

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE: FRIDAY 19TH MAY 2017

Over the past two weeks we have heard two fantastic messages in this Chapel. Last Thursday Father Terry spoke about the importance of “being the very best that you can be”, in other words to do yourself justice and to use your God given talents to the full. On Tuesday at Evensong, Dr WP van Zyl urged us not to be held back by self-doubt but rather to believe that we are capable of great things. In the famous words of Theodore Roosevelt; *“Far better is it to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure...than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much, because they live in a gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat”*.

This got me thinking about many of the boys I have counselled over the years here at Bishops who are under-achieving, who are flying under the radar, so to speak. This often leads to great frustration for parents and teachers, and indeed for the boys themselves as they get into this negative spiral of self-doubt.

I came across this very interesting article written by the columnist Alec Hogg, which spoke about the incredible power of the mind:

Over the years he examined numerous examples of what is known as the placebo effect – the ultimate example of “mind over matter.”

One of the best stories about placebos began in 1939 when Italian surgeon David Fieschi invented a technique to help patients suffering from angina. His procedure involved slicing open the chest and tying off a major artery, forcing the other one to pump more blood to the heart. It enjoyed a success rate of over 80% and for almost two decades Fieschi's invention was practiced all around the world.

But in the late 1950s, cardiologists in Seattle and Kansas City proved that it was the patients' minds, not the procedure, that was actually doing the trick. They divided patients into two groups – one received Fieschi's artery tying procedure while the other patients were immediately closed up again after their chests were opened. The results staggered the medical fraternity: those who got the full surgery reported a 73% success rate, but the sham operation patients scored 83%.

Understanding the power of the mind is one of mankind's final frontiers. It is a quest we can all contribute towards, just by becoming aware. It was Socrates who told us that the unexamined life is not worth living.

Winnie the Pooh sums it up well with these words; *“Promise me you'll always remember: you're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think!”*