



# Counselor's Corner

September/October 2016

## Paths for Happiness

Studies show happiness is good for our minds and even our health. Psychologist and author of "Real Happiness: Proven Paths for Contentment, Peace, and Well-Being," Dr. Jonah Paquette, defines happiness as a:

- strong presence of positive and pleasant emotions,
- feeling of connection to those around us,
- feeling of satisfaction with our life,
- deep sense of meaning and purpose.

Often times the things we believe will boost our happiness (new car, bigger home, new toy, different job, etc.) only account for a small percentage of happiness and these effects are often short lived. Dr. Paquette describes happiness as a skill. We can create new connections and pathways in the brain to enhance states of happiness by fostering habits of well-being. These habits include:

- Cultivating gratitude
- Practicing kindness and compassion
- Living in the present moment
- Fostering self-compassion
- Boosting optimism
- Strengthening relationships
- Practicing forgiveness

By modeling these tenets and practicing them with your children, you can foster healthy habits which facilitate happiness. Here are some simple activities you could practice with your children.

- Keep a gratitude journal and write three good things that happen each day.
- Volunteer for a cause.
- Mindfully mediate on breathing for a few minutes a day.
- Write down 5 aspects of yourself that you are proud of and appreciate.
- Picture yourself a few years from now and imagine your dreams being realized.
- Write a letter of forgiveness (the letter doesn't need to be delivered to a recipient).
- Find time to unplug media devices and connect in person.

For more information on happiness and well-being, please contact your school counselor.

For further details or information, please contact your child's guidance counselor:

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