



A Holiday Message from TMS Head of School, David Young

Tenderness: Where Strength Begins

When I was a boy, my mother would come and tuck me into my bed each night. She would rub my hair and tell me she loved me. She wasn't a big story teller – that was my dad's job – she was quiet and comforting.

As with all young boys, sometimes worries plagued my day. Small things from an adult's perspective but all-consuming when you are young. I would never speak about those worries during the day. I would wait until my mother came and tucked me in. I waited until she rubbed my hair. I'd wait for that wave of safety to waft over me and then I'd begin, "Mum..."

Now I need to be clear, during the day my mother could be pretty strict. To a young boy she could seem like a bit of a nag, even a little harsh. If I wanted to laugh, or talk about big things or have fun, I went to my dad. I could resent some of the things she would stop me from doing or playing. But at night, when tucking me into bed she was never strict, always gentle and kind...tender.

That tenderness afforded me the safety to share all that was in my wee boy's heart, which was sometimes bursting from a need to be assured everything was going to be OK. Her soothing would draw all the worry out of me, sleep would come and I would emerge the next day feeling strong.

I'm a grown man now, with a family of my own but I still seek out my mum when things burden my heart. And she is still tender with me, soothing my worries and anxieties. I still emerge feeling stronger because of her care.

Our theme this year has been 'Tenderness', that multivitamin of good things – gentleness, kindness and love. I know that to some it continues to be considered a weak word, or at least not a strong word. But that is not my experience. My experience is that behind almost every example of strength in my life, there is first tenderness.

As we approach our Holiday Season, we do so after a long and difficult experience with the global pandemic. We have each faced worry and stress in our personal lives and also as members of a School Community. We have grappled with problems and challenges, restrictions that have been frustrating. We have seen things from many different perspectives. Each of us has held worries in different ways and to different levels.

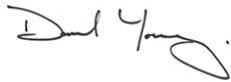
But we arrive at the holidays strong, tired for sure, but in a strong place. Our students, your children, have learned throughout and have been joyful and vibrant in their learning. They have embraced the hurdles COVID-19 has put in their way, overcoming and pushing forward. It has been no small feat. Our teachers have felt your care and encouragement almost daily and we hope that we have been available to you when you have needed us.

We have done all this because tenderness has been evident in our relationships. Most often we have begun with care, even in the hardest of conversations. We have tried to absorb each other's worries and so have felt strong and supported to move forward.

This holiday may not be quite the same, I know that. We cannot gather easily with those we love. We may feel distant from our families and friends. But you will be with your children. And in amongst the chaos and noise, there will be moments of quiet and closeness. And your children will absorb your tender attention and strength will be planted there.

From all of us at TMS, we wish you a very Happy Holiday.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Young". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

David Young
Head of School, TMS