

# Hunt the Good Stuff

## A Message from Our School Counselor

This year, I implemented a ritual to start our sixth grade Life Skills classes and the ninth grade class meetings. The ritual is called “**Hunt the Good Stuff**” and it is where we collectively reflect upon our week and recall the good things that happened. I first saw this in action when I worked with the US Army and observed their Master Resiliency Training courses. Master Resiliency Trainers teach a resiliency technique to their company every month. Every company in the US Army does resiliency training to promote their mental, emotional, and physical performance. The Master Resiliency Training was developed by the Positive Psychology Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

The skill developed when you Hunt the Good Stuff is used to notice positive experiences to enhance optimism, gratitude, and other positive emotions. According to the University of Pennsylvania, people who are optimistic are more likely to ask for help and therefore, more likely to receive support. There is also evidence that optimism leads people to take action, use a sense of humor, eat healthy, and have an exercise routine. Physiologically, focusing on the good things also promotes rest and digest.

Practicing Hunt the Good Stuff on a regular basis counteracts the **Negativity Bias**. It shifts our brain’s natural ability to focus on the negative. We are naturally inclined to pay more attention to the negative to protect ourselves as a survival strategy. However, in some instances it is not helpful. For example, if someone has a great day but one bad thing happens, we have a tendency to focus on the one bad thing. Hunt the Good Stuff is a gratitude skill that shifts that focus back to the positive. It involves identifying and reflecting on what we are grateful for and why. In a negative situation, is there any benefit?

What is good stuff?

- A big or small event, accomplishment, or milestone
- Any area of your life you are content with or happy about
- Something positive about you or anyone else in your life
- Something about the natural world you enjoy
- Something you are grateful for or feel is a blessing in your life.

How do you Hunt the Good Stuff?

The Hunt is the process of **reflection**. Record three good things and reflect on each: Why did this good thing happen? What does the thing mean to you? What can you do to enable more of this good thing to happen? What ways did you or others contribute to the good thing?

On their hunt for good stuff, NYA students talk about being able to travel after a time of restriction due to the pandemic. They recognize visiting extended family, especially those that live out of state and are permitted to travel again. They also point out being able to compete with their athletic teams. Students identify with strong themes of connection and a sense of belonging with family, friends, and teammates. I would encourage families to make this a daily practice at home. Please share with me any outcomes you notice as a result!

Other gratitude practices:

- Use visual cues. Signs or posters with positive messages.
- Write a thank you note or email.
- Family Blessings: Each family member shares 3 blessings for the day.
- Text a loved one every morning.
- Thank someone for the opportunity to look at something differently.
- Silver Linings, find the good in a bad situation.
- Take pictures of natural surroundings and look back at them later.
- Leave a **kind note** for a family member in a lunch box, backpack, or computer case. Collect any notes you may receive and put them in a location where you will see them.

If you would like to learn more about Hunting the Good Stuff, check out the resources below:

- [\*\*US Army Master Resiliency Training video\*\*](#)
- [\*\*The Resiliency Factor by Karen Reivich\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Explore the work of Robert Emmons, Ph.D. on Gratitude\*\*](#)