

Nancy, 13 years old was dragging her feet as we accompanied her back to school this morning. She had been most irregular this year and she was thinking that she will be getting an earful from the Principal. While she had promised her family that she will return to school she was not sure if it would be a promise she could keep. As we headed toward the counselling room, she thought to herself, 'Ah... a lecture first before a scolding.'

However, when she opened the door, her classmates screamed 'Surprise!' and took turns to give her a welcome hug. Nancy was speechless and soon she had tears in her eyes as she heard stories about a recent class camp and the troubles some of her friends were getting into while tucking into pizza and cola. It was a party she had come back to and when the fun and laughter simmered, everyone got into a circle and took turns to share a memory, a feeling or a wish that they had about Nancy. Most said that they missed her and wished that she was back at school. One person reminded her that together with a few others, they had made a pact at the beginning of the year to stick together until they left school. The pact was based on the belief that when friends stuck together they could achieve anything.

Some of Nancy's friends did more than then just speak, they handed her a letter. Will just copy a selection of sentences from the various letters below:

*'Hey babe,*

*Long time no see. Without you, no fun at all. Can't forget the times with you. Forget the fights and arguments, we still friend you!'*

*'I also don't like school! But if we want to live happily ever after, suffer now enjoy later.'*

*'Why you sleep in class? Teacher talk very long is it? Next time you feel like sleeping, look at Rita's dimple and admire it. Haha 😊'*

*'Come back to school la! Trust me, in 4 years' time you will regret what you have done now. I was like you but my friends hit me with some sense so I share this with u'*

Toward the end of the circle, a girl shared 'We can't force you... you need to decide to come with us.' But, in the same breath she added with steely determination, 'The plan next week is that I will call 2 others at 5am and together, we will come to your home to wake you up and walk to school together.'

Nancy requested for the school timetable and her name tag. She will report to school on Monday.

People are experts of their own lifeworlds. They have the capacity to respond to life's challenges, to have a vision, to act, and to adapt...even if they are just 13 years old.

Enjoy your weekend.

Gerard

*[Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light. - Helen Keller](#)*