



BELLAVISTA

NEWSLETTER

DEVELOPING MINDS

2 of 2021



Holding hearts and developing minds

Each year at Bellavista we pick up a word and that word becomes our hash tag – our point of reference anchoring our focus as we develop character, take a position and deepen our ethos. This year, we are zooming in on #grace.

In 2020, we marked our hearts with “*Be the I in Kind*”. 2021 is the year to **hold hearts**.

How do you hold hearts? With grace.

The Miriam Webster dictionary offers comprehensive definitions for the word grace, including to confer dignity or honour on another or to offer thanks or express gratitude, especially for food. Grace speaks to a special privilege or favour. It refers to a given talent or blessing; politeness and good manners or charm; a pleasing appearance; and ease in movement. Grace is about extending kindness towards others who aren't getting it right. It is nuanced with the notion of mercy. Grace is an instance of kindness. It is about being considerate or thoughtful. It's a way of being and an action to take. Grace is *Kindness 2.0*.

The close of December saw many people take to their various platforms to express the 'gifts' that the pandemic brought. Earnest authors made every effort to persuade us to look for the good: the positive in the chaos; the 'reset'; the opportunities for some; and, the time we were given to use differently. They were right to. Looking for the good gives human beings hope. A disciplined mind might explore the notion and genuinely find the positives and proclaim these loudly. It is true that there are always swings and roundabouts or 'silver-linings' in this life. Hindsight always gives us space to see these. In the fog, the same observations evade our sights. Some could embrace the contemplations as they sat home alone, but many hearts were wracked and torn. Dark clouds of anxiety, anger, loss, grief, uncertainty, fear and despondency lurked in the recesses of our minds, individually and collectively. Lingering loudly in the air like thunder as it rolls, these emotional truths were not for journaling on New Year's Eve, or even after the clock turned. Brave ones dared to venture a "happy New Year" greeting as January rolled in but by and large, such cheer was obliterated from all email preludes that rather went straight to the business of the communication. A few brave souls wished others a "happier" New Year. Light banter undoubtedly followed; or not.

In our global village, it's not a happier year. In fact, without all our rites of passage, the clocking of calendar time seems foreign to our inner rhythm. It is another year to face the storm and find our way together.

The gift of 2020 was the opportunity to develop resilience – bounce back. We got through the year together. The gift of 2021? Grit. Grit is perseverance for the long haul in the face of adversity and through a plateau says Angela Duckworth. Grit requires deliberate practice. Howard Gardener reminds us that it needs to be 'good grit' where we look out for each other not only ourselves. Tal Ben Har studies who succeeds despite the hardship, not how things fail. The subjects he finds are gritty individuals.

As we closed the year, we held to that virtue, but our levels of deep fatigue were no longer secret. Each could do what they could do to "get to the end of this foul year". Rest recouped some physical energy as it always does, but depletion of our inner reserve remains. We are tired still.

How does this all tie into grace and holding hearts? We started the year last January, looking to develop a spirit of kindness within our children by bringing it front of mind. As we entered our shared crisis together in March 2020, we knew to be kind, and we were. This commitment held us through our year and our entire community became wrapped in a culture of kindness, far beyond what any planned social and emotional learning exercise could achieve. Herein was the second gift of the crisis. The backdrop or context of the call to be kind was tested it to its limit and gave scope to exercise it where we could never have engineered one. In the storm, we held hands (figuratively speaking, of course). Listen to this podcast about our Bellavista journey to know more about our experiences: [kindness](#).

The new year demands a deeper commitment to our culture of care - within our school community, nationally and globally. We must give from a reserve we may not believe we have. It is grace that will enable this next push. We need to see or acknowledge one another and in all our dealings, extend respect and dignity. We need to infuse our daily living with gratitude, for our food yes, but for the many blessings that surround

us. We need to teach our children that they are privileged and build a compulsion within them to leverage for change for others who are not. We act knowing that we might never know what someone else is dealing with, and treat each other with politeness and gentleness, even if we aren't recipients of the same. We should forgive those who make mistakes that affront us and judge less in these times. We must respect ourselves enough to present self respect to the world. We must look for opportunities for deep, meaningful acts of kindness.

If you are a parent at Bellavista School, you will see these ideas filter down into your home. These actions are not for the children alone, but form a code of expected behaviour between us as adults in our little community. Please join us. Be kind. Extend grace. Hold on tightly and let's go through this next white water rapid together.

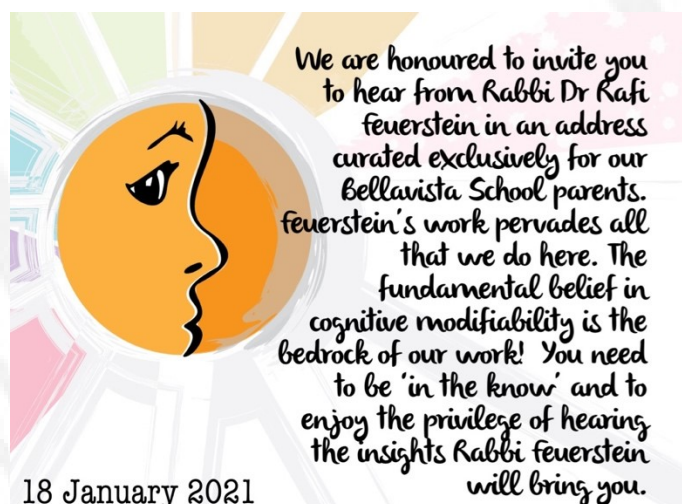
Nuts and bolts

Per the communications over the weekend:

- The campus is **open for Gr1-7 on 18, 19 and 20th January** to connect relationally with the children and to set up devices and equipment for remote learning between 21 January and 12 February.
- **Grade R will orientate on 19 and 20th January** before going offsite too.
- Your child's therapists will communicate around access to therapy with health professionals as events unfold and the regulations become clearer.

Take away from yourself that this is 'home schooling'. It is not. We have a planned and guided curriculum to complete. Challenging as distance is, we have a road map and we will curate the learning as your child needs and can manage it. The teachers and therapists are experienced and have goals for your child across the full duration of the school year. Work with the pace that is set and keep communication positive and open.

- Set multiple alarms to log on and attend our closed parent event this evening: Rabbi Dr Rafi Feuerstein will address our parents and we believe it will give you hope and assurance that you are doing all you can for your child on a level that is world class in terms of education and intervention.



18 January 2021

19:30 per ZOOM: 99269268580/290445

Please join us and allow his message to deepen your hope.

Note from Bursar's Desk:

- Please be reminded that if you selected to pay annually, a payment of R179,940.00 was due on the 15th January 2021.
- If you selected to pay termly, a payment of R63,896.00 is due.
- Monthly payments are by debit order arrangement, please contact me for a copy of the instruction.

Many thanks, Amanda.

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Alison Scott (Mrs)
Executive Principal