



# SCHOOL COUNCIL

## NEWSLETTER

MAY 2018 • VOLUME 28

# SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS FOR CHAIRS

The months of May and June is the time that some council chairs are thinking about transitioning out of their role and perhaps their school. This is especially true in the elementary panel where parent leaders move on as their children also transition to secondary school. This month we are featuring an article on how a chair can make that transition successful for themselves and for their school.

Next month, we will be including several articles on playing safe, working hard and enjoying the summer break with your children.

We will continue our Facebook Live sessions over the summer months, including sessions with partners Microsoft Education. In late August, we will be doing a session on school council elections and getting ready for the new school year.

*continued next page*

## INSIDE ▼ *this issue*

### **PAGE 1 - 2**

Successful Transitions  
For Chairs.

### **PAGE 3 - 4**

Think About  
Tomorrow Today

### **PAGE 4 - 5**

#### **Paul's Safety Corner**

Facebook Tips  
(Updated April 2018)

### **PAGE 7 - 9**

#### **Sara Westbrook**

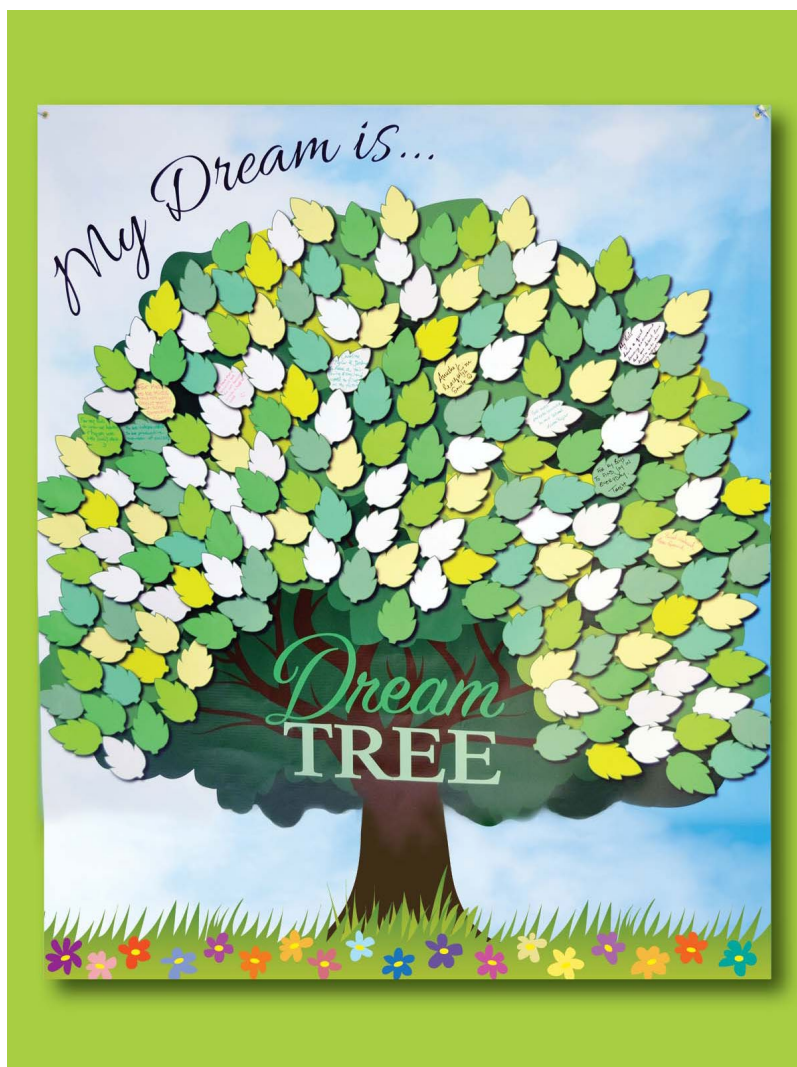
How to Help Children  
Let Go of Judging Others



It has been amazing to see the number of subscribers that have signed up to receive these newsletters directly. Thank you for being engaged with us and with your child and their school.

We will be launching our DREAM BIG multi-year plan for the new year. A great way to energize your community on curriculum night is to purchase a DREAM TREE banner and have parents, students and educators write their dreams on the tree. Please see photo on the right for a picture of the 5' x 6' vinyl banner with over 150 blank leaves to feature the dreams of your community!!!

Take the next month and make it a great one for your team!!! This is the time of year to thank all volunteers that have helped your council and school be the great place for students!!





As the last three months of school are upon us, school council officers who are poised to move on from their positions begin thinking about how they can make the transition a positive one. A really good leader will leave behind a parent council that is positive and strong. An exiting chair will set forth a plan to move ahead with the goals that have been set and be ready to explore new initiatives.

Often it is with mixed feelings that a committed parent leader moves on from the chair position on a school council. How you have interacted with the group while you were in your role and the role you hope to play once you leave will greatly affect how you transition.

**REASONS FOR PARENT COUNCIL CHAIR RETIREMENT**

**There are many reasons that a chair decides to transition from the chair position including:**

- Imposed term lists set by council by-laws
- Your child is moving from elementary to secondary or from secondary to post secondary
- You quit over a dispute on an issue that the council has dealt with
- You decide you are not able to commit the time you have been able to in the past

As we begin to transition, it is helpful to remember the reason that we began volunteering in the first place. For most of us, we began our journey with a desire to play a role in improving the educational experience for our children and for all the children in the school. Becoming a leader on a parent council gives a parent the opportunity to exercise their leadership skills. It also provides an opportunity to make significant strides in advocating for the needs of the students while increasing communication skills between school and home.

**TRANSITIONING**

To transition effectively it is a good idea to work with others who are interested in playing a leadership role in the next school year. It is beneficial to educate them on the responsibilities that the position requires. In addition, the last few months gives an opportunity for a chair to bring the whole council up to date on any matters being considered at this time. Creating a plan with your council for next year will help the group get off to a good start.

A chair transitioning should prepare for the election process for the upcoming school year by completing the Annual Report which is required under Reg. 612. If your group has done any fundraising, a financial



report is required as well. Your school board may require other reports in addition to those required through the Regulation. Being prepared to wrap things up in good order will make you feel more satisfied as you transition.

### PASSING THE TORCH

As the exiting chair, your experience is important to the parent council. You know what worked and what didn't and hopefully you have played a strategic role in planning events and increasing parent engagement. You likely facilitated resolving conflicts and guided the council away from controversy in their decision making. An important part of transitioning is passing this experience on. Encourage council members to maintain and welcome new members to the council. You may want to write some personal notes on specific items which the new chair may face when they take over next year.

Leaving your role as the chair can be a positive experience. If your child has moved on to the next school level, you may wish to continue your relationship with the council as a community member. The key to staying involved is respecting the new council and their leaders. Remember to encourage them to explore new ideas while carrying on the good work of previous councils.

And from one parent to another – thank you for your service!

Remember to share

Like this article? Be sure to share it with other parents and school councils.



# PAUL'S

## *safety corner*

### FACEBOOK TIPS (UPDATED APRIL 2018)

My latest tips for Facebook Users, that go beyond the Security Settings which you NEED to address in your FB profile (6-10 minutes)

#### **BASICS**

- 1) **Remove:** Day / Month / Year of Birth from the visibility in your Profile
- 2) **Remove:** All the companies you have ever worked for
- 3) **Remove:** The schools you attended, and the year of graduation from your last school

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### “LOG IN USING YOUR FACEBOOK ACCOUNT”

- NO! Always manually create a username/password for any site you wish to join.
- Never use your FB or Google Accounts to log into other sites/ applications, using your credentials from any existing platform.

### FRIENDS LIST:

Do a FB detox. Go through everyone on your list. If it's time to remove them, do it!

### TAGGING PHOTOS

Do not allow anyone to tag you in a photo. You can set this up in your account settings page

### VACATION PHOTOS

Stop taking photos while you are on

vacation in REAL TIME. It's a security risk. And if the truth be known... No one cares that you are on vacation. Just tell us when you come back. If you have seen my presentation this should be making you smile right about now.

### FACEBOOK APP VS MOBILE WEB BROWSER

Use the Browser! The FB App is one of those apps that, when you read the permissions you are granting it, should make you nervous as to how much it is accessing. Using a browser (Firefox) takes more effort, but it is worth it.

If you are an iPhone user, the FB App uses lots of storage space, and also processing power on your device. I suggest delete the App and use Safari

Please follow on Twitter: @pauldavisSNS

Parents/Teachers: [facebook.com/pauldavistips](https://www.facebook.com/pauldavistips)

Website: [socialnetworkingsafety.net](http://socialnetworkingsafety.net)

My presentation calendar can be found on my Facebook page.



# I Dream BIG



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T-SHIRTS

CAUSE  
BRACELETS



# How to Help Children Let Go of JUDGING OTHERS

sarawestbrook.com

After seeing a UPower presentation, young people often share their thoughts and struggles with me in person and then later through social media and emails.

One recent message I received stood out:

Hi Sara! I'm Alex, I don't know if you remember me but I said "I Matter" into the microphone when you visited my school. During 2018 I wanna get over judging people by their looks because I know that I feel ashamed when someone does it to me. So, when I try to stop judging people, my mind just automatically starts doing it. How do I stop it?

The judgments young people are making about themselves and others are shaping their beliefs about what is right or wrong about appearance, clothing, preferences, relationships, backgrounds and even cultures. Unfortunately adults are also doing it.

As Taylor astutely pointed out, feeling judged brings up the emotion of shame. Shame is the belief that

we are flawed, unworthy of love and belonging based on something we've experienced, done, or failed to do, and that we are unworthy of acceptance and connection.

Developing healthy self-esteem and confidence relies on the ability to be accepting and compassionate of oneself and others for all our imperfections. Sounds simple enough but we know it isn't easy!

## CREATING HEALTHY DIALOGUE ABOUT JUDGMENTS

When talking to young people about judgments I make the distinction that some are useful. For example, when you are assessing whether a situation is dangerous or not, making a judgment based on hunch or gut feeling is a good thing.

However judgments, when made thoughtlessly and habitually, can develop into hurtful, harmful and unfair biases.

As Taylor found, when we try to simply give up judgments, it can be difficult. We need to build habits to replace the judgmental behaviour.

**Here's 4 steps that I use when I catch myself judging others.**

### 1. BE AWARE

Because we need our judgment, the key is catching the times when we are judging ourselves or others unfairly and harshly.

When this happens, examine why you are judging. Are you in a potentially unsafe situation? Or are you making a judgment from one of the following places:

- Thinking you know better or that you are right
- Emotions like jealousy, angry, uncomfortable, awkward
- Trying to fit in with others or trying to impress others
- Assumptions based on appearance, culture, friends etc.

Sometimes we judge others when we have an opinion or experience that we think is better. When someone else is doing something differently or not at the standard we think is best, we judge them.

When you catch yourself doing this, remind yourself that everyone is different - that there are many different perspectives and ways of doing something.

### 2. PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES

It can be really easy to jump to conclusions about people without knowing their perspective. Give people the benefit of the doubt because you really don't know what is going on in their life.

This reminds me of the following story:

'A man was letting his kids run wild and upsetting everyone on the subway. He seemed oblivious. Finally, someone couldn't stand it and asked the Dad to do something about it. Dad looked up to the kids and then said, "My wife just died an hour ago in the hospital. I guess the kids don't know how to handle it either."



## Everyone is different

It's important to remember there are many different perspectives and ways of doing something.

[sarawestbrook.com](http://sarawestbrook.com)



When I am about to make a judgment I think of this story and remind myself to take a moment to put myself in the other person's shoes. What don't you know about them? How do you think they are feeling?

### 3. FOCUS ON YOUR UPOWER THOUGHT

Once you have become aware of your judgments, the thoughts you choose to replace them with are important. You need to replace them with something positive and powerful like a UPower Thought which comes from a choice you have made from the character traits you want to be known for.

My UPower thought is 'I choose to be respect myself and others.'

#### Here's how to create yours:

1. Start with the words 'I choose \_\_\_\_' and fill in the blank with a character trait you want to work on.
2. Whenever you notice yourself judging, replace it with your UPower Thought.

For me, I say to myself, "Does the choice I'm about to make show respect?" Ask the same question using Your UPower Thought.

3. Keep With It! The more you read it, think it, and say it – the more your brain will believe it and make choices from it.

### 4. BRING THE FOCUS BACK TO YOU

Have you ever noticed as soon as you start feeling grumpy you find a lot of things to complain about? That's because negativity grows like a weed.

If you are feeling insecure, unhappy or not good enough, it's easy to fall into negative thoughts about others. On the other hand, if you are feeling content with who you are, you are less likely to judge others.

When you find yourself judging others, it is a good time to reflect on what you could be doing to build your own happiness, confidence, and self esteem.

Take the time to write in your journal about the emotions you are feeling. Keeping a journal is a great way to examine your thoughts and emotions without fear of judgment.

As you write openly and honestly, you may find yourself judging your own thoughts. Take a breath. Then allow yourself to be honest with your thoughts. It can help you clear your mind and clarify what is going on for you.

#### If you or your child aren't sure where to start with journaling check out these resources:

1. The Remarkable Impact of Journaling on the Mental Health of Young People
2. The UPower Journal - full of stories, exercises, and quotes to guide the journaling process

Remembering that judging others does not define them, it defines me, helps me move through my judgments quickly!

Until next time,



*about  
the  
author*

Sara Westbrook is a Motivational Speaker/Singer/Author specializing in Resilience, Confidence & Mental Well-Being. She has performed her UPower presentations to over 250,000 students, parents and educators.

She is author of 'The UPower Journal' - a book for youth to not only express their thoughts and emotions, but also to build their confidence, resilience and mental well-being through the personal stories, many exercises and quotes found inside.

To book a presentation or to learn more about Sara visit [www.sarawestbrook.com](http://www.sarawestbrook.com)

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Parents Engaged in Education is a not-for-profit organization formed by experienced school council members to provide resources and skill building opportunities for parent leaders across the province.

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