



DUCHESNE HIGH SCHOOL

shaping leaders in mind, body, and spirit

Hi all,

One of my sources for inspiration and contemplation is *Comment* magazine, a publication that describes itself as “Public Theology for the Common Good.” The fall issue features an essay by David Brooks: “[The Feminine Way to Wisdom: Etty Hillesum, Edith Stein, and Simone Weil](#).” In it, Brooks connects the philosophers in a number of different ways, the most striking of which is the way the three were able to perform the seemingly simple act of paying attention. As Brooks puts it, “As you look deeper into the lives of Hillesum, Stein, and Weil, you begin to appreciate that attention is a moral act, maybe the primary moral act. The quality of attention you bring to the world determines what you see in the world, and ultimately what you do in the world.” In that spirit (and with the help of Brooks’ essay) I’d like to turn the attention of the next few letters to these remarkable women.

Etty Hillesum was a person completely unknown to me prior to reading Brooks’ essay. She was born into a non-observant Jewish, Dutch family in 1914. As a young woman, she was a harsh critic of both herself and those around her. Shortly after the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands, she found herself, “Forced to the ground [in prayer] by something stronger than [herself].” These prayers lead to the *Psalms*, Augustine, and eventually the conviction that, “the world could only be saved if it embraced the vision of love described by ‘the Jew Paul’ in his letter to the Corinthians.”

As the Nazi occupation intensified, Hillesum had an opportunity to flee the Netherlands, but instead volunteered at the Social Welfare for People in Transit Department serving the prisoners in any way she could. In this capacity, she witnessed many of the horrors of the Holocaust, but “She resolutely refused to hate the Nazis—refused to let Nazi barbarism evoke the same kind of barbarism in her own heart.” Instead of hating her oppressors, Hillesum’s attention turned to loving the oppressed. Eventually, her own name was on a death camp list and she was transported to Auschwitz where she was killed.

Brooks marvels at her change and growth in the face of such death and misery. How did the self-obsessed, hyper-critical teenager become the kind of young adult capable of finding joy and love in the presence of such hatred? Brooks believes it was her ability to pay “deep attention.” This attention allowed her to see others with “a loving gaze, a visual embrace that not only helped her feel what [they] were experiencing but also gave those around her the sense that she was right there with them, that she was sharing what they were going through.”

Attention as a moral act shines through in Hillesum’s story and serves as an inspiration. How can we pay attention to others (especially our students) in a way that lets them know we are “right there with them”?

Pax,

Dominic D’Urso



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Upcoming Events

September 22

Home Football: Friday night, Duchesne partners with “Coach to Cure MD” to raise awareness and support for finding a cure for Muscular Dystrophy.

September 25

Spirit Week: The 25th kicks off spirit week as we prepare for Homecoming. There will be a variety of costume contests and activities leading up to the big game and dance. Monday’s theme is Beach Day.

Home Tripleheader – Tennis, Volleyball, & Soccer

Lyons Day: Be sure to stop by Lyons for some ice cream in support of Duchesne!

September 26

Home Doubleheader – Soccer & Golf (Bogey): Tuesday’s Theme is Geek vs. Greek.

September 27

Wednesday’s Theme is Wild West vs. Dress Up

September 28

Home Volleyball

Jr/Sr Girls Football: We will play our annual girls football game in the stadium at 2:00. All are welcome. The theme for Thursday is Pink vs. Navy

September 29

Homecoming: Our pep rally will be at 2:00 and will include an introduction of our Homecoming court. The game begins at 7:00. The Homecoming court will also be introduced during halftime of the game. As usual, all of our families are welcome to attend both events.

Of course, Friday’s theme is BLUE & WHITE!!!

September 30

Homecoming Dance: The doors will open at 7:00 with the ceremony starting at 7:30. The dance will follow the ceremony and end at 9:30. Students attending the dance are required to stay until 9:00.

October 4

Power Hour



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October 6

2003 Soccer State Championship Reunion/Swiftie Night:

On Friday night we will honor the 2003 Boys Soccer State Championship prior to our game with Priory. At halftime, the danceline with over 100 grade-schoolers will perform. It should be a fantastic night. I hope everyone can make it.

October 9

Picture Re-Take Day: Our photographers will be on campus for the students who missed the first picture day and those who are dissatisfied with their pictures.

Home Doubleheader – Volleyball & Soccer

October 10

Blood Drive: Duchesne will host a blood drive in our PAC from 9:30-1:30. If you would like to donate, contact Mr. Schneider.

October 12

Last Day of Quarter 1

All School Mass: We will celebrate mass as a whole school community on Thursday. All of our families are welcome to attend; we'd love to see you. The mass will not start before 9:45. To ensure that we have enough chairs, please email Robyn Fuchs (rfuchs@duchesne-hs.org) if you plan to attend.

October 13

Career Day: Career Day is a half day of school. Students will start in their Communios at 7:45. From there, they will rotate through a variety of workshops. The morning will conclude with a career fair. More details coming soon.