



February 2022

"Those who have a 'why' to live, can bear with almost any 'how'."

- Viktor Frankl

St. Cat's Counseling

Letter to Families

If someone asked you 'why' you do what you do each day, would you have an intentional answer to give? Knowing why we do what we do provides us with value and meaning, helping us to feel motivated and strong. As quoted above, Viktor Frankl knew well the importance of the 'why,' willing himself each day to find meaning in his existence in concentration camps. Although the circumstances are incomparable, I can't help but pull from Frankl's lesson and his call to the 'why' as we enter Catholic Schools Week. In a world still struggling with something out of our control, we need to reflect on our 'why' more than ever.

For our 'why,' we can start by reflecting on the grit and passion of all those who blazed the trail for the Catholic education we are grateful for today: St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. John Bosco, Catholic immigrants, laypeople, countless nuns, priests, brothers, and modern-day saints. Through them, we, too, remind ourselves of the 'why' of this fortunate education. Did you know that St. Cassius was killed by his students when he refused to worship pagan gods? (gnarly, I know). Or that John Bosco opened a school to keep young boys out of jail? Or, that St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was the first to create a free Catholic school in the United States, despite discrimination for being Catholic? Talk about knowing your 'why,' right?

Take time with your kiddos to reflect on the 'why' today and each day, so we can avoid walking through the storms of life with our heads down, unable to move forward, unable to be resilient. Are we able to look at the storm we are in right now, and continually ask ourselves valuable 'whys' of life? Why we choose St. Catherine; why we choose to connect authentically in a world that makes it hard to connect authentically; why we choose to show kindness to those who face a pandemic differently than us.

Whether you parent, learn, or teach, adding your 'why' adds value and meaning to what we do each day here at school. Why do we choose to educate ourselves and our children each day? Why do we challenge ourselves to grow? Why do we face fears, insecurities, inequities, and any pagan gods of our modern-day, (to steal inspiration from St. Cassius)? Thank you teachers and parents for all you do to make Catholic Education the gift that it is. Let us reflect on our 'whys' as we embark forward through all the 'hows' of life.

Kevin Ward, School Counselor kward@stcatherineschool.net

Updates From My Office

- **Small Groups:** Serving as a fruitful way to encourage more genuine, vulnerable, and confident conversation about yourself and your relationships with others.
 - **Small groups up and running right now:**
 - High School Chat - all 8th graders, bi-weekly
 - Courageous Cats - 8th Boys, continuous
 - 6th Grade Snack Chats - all 6th graders, monthly
 - 5th Girls Social Club - weekly
 - Pre-K Party - monthly, (or whenever capable), Pre-K variety
 - 5th Guys Who Care - monthly
 - Although I cannot guarantee my ability to run other small groups, please feel free to reach out if you see a need at St. C's that can be served by a small group. Thanks!
- **Tiger Stories:** Does your student have a story about their strength, resiliency, courage, or triumph over the difficulties of COVID that they would like to share? We need each other to find hope and encouragement. Don't be afraid to share your story about your mental health and strength, it will help others!

If you would like to share, email Mr. Ward your story at kward@stcatherineschool.net, and he will put it on his school counseling web page. *It can be completely anonymous if you want it to be.* It does not have to be more than a couple of sentences long, but can be as long as you would like it to be!

- **National School Counselor Week: February 7-11th**
 - Following Catholic Schools Week, this week is aimed at advocating for more counselors, more mental health support, and a greater understanding of the role. I would like to say THANK YOU for your support and trust in working with your young ones each day.



- **Parent-Counselor Learning Sessions:** Thanks to all who showed up to the last session, and all those who reached out asking to view the session recording online! As a reminder, you can find that recording, along with the connecting PowerPoint right here: [Session Recording](#)
 - Next session coming later this winter!



- On the left, some Kindergarten work on expression of needs!
 - I feel rested when.... calm when.... happy when....
 - When I feel _____, I need _____.

Resources of the Month

- **Buddha Boards!** (as modeled by Jon Legend in [this](#) video). Fantastic for young artists, reflective souls, and kiddos struggling with perfectionism. This product allows you to draw on a board with disappearing ink, pushing your brain to accept the creation and quickly let go of your art. [Buddha Board on Amazon.](#)

- **Webinar on February 10th:** [Bonding Activities for Teens with ADHD & Their Parents: Relationship-Building Ideas \(additudemag.com\)](#)

- Thoughtful opinion piece. What do you all think? [How Many Toys Should a Child Have? Green Child Magazine](#)

- **Calming Bedtime Mantras** - click on the moon for more!



I am calm and peaceful
now that my day is done.

- Article for 8th graders fearful of going to high school in an extroverted world: [How to Survive High School, According to a Teenage Introvert \(introvertdear.com\)](#)

- “You got trouble!” were the infamous words of the Music Man, aka Professor Henry Hill. I was recently fortunate enough to see Hugh Jackman play Professor Hill on Broadway, and he was good enough to make me want to buy a tuba. This reminded me of some old mediums I wish our kids could see more often. Find a show today! [Seattle Theatre Show Guide](#)

- **Book rec!** From a parent perspective and the creator of “Screenagers” comes an easy-to-read guide on screen time for parents. Check out the details by clicking on the book cover:



- This week in class, we learned about the power of thoughts, not just how many we generate, but your unique ability as a human to change them to change the way you feel. Check out this mindfulness activity to help examine your thoughts:



- Click on the image to the left to open the video.
- Find a comfortable position, not so comfortable that you'll take a nap, but just comfy enough to feel settled.
- Don't be afraid of confronted your thoughts: they are not who you are.

- **CLIMB stands for Children's Lives Include Moments of Bravery.** This special support program provides emotional support for children who have a parent or primary caregiver with cancer. The CLIMB program is held on Thursday evenings for five consecutive weeks
- **Who is eligible and how do we enroll?** Children ages 6-11 who have a parent or primary caregiver with cancer are eligible to enroll. The patient does NOT need to be receiving care at a Swedish facility — this program is open to the community. The 2022 Winter and Spring sessions are held virtually: **Winter Sessions Thursdays, 5:15-7:00 p.m. February 17 - March 17**
 - For more information about the CLIMB program or to enroll, please contact the Oncology Social Work referral line at 206-386-3228. Registration is required.

Supporting kids of a parent with cancer. Because stronger families make stronger survivors.

What is CLIMB?
CLIMB stands for Children's Lives Include Moments of Bravery. This special support program provides emotional support for children who have a parent or primary caregiver with cancer. The CLIMB program is held on Thursday evenings for five consecutive weeks. During the two-hour group meetings, conversation and art are used to help children identify and appropriately express complex feelings related to having a parent with cancer. They are given their own workbook to capture their progress, which they are encouraged to share with their family at home.

What about the parents?
We offer a concurrent parent group which takes place at the same time as CLIMB. Facilitated by a Swedish Cancer Institute social worker, the parent group is an educational experience where parents can learn and share healthy ways of helping their children cope with a cancer diagnosis in the family.

What is the cost of the CLIMB program?
The program is offered free of charge to both children and parent participants, because we firmly believe that stronger families make stronger survivors.

Who is eligible and how do we enroll?
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The 2022 Winter and Spring sessions are held virtually:

Winter Sessions Thursdays, 5:15-7:00 p.m. February 17 - March 17	Spring Sessions Thursdays, 5:30-7:15 p.m. May 5 - June 2
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Families are encouraged to talk with a social worker at any time to receive support for how to talk with kids about cancer. For more information about the CLIMB program or to enroll, please contact the Oncology Social Work referral line at 206-386-3228.

Registration is required.

SWEDISH CANCER INSTITUTE

THE ISSUE WITH FORCING YOUR CHILD TO APOLOGIZE AND WHAT TO DO INSTEAD

A forced apology results in insincere words spoken to avoid conflict or shame. It makes your child feel bad about themselves. Instead, teach your child about repairing relationships. When you guide your child to repair the relationship, you'll teach them how to create **genuine apologies**.

- REFRAME THE CONFLICT FOR YOUR CHILD**
"I saw you run to the bathroom. As you entered the doorway, you pushed past your sister, causing her to fall backward."
HELP YOUR CHILD RECOGNIZE THE FACTS OF WHAT HAPPENED, FROM ALL POINTS OF VIEW.
- TEACH EMPATHY FOR OTHERS**
"Your sister looked shocked and then hurt when you pushed her. She is frowning and looking tearful."
VERBALIZE FOR THEM HOW OTHERS FEEL. SHOW THEM HOW TO RECOGNIZE OTHERS' EMOTIONS.
- ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO TAKE OWNERSHIP**
"What was your role in this situation?"
GUIDE THEM TO ANSWER WITH HOW THEY ACTED AND WHY THEY ACTED THAT WAY. "I ACTED HASTILY BECAUSE I WANTED TO GET THERE FIRST."
- GUIDE YOUR CHILD TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE**
"How can we fix this situation?"
BRAINSTORM SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW YOUR CHILD CAN RECTIFY THE PROBLEM. ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO ASK THOSE INVOLVED: "HOW CAN I MAKE THIS SITUATION BETTER FOR YOU?"
- BRAINSTORM IDEAS ON HOW THEY CAN ACT IN SIMILAR SITUATIONS**
"Next time, you can ask your sister if you can go first because you're in a hurry."
REMINDE THEM THAT EVERYONE MAKES MISTAKES. POINT OUT THAT CONFLICT RESOLUTION IS A SKILL THAT CAN BE LEARNED.
- HELP THEM REPAIR THE RELATIONSHIP**
"It sounds like what you are saying..."
HELP THEM PULL ALL THE PIECES TOGETHER: "I CAN SEE THAT YOU FEEL UPSET BY WHAT HAPPENED. I ACTED HASTILY BECAUSE I WANTED TO BE FIRST. I WANT TO MAKE THE SITUATION BETTER - PLEASE GO FIRST AND I'LL WAIT."



- **Mental Health Professionals Resources:** If you are struggling to find mental health resources in the city, you are NOT alone! Mental health resources are more in demand these days, but you can still put your name on waiting lists, and check in periodically for new resources. Here is my updated list:
 - [St. C's Mental Health Referrals](#)
 - Low cost from NAMI Seattle: [Low Cost and Sliding Scale Psych Providers](#)
 - Emergency lines from NAMI: [NAMI Helplines](#)
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[School Counselor Home Page](#) – My page on the school site is the place I house all these resources and more.

As always, remember that it shows strength and courage to ask for help or advocate for the mental health of someone else. You can save these numbers to be prepared:

Crisis supports are available if your student is concerned for themselves or others. [Teen Link](#) can be reached daily from 6-10 PM at 1-866-833-6546; the following resources can be reached 24/7 365 days a year: [Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): 800-273-8255 / Worried about someone on social media? [Support on Social Media - Lifeline](#); the [24-hr Crisis Line](#): 1-866-427-4747; and the [Crisis Text Line](#) can be reached via SMS 24/7— simply text “HEAL” to 741-741.

If you have any questions, concerns, or you think someone needs help, please reach out to me and we can discuss how and when to reach out.