



Dear Parents

28 January 2022



On my initial arrival at Ridgeway College, I was immediately impressed by the proud display in our college foyer area of our mission, vision, and values. In any great school throughout the world, creating space to encourage self-awareness and self-regulation in students is paramount in forming young adults that will add value and significance to their world of work.

I would like to share some notes from Brett Borbely’s examination of the role that self-awareness and self-regulation play in our children managing their emotions:

Self-awareness is knowing what we are feeling and why we are feeling it. Self-regulation is intentionally choosing how to respond to those emotions.

In his book, *The Art of Rhetoric*, Aristotle wrote, ‘Anyone can become angry – that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way – that is not within everyone’s power and is not easy.’ This kind of power requires self-awareness and self-regulation. Not everyone currently may have this awareness and regulation of self, but this skill of emotional intelligence (EI) is learnable.

Self-awareness can easily be the most taken for granted EI element. We simply assume we are in touch with our emotions, but the truth is the reaction to a feeling is often well and truly enacted before we stop to consider the intensity and catalyst of our feelings. In other words, we jump straight to reacting to a situation before we take time to understand it - there is a biological reason for this. It is because our prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain used for high-level analytical decision-making can be blocked from receiving information when our amygdala goes ‘on alert’ and cortisol starts pumping in response to a ‘threat’. This naturally occurring process keeps us alive and safe when the threat is real and we do not have time to pause before running away, but unfortunately, our amygdalae cannot always tell the differences between a life-threatening situation and anxiety-ridden or unjust experiences. Therefore, we often allow our primitive survival instincts to ineffectively navigate complex experiences that demand sophisticated and nuanced decision making.

To strengthen our self-awareness and self-regulation skills, we must tune into our bodies. Dr. Brené Brown often speaks of vulnerability as having a ‘tremor’. What she is saying is that our body has physical cues that can, if we are paying attention, alert us to how we are receiving an experience. Are we getting angry because one of our core values is being questioned, or because we perceive a great injustice, or do we sense lack of psychological safety? Are we laughing because we are joy-filled and grateful or are we uncomfortable and embarrassed? The more we become familiar with our body’s cues, the better we will be at identifying the catalyst for our emotions. And once we have this knowledge, we can make a conscious decision on how we want to move forward.

Some strategies for learning this type of body awareness are:

- Practicing mindfulness – take 5 minutes a day to practice mindfulness. The free Smiling Mind app and many other mindfulness apps are great resources for learning this practice. Other great apps include Mood Kit, Pause: daily mindfulness, and Happify.
- Journaling - this reflection can help you become familiar with how your body uniquely responds to different emotions.
- Breathing - deep breathing is the most effective way to take our amygdala out of alert-mode and allow for messages to enter our prefrontal cortex, where we can make the best decisions.
- Values - take time to determine what your top two or three core values are and what actions are aligned with them. Clearly knowing your values enables you to know when someone has breached them and why you might be triggered.
- Read - read and discuss literature that helps your child to better understand these self-awareness and self-regulation skills in an age-appropriate way. The younger we can start these conversations, the better for our children.

Responding, instead of reacting, requires us to pause, to be aware of our emotions, knowing our values and then making deliberate choices on how we want to act. Being able to do this in every moment and situation will require the highest levels of self-awareness and self-regulation, and it will take a lifetime for each of us to fully develop, but the process of trying, failing, and refining will lead us to strong emotional intelligence and better relationships with ourselves and others.

References

Borbely, B., 2022. [Online]

Available at: <https://theparentswebsite.com.au/the-five-aspects-of-emotional-intelligence-self-awareness-and-self-regulation/>

YOURS IN EDUCATION

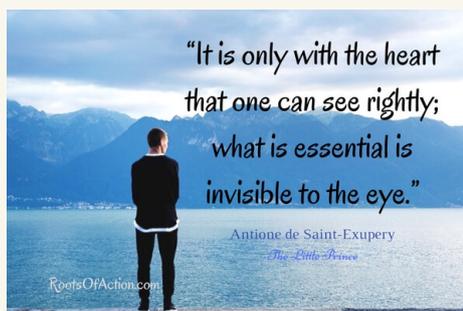
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When you know yourself, you are empowered. When you accept yourself, you are invincible.

PictureQuotes.com



Self-awareness gives you the capacity to learn from your mistakes as well as your successes. It enables you to keep growing.

Lawrence Bossidy

Upcoming Dates

- WED 2 FEBRUARY - INTER SCHOOLS ATHLETICS (STANFORD LAKE)
- FRI 4 FEBRUARY - ATHLETICS (LTT HIGH SCHOOL)
- TUE 8 FEBRUARY - BLOOD DRIVE (RIDGEWAY COLLEGE)
- FRI 11 FEBRUARY - GRADES 8 & 12 CAMP OUT (RIDGEWAY COLLEGE)

You are enough

Believe In Yourself....

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LIFE SCIENCES - 'UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL'

Our Grade 11 Life Sciences students are learning about micro-organisms and recently grew their own bread mould! They really enjoyed viewing their organisms under a magnifying glass and identifying the different types of fungi!

The fun with microorganisms isn't over yet. We will be growing our own bacteria and completing vaccine simulations in the upcoming weeks.

Ms T Wilmans
(HOD Sciences)



ATHLETICS (LOUIS TRICHARDT HIGH SCHOOL – FRI 21 JANUARY)

This afternoon/evening event was a 'friendly', hosted by LTT High School. Our children did themselves and Ridgeway College very proud at the Athletics Meet this past Friday. The size difference between our two schools was certainly not reflected in the results on the day.

Our high school of 200 pupils ended the event achieving a staggering 192 medals:

50 – Bronze

70 – Silver and

72 – Gold

Best junior girl track athlete was awarded to Marilyn Munyoka.

Best junior girl field athlete - Marilyn Munyoka.

Best junior boy track athlete was awarded to – Unarine Netshitange.

Our best female athlete of the day was Kabelo Fambe and

Our best male athlete of the day was Muchavaleri Bandi.

Congratulations to all of our athletes, your commitment and determination produced some excellent results.

We look forward to our next meeting on Wednesday 2 February.

CONGRATULATIONS



OUTREACH PROGRAM

Our first outreach program of the year involved collecting sanitary pads for those who cannot afford them. Many girls miss school as a result of not having it. Ridgeway College decided to step in and help!

We have managed to collect over 85 large packs of pads to hand out as part of a larger collection done through a local organization. This is an ongoing initiative and sanitary pads or cash donations may be given to Miss. Wilmans throughout the year. A huge thank you to everyone who supported this initiative.

*Together
We Can!*

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