

From the
HEAD OF SCHOOL
Norm Colb

Dear Friends,

I encourage you to attend this year's [Parent and Faculty Education Conference](#). What an opportunity! The panelists and workshop leaders are truly world class. The Conference co-chairs, Vivian Leal and Pam Shames, along with Tracy Bianchi, Laura McGourty and other members of the committee, worked tirelessly to plan a series of talks that you simply do not want to miss.



By the way, I do not use the term “world class” loosely. All of the panelists and workshop leaders are involved in important work that is reframing our understanding of the challenges facing today’s adolescents.

We all know that the world has shifted dramatically during the past few years, and our children, growing up in an environment that is increasingly dominated by technology, are facing challenges that are simply unprecedented. The



panelists and workshop leaders will help us plumb what this means for us as parents and teachers.

The Conference would have been full were it to end after the workshops, but the Conference organizers have asked me to deliver a closing address. I was honored by this invitation, of course, but also somewhat reluctant to accept. Here’s why I demurred: Speaking broadly, and judging by the results, Menlo parents are doing a fine job. If you had the opportunity, as I do, to see your children on campus, you would understand why I am so impressed by their upbringing. More than impressed, I see your children as reason to be optimistic about the future. Now, I know there are times at home when your children may be challenging, but here on campus they are almost always kind, thoughtful and inquisitive. In short, when I was invited to speak it was not clear to me what I could say that could help you do even better than you already are.

“We all know that the world has shifted dramatically during the past few years.”

And so I demurred, but not for long. If you know the Conference chairs, you will not be surprised that they managed to override my objections and convince me that my insights may be of interest to you. By the way, they initially wanted to describe my talk as “Norm Unplugged,” suggesting that because I would be moving on this June there was no longer any need for me to be cautious. I much prefer to call my talk a “Tune-Up” in the hope that my comments will confirm much of what you already do.



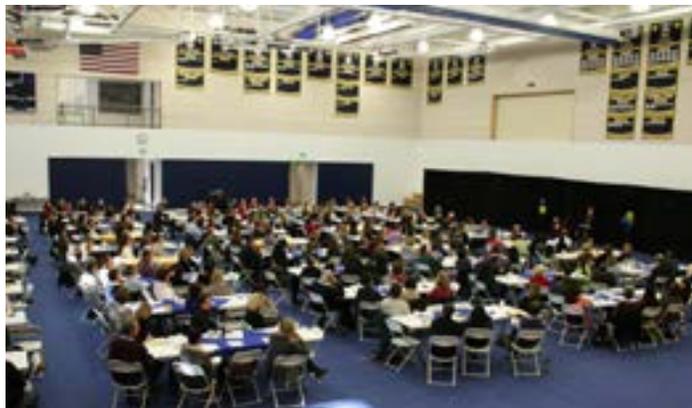
So, if you can stay for one more hour after the workshop segment of the Conference, I will be ruminating about issues such as these:

- We all agree that we want our children to grow up to be self-confident, resilient and ethical. What specific parenting practices actually promote these desirable traits? And what practices erode these traits?
- What values are our children imbibing from popular media? Are we comfortable with these values? If not, what can we possibly do?
- What colleges serve our children best? And what should our role be in the college admissions process?
- We feel compelled to protect our children from disappointments and other negative experiences. But how much protection helps, and how much is too much?
- When do our children stop needing us? And what do they need from us?

“What values are our children imbibing from popular media?”

I hope to see you February 9 for a morning that promises to be both informative and productive—and possibly even provocative.

My best,

KnightLine is published in .pdf form on the Menlo School website each month, with an email alert including a link sent to all parents. For questions, please contact Alex Perez, Director of Communications, via email at alex.perez@menloschool.org or by calling 650.330.2001 ext. 2330.

