THE WAY

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FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

Earlier in the term I had the opportunity to share a devotion with Year 7, 11 and 12. As I reflected on what I would speak to them about, it occurred to me that they were all embarking on significant years of challenge and opportunity. This brought to mind the work of Jonathan Haidt, author of 'The Anxious Generation'. Haidt is quoted as saying the following…

"Some things are fragile, like glass – when you drop a glass, it breaks. Some things are robust, like a plastic cup – when you drop it, it stays as it is. But some things are anti-fragile – when you drop them, when they are exposed to shocks, they end up becoming stronger."

I love this concept and the way he describes it. He provides the example of our immune system… it gets stronger when it is exposed to germs…it is anti-fragile. And so too are people, particularly children. As young people are exposed to challenge, as they experience failure, as they encounter inevitable social issues and work through hardship, they have the opportunity to become stronger. This growth process is critical to prepare them for what lies ahead in their later teenage years and the reality that we as adults navigate on a daily basis.

What makes this idea even more powerful is the fact that it has been around for centuries. In fact, it is a concept owned and created by God. Romans 5:3-5 says,

"Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us."

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This section of Romans reminds us that God is at work in our lives, in the good and hard times and through it all he is growing us.

This concept was brought to the fore once again last week when Dr Justin Coulson presented to parents. He spoke about the importance of resilience in young people and the important role that parents play in providing this perspective. It is natural for young people to become caught up in the moment or experience. This can lead to anxiety or seeing the glass as ‘half full’. As adults, we need to be able to lift their gaze, provide encouragement and guidance and point to the growth that has or will come through the experience. Ultimately, we want to work together to support the growth of young people who are anti-fragile, equipped with the skills, attitude and resilience to deal with adversity and the ability to bounce back.

Already this year, I have observed the anti-fragility process in action and it has been a joy to see the growth.

- - Four-year-olds struggling with separation from mum and dad on Day 1 now thriving in the Prep space.
- - Year 8 students daunted by the challenge of the Giant Swing on camp, walking proudly away from the experience.
- - Year 12 students overcoming their perceived limitation by engaging in extended independent study sessions.

What a privilege it is for us to be able to play a small part in this growth process!

Mr Chris Wyatt
Deputy Principal

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