

Sometimes we cannot see into the hearts of our children and measure their losses over this past year.

They are mostly resilient creatures, here in the moment to satisfy their needs and desires to grow, to learn and to be loved. This does not mean they don't feel loss.

They noticed the six-foot space from their friends.

They noticed the playground was absent of balls to share and not to play too close to another. Not talking at lunch was worth the price of being able to see your friends, even if only with a mask.

They noticed the numbered spaces they had to stand in while they waited to be escorted into school six feet apart.

They noticed and accepted these new rules to follow for they sensed the gravity of the pandemic.

How could they not when the whispers of family, friends, teachers, and the news all spoke of fear, hospitalizations, and mounting death tolls.

They saw families, communities, the country, and the world sacrificing and coming together acting in unison for a common purpose, to keep everyone safe.

They experienced hybrid models, remote learning, being left at home, to motivate themselves, in isolation from their friends, peers and teachers.
Far from ideal.

Then there was the quarantine, to stay home, if you were a close contact or if you got Covid. Another long stretch of time alone.

There were the long absences of being embraced by grandmas and grandpas, for fear of making them sick. Such a burden to be placed on a young heart.
Even now as things "open up", our students cannot return to talking freely at lunch. They sit in silence, six feet apart in all directions, waiting for all to finish their lunch so they can put their masks on to be social again.

This year saw zoom birthday parties and drive by celebrations. It saw graduations played out in the form of car parades and lawn signs. Proms without dancing. All of their norms morphed into something foreign. They have had to practice patience and restrictions that go against the nature of their youth.

So dear parents and friends of children everywhere, imagine the sorrows that they have silently counted this pandemic year.

Know their healing will unfold as they return to a more normal life where they can easily see a smile and respond to a frown, put their arms around each other, hug, cry, comfort, play, sing, dance and go about living in the moment to satisfy their needs and desires to learn, grow and to be loved.

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