

Dear PCS families, students and staff,

Thank you so much to those of you who have reached out to let me know that these emails are helpful. It warms my heart to hear from you. I enjoy writing to all of you so much and truly feel connected to you when I write. I am benefitting tremendously from thinking deeply about how to be proactive in taking care of our emotional health. As always, take what delights you and leave the rest. 😊

1. **Anxiety and Control:** Anxiety is greatly increased when we feel out of control. Fear sets in and takes over.

Focus on the things you *can* control and wherever possible, coach yourself to release the rest. When you feel overwhelmed and anxious, take deep breaths and speak gently to yourself the way you would to a frightened child or animal that you love. Your feelings are valid and they matter, but now more than ever you need the confident soothing that a loving parent can provide. Be that loving parent to yourself.

What do you have control of in your day to day life? Expand on those things. Relish them, roll around in them, celebrate them.

For me I am focused on the control I have over how I invest my time and energy. I am focused on my self-care because I have tremendous control over that. I ski or hike in nature every day with our dogs. I eat healthy, delicious foods that make me feel fantastic. I meditate. I express gratitude. I read books about subjects that I enjoy. I write these emails to you. I call my clients and stay on a weekly schedule with them. I bathe and do my hair and put on nice clothes and mascara even if I'm not leaving the house. I don't watch the news very often- only to get updates once a day or less. I wash my hands and use hand sanitizer and adhere strictly to physical distancing when with others or out in public. I minimize my time in public to only necessary grocery runs. I stay connected with my friends and family through phone calls and texts and if we see each other in person, it is always outside with a distance between us of at least 6 feet. These are some of the things I have control of.

2. **Cocoon:** "The winter solstice has always been special to me as a barren darkness that gives birth to a verdant future beyond imagination, a time of pain and withdrawal that produces something joyfully inconceivable, like a monarch butterfly masterfully extracting itself from the confines of its cocoon, bursting forth into unexpected glory." Gary Zukav

I want to invite you to look at this time as an opportunity to grow in some way that is precious to you. As a collective, we have never had a period of withdrawal like this. What a perfect time to be with yourself and see what's in there! I don't mean to sound like Pollyanna about any of this because I know there are some deep and often painful feelings coming up right now. But what if some of these feelings are a gift and something we could learn to lean into, tolerate, or even celebrate? We can't know in what ways our world will be different when we emerge from this quarantine. We can't know what each of us will look like as we emerge... but we

have a lot more influence over our individual emergence. What if we took this time in our cocoons to ask ourselves what truly matters to us? Who am I? Who do I want to be? Am I living in alignment with my vision of myself? What do I need to let go? What do I need to embrace? These are the questions I am asking myself. Picture what you want to look like when you emerge from your cocoon. What do you want to feel? Who do you want to be? The cocoon can be dark and sticky, but something magical is happening in there, too. The caterpillar has to let go of being a caterpillar and fully embrace the muck of being sludge in the cocoon in order to emerge as the butterfly. And when it is time, the fight to get out of the cocoon is what makes the butterfly beautiful. We will come through this. I am so excited to see you when you emerge!

3. **Priorities:** What really matters to you? Who really matters to you? Is there someone you've been thinking about who would love to hear from you? This is the perfect time to get our priorities straight. Is there something you've been putting off? Now is the time to act. Also take note of the things that used to seem really important that just don't seem to matter anymore. I think we might all be getting a little deeper, by golly!
4. **Love and Connection:** Stay connected to your friends and family. Call, text, zoom, facetime whatever. Don't isolate. Smile at strangers. Spread some love. Be extra, super kind to your family. Snuggle with an animal. Get along with your siblings. Appreciate the things you appreciate about your loved ones and tell them directly. Practice gratitude. And patience.
5. **School and house work:** Lovely **students**, please keep plugging away at your school work. We're so proud of you for working so hard. We know this is difficult, but you've got this! Be sure to ask for help if you need it. Don't be shy. Your teachers want to help you and it will benefit all of you if you ask for help BEFORE you let yourself get behind or too confused. You are not alone.

Enjoy your spring break! (For those of you I meet with weekly, we *will* continue our sessions through spring break so expect my call)

**Students:** I also want to encourage you to find ways to contribute to your family by helping out around your house. Do you have a favorite dish you like to make? See if you can help with some of the cooking, cleaning, stacking wood, tending to the animals, helping your siblings with homework, or other things you know would help your household run more smoothly. Everyone is working hard right now to keep everything going as normally as possible... surprise your family by doing something a little extra today to help out. 😊 And be sure to thank your family for what they do for you.

As ever, I am here to support you, [bpowers@plumascharterschool.org](mailto:bpowers@plumascharterschool.org). And I thank you for your support, too! Whether you have reached out directly or not, I feel you out there!

Below, I've included one of my favorite poems.

Warmly,

Becky

# The Invitation



By Oriah Mountain Dreamer

It doesn't interest me  
what you do for a living.  
I want to know  
what you ache for  
and if you dare to dream  
of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me  
how old you are.  
I want to know  
if you will risk  
looking like a fool  
for love  
for your dream  
for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me  
what planets are  
squaring your moon...  
I want to know  
if you have touched  
the center of your own sorrow  
if you have been opened  
by life's betrayals  
or have become shriveled and closed  
from fear of further pain.

I want to know  
if you can sit with pain  
mine or your own  
without moving to hide it  
or fade it  
or fix it.

I want to know  
if you can be with joy  
mine or your own

if you can dance with wildness  
and let the ecstasy fill you  
to the tips of your fingers and toes  
without cautioning us  
to be careful  
to be realistic  
to remember the limitations  
of being human.

It doesn't interest me  
if the story you are telling me  
is true.  
I want to know if you can  
disappoint another  
to be true to yourself.  
If you can bear  
the accusation of betrayal  
and not betray your own soul.  
If you can be faithless  
and therefore trustworthy.

I want to know if you can see Beauty  
even when it is not pretty  
every day.  
And if you can source your own life  
from its presence.

I want to know  
if you can live with failure  
yours and mine  
and still stand at the edge of the lake  
and shout to the silver of the full moon,  
"Yes."

It doesn't interest me  
to know where you live  
or how much money you have.  
I want to know if you can get up  
after the night of grief and despair  
weary and bruised to the bone  
and do what needs to be done  
to feed the children.

It doesn't interest me  
who you know  
or how you came to be here.

I want to know if you will stand  
in the center of the fire  
with me  
and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me  
where or what or with whom  
you have studied.  
I want to know  
what sustains you  
from the inside  
when all else falls away.

I want to know  
if you can be alone  
with yourself  
and if you truly like  
the company you keep  
in the empty moments.

Source: <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/the-invitation-by-oriah-mountain-dreamer>