transformation. She has authored numerous publications. She is a member of the Diversity Collegium,

and is an associate lecturer on Transformation Strategy for the Stellenbosch business School. She is a sought after speaker for conferences around the world.”

There will be no charge for either of these talks. We would encourage parents to put aside time in your diaries to join us to listen to and enjoy their stories and to receive first-hand some of the wisdom as offered by both of these renowned speakers.

Junior Primary Upgrade

It is good to report that the demolition phase of our Junior Primary Upgrade project is now almost complete. There were a few rather nostalgic moments for some of us as the old JP, built and opened in 1972, came, quite literally, crashing down. Of course, with every farewell there is an anticipated new beginning and so, as the final clean-up takes place during the next few days, we can anticipate seeing the beginnings of the new building rising out of the footprint left by the old one.



Our Grade 7 Headmaster's Leadership Programme

Many parents will have gathered that, as part of a very full and busy senior year experience, our Grade 7 boys are involved in and sincerely committed to being part of our Headmaster's Leadership Programme. The boys are encouraged to come up with and then tackle four carefully chosen assignments that provide them with opportunities to develop their leadership skills. The four leadership components that they are expected to get involved in are: Service to School or Community; Development of Self; Physical Development and Organizational Skills.

Many of this year's Grade 7's have set to the task with real enthusiasm and an excitement to not only stretch themselves into new adventures of learning but also to offer themselves in service to others. Once a boy has successfully completed two projects within two of the four components he is awarded his Blue Leadership badge at a Friday morning assembly. We look forward to sharing some of what our senior boys come up with as they reach into the community and into themselves in ways that will enhance and develop a range of new skills that will expand their respective 'boys into men' learning experiences.



A Final Word

The Ridge boys and staff enjoyed another important opportunity to host the girls and teachers from Auckland Park Prep School and St Katharine's for the annual Ash Wednesday Service on the morning 14th February.

The day also happened to double up as this year's Valentine's Day celebration. As such, in taking the opportunity to combine a message of Lent to that of Love, my challenge to us all, at this time of self-reflection and introspection, is to find opportunity to examine the way we share our love with those around us.

In an age when the word Love has been so distorted, sullied and defiled in so many ways, there is still so much that is right, natural and profoundly good about the pure, unconditional love that families and indeed friends are able to share and live out together. But it is the love that we are called on to demonstrate when people threaten or invade our lives in 'unlovely ways' and in circumstances and places when instinct sees us reaching for a range of other types of emotions. All it takes is a change of heart and, perhaps, a chance, during the days ahead, to 'share the love'.

All the best and may God's continued blessings be yours.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Stanley', written in a cursive style.

Richard Stanley
Headmaster