

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

A Note from Our Academic Coordinator, Esther: *Purposeful Moments*

They happen all the time at Academic Pathways. Time with your child, carefully scheduled and planned, to help them grow and learn. If your child has been a part of the Reading & Writing Program, they know the importance of revising the ideas they put on paper. As they revisit their writing and wrestle with how to use their words most effectively, an idea grows.

So what if we as parents planned a purposeful “session” with our kids this holiday break to grow our connection with them? “Easier said than done!” you may be thinking to yourself. It’s a crazy time of year with end-of-year work commitments, special events, or holiday travel. But even a well-chosen moment on a car ride can make a difference.

I have two children; a sweet and thoughtful 6-year-old boy and a spicy and challenging 10-going-on-18-year-old. The younger engages in conversation readily. The older can be a tough nut to crack.





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However this year, I found that when I tell her a story about something that happened to me when I was her age, she engages, asks questions, and seems genuinely interested in conversing with me. Obviously it has to be something juicy where I was wronged by the mean girls or publicly humiliated in front of my friends, but it opens a door that gives me glimpses into her life when I'm not around.

As our kids get older, it may seem like we have less to connect with them about. **While it's important to give them freedom, I feel this is actually the time when they need us more, even if they act like they want nothing to do with us.** When I'm the one sharing first, my daughter feels more comfortable cracking open that door into her world.

So what would a purposeful "session" with your child look like? Maybe sharing a favorite childhood book, nostalgic song, classic movie, or embarrassing story with them. It might be a simple question asking about their favorite character in the book they are reading or grabbing an earbud to listen to their favorite music with them while you try not to cringe. Show them the funny photo from when they were little and share the story that goes with it. Ask your high schooler what the most grueling part of their final exam was and then suggest cutting it up with scissors in celebration of it being behind them. (I actually burned my Chemistry final in a metal trash can over one holiday break, and it was quite liberating.)

Think about the purposeful moment. **Reexplore what you love to open the door to the world of what they love.** Continue revisiting how to connect with your child as they grow, as I attempt to do with my spicy child, and—like ideas on paper—the connection can grow.

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Vladimir Nabokov said that “a good reader, a major reader, an active and creative reader is a rereader.”



There is a myth that rereading favorite books is a waste of time. While it's always commendable to explore new challengers and authors, there are also many benefits to be had from revisiting the writing that strikes a chord within ourselves.

When a student rereads a familiar story, they are able to consider the nuances of the writing. They can better pick up on voice and perspective, world-building, and structure.

Writingcooperative.com writes: "When you read a book many times, you develop an intimate familiarity with the story, the characters, and the author's style. You pay closer attention to structure, plot devices, and voice. You already know how it ends; when you reread, you ask yourself, 'how does the author go about getting there?'"

The magic of rereading is not only that it makes us better readers. It also makes us better writers.