



NATHAN HOUSE Letter 4 May 2020

Good afternoon folks

I greet you from a very quiet Nathan House master study. By now the master on duty would have had to field a myriad of questions from boys knocking down the door, ranging from inquiries about punishment to simply getting a new laundry slip. I, for one, certainly would not mind to face that reality again, as that would mean that things are back to normal. I'm sure I don't need to tell you that by now we would have found ourselves well into the second term with a number of weekends of sport under the belt. How quickly and drastically life can change. We are all facing unprecedented challenges, but our hearts especially go out to the Nathan House prefects and the rest of the class of 2020, who are having to bear the brunt of this pandemic in their much anticipated final year at our great school. Why now? Why ever? Who can provide answers to such grand questions? What I do believe, however, is that if ever I have come across a group of boys who could face such a mighty challenge, it is this matric group.

Your boys are not without their share of obstacles either. They were just beginning to find their feet and only just started sinking their teeth into the exciting winter season at College when national lockdown came along. Academics has become a different beast altogether too. At this point I just want to add that we are not indifferent to the struggles your boys are experiencing. We want the boys to return and breathe life back into our boarding establishment as much as they do. Unfortunately there is no way of telling when that will be. In fact, there has been no official announcement about the updated school calendar, only a proposal for Grade 12's to return on 1 June. From what we can gather, each grade will then be subsequently phased back into the schooling system with Form 2 being last in line. I know this is not what you want to hear, but we need to be prepared for the worst case scenario, as it may be a long wait.

Since we cannot change what is happening on a global scale, all we can do is give our best with the cards we've been dealt. I would therefore like to offer the following advice to the boys:

1. Be grateful for what you have at any time, as nothing is guaranteed.
2. Appreciate the people around you and let them know that you do.
3. Spend your time wisely, get into a healthy routine.
4. When opportunities to learn, grow and develop present themselves make full use of them.
5. Live each day with faith, knowing you were created for a purpose and that there is always hope for the future.
6. Pray often

These are just a few small thoughts that I believe are practically applicable and can have a big positive effect if consistently applied. I expand on the points of advice below this letter for further “prescribed” reading for the boys. You should have received a letter from Mr Kyle, where he has outlined some important matters regarding the safety of your boys on their return to the BE. Please would you read through that if you haven't done so already.

I will be sure to relay any important information regarding the reopening of school for Form 2 and Nathan House once I receive it. We miss the boys and everything school has to offer which is why we will keep hoping and praying for a speedy return to normality, not just at College, but our entire nation. I wish you and your families all the best in this very difficult time.

Yours sincerely

Drikus Hoffman

Some advice

Be grateful for what you have at any time, as nothing is guaranteed

As you've seen for yourselves, life can change very quickly. As we go through the seasons of life there will be good times and bad times. Being grateful is a choice and it can be a tough one too. There is however always something to be grateful for, regardless of the circumstances and season we find ourselves in. Take time to think about the things in your life you can be thankful for. Thankful people are always uplifting to be around and tend to be the people we look up to.

Appreciate the people around you and let them know that you do.

This is in line with the previous point, but focuses on people specifically. We all have family and friends who really mean a lot to us, but do we show them that they do? Thanking the people in our lives for who they are and what they do costs us nothing. Remember boys, **Mother's day** is coming up—what better time to celebrate mom for all she does for you!

Spend your time wisely, get into a healthy routine.

A good routine is key to productivity and success, not just at school either. Set out a simple plan of what you want to do during the day and when you will do it. Be realistic. If you are consistently doing the small things well it will pay off in the long run. Just because there is no school at the moment does not mean you don't have a responsibility toward your academics. The responsibility is far more manageable in small chunks daily, than trying to accomplish massive amounts of work in little time when school starts again. Do exercise too, it is never a bad idea to exercise regularly.

Some advice

When opportunities to learn, grow and develop present themselves make full use of them.

Think about how much the matrices are missing out on because of what's happening. They would give everything for the opportunity to be back and developing on various fronts, but they can't. Opportunities to grow are blessings that come in different forms and at different times. Grab hold of every opportunity that comes its way in this time. Learn to braai with dad, or bake something with mom, or play a new instrument, or do that very difficult maths sum you've been avoiding. There is no such thing as being stagnant—if you're not growing, you're shrinking.

Live each day with faith, knowing you were created for a purpose and that there is always hope for the future.

I don't know what it is you believe gents, but every person on earth puts their faith in something or someone. Some people place it in money, others in security, others in qualifications, others in God and the list goes on. I know where the best place is to place it. Faith is not about ignoring the facts that we see all around us, in fact it is the opposite. Faith is acknowledging reality and trusting for a better reality. But the trust for a better reality requires action, not sitting back and thinking things will just get better. So believe for the best so that you can be a young man of action that works to see the better reality. This in turn will give you **hope** for the future, which is so needed right now.

Pray often

Again, I don't know what you believe, but this personally helps me a lot. You don't have to pray long fanciful prayers. Pray by talking the way you would to anyone else. Honesty is important here. Personally prayer gives me peace and when I'm at peace I am a much better person for my family to be around. Also, there are many people out there who will appreciate knowing that you are praying for them. Keep it simple and watch God do something special in your life and the lives of others.

Here's to seeing you soon.

God bless
Mr Hoffman