

Dear students, staff and families,

Once again I have been thinking about you all a ton. I hope you enjoyed spring break and this lovely SUNSHINE!!!! Welcome back. Hoping you are feeling refreshed and ready to launch! As always, take what delights you and leave the rest.

**Self-compassion, gentleness, and motivation:** I'm wondering how you've been navigating this adventure? I've been talking to many loved ones and I recognize that we are all coping in different ways. Some people are doing better than normal; deep cleaning their homes, playing with their families, planting gardens, reaching out to people, creating online events or businesses, and getting out in nature and exercising. Some days I fall into this camp, and other days I feel sad and unmotivated. Some folks are really struggling with compulsive/negative/destructive behaviors to deal with the feelings of fear and overwhelm. Some are getting really depressed and anxious. Honor the way you are feeling.

I don't have any judgement about any of that. Truly. If you want to talk to me about anything, please know that you can. This is a safe space.

I invite you to look at what is, and what is not, working for YOU. Trust yourself.

I have shared and will continue to share things that I know to work to improve mood and emotional health. You may experiment with things and see what works for you. Self-compassion is always a good thing. Sometimes the most compassionate thing you can do is let yourself feel your feelings, be lazy, and do something that comforts you, even if it may not be the most "healthy" choice like eating that whole pint of ice cream. And sometimes the most compassionate thing you can do for yourself (or a loved one) is give a little push: get your routines going, go for a walk outside even if you don't feel like it, eat something healthy, or do some school work.

**1. Inspire me! What's Working?:** I would LOVE to hear from you (students, staff, and families) about what *is* working well for you? What are you doing to take care of yourself that is delighting you? What routines are working for you? What is your family doing? How are you managing your school work at home? I'm sure each of you has figured out at least some little something that works well. I want to hear about it so I can learn from you.

We have so many resources in this group and I would love to know what you have discovered. If you are open to it, please indicate in your message if I can share (anonymously) your example of what is going well. We all could use some examples and inspiration. Send me a quick message. Please share the things that have made you laugh and smile!

**2. Appreciation:** You are suddenly spending a lot more time with your family in a small space. It's possible that this is feeling a little intense and you may find yourself feeling irritable or noticing things that don't thrill you about the people around you. What if today you found at least one thing that you appreciate about each of the people in your

inner circle? Share what you appreciate with each one of these people either through spoken words or in a post-it appreciation note. “What we appreciate appreciates” meaning: if we find the good in someone and we actively focus on the good, we tend to get to see more good from that person. Same goes for you: What do you appreciate about yourself?

3. **Meditation:**

Simple tips for meditation:

1. A mantra I like to use when I am taking a few moments to meditate is just to follow my breathing with the thought: “Breathing in I know I’m breathing in. Breathing out, I know I’m breathing out. In. Out. Deep. Slow. Breathing in I know I’m breathing in....” and just follow your breathing.

2. Take a few deep breaths and relax. Then do a scan of your body checking for tension. When you find an area of tension, take a moment to consciously relax that part of your body. Drop your shoulders. Relax your jaw. Relax your belly.

3. Choose a couple little cues to remind you to meditate throughout the day. For instance, every time you’re at a red light, take a deep breath. When you wait in a line. Breathe. Every time your phone chirps that you have a message, meditate for 30 seconds. You choose.

4. If I wake up in the middle of the night and can’t get back to sleep, I utilize Insight Timer on my phone and turn on a guided meditation. I use these as I’m trying to fall asleep at the beginning of the night, too. If you share a room, headphones might help.

4. **Serious Mental Health Concerns:** If you are concerned about the safety of a loved one or yourself due to self-harm, suicidal thoughts, thoughts of harming others, or inability to care for self, please contact Behavioral Health at (530) 283-6307. Or contact the Sheriff’s office for a welfare check (530) 283-6300. I am certainly here to support, but I want to make sure you know where to turn for emergencies.

5. **Gratitude:** What are three things you are grateful for right now?

1. I am grateful for my hike with my dogs this morning.
2. I am grateful for a sweet picnic with my parents yesterday followed by a zoom meeting with our entire family that was totally chaotic and ridiculous but that made my 85 year old grandmother giggle with glee.
3. I am grateful for the meditation I just did with my mentor that inspired me to ask YOU what is working in bullet #2! I’m so excited to be inspired by you!

I’m here if you need anything [bpowers@plumascharterschool.org](mailto:bpowers@plumascharterschool.org)

Below I’ve included my favorite poem :)

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 centre 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.

By Oriah © Mountain Dreaming,  
from the book *The Invitation*  
published by HarperONE, San Francisco,  
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