

Learning how to ‘Let Them’: a positive mindset

Assembly by Katie Proctor, Graduate Drama Assistant and Assistant Houseparent, March 2026

Standing here in this Cathedral, it’s hard not to feel a sense of perspective. These walls have witnessed centuries of people worrying, striving, hoping, failing, succeeding, and yet, here we are, still learning what it means to live well.

I want to start by being honest with you.

Recently, I received some news completely out of the blue that changed what the next few months of my life were going to look like. At that moment, I burst into tears in front of a room full of people. I genuinely felt like everything was unravelling. I had to rethink so much in a very short space of time.

And if I’m honest, at that moment, it felt overwhelming.

Like many people, and like many teachers, I struggle. I worry about doing enough, being enough, getting things right. I can find myself carrying stress that isn’t always mine to carry: other people’s expectations, other people’s views and reactions.

And if I’m really honest, I don’t just struggle with what people think of me. I sometimes struggle with what I think of others too. I catch myself judging, comparing, or forming opinions far too quickly, when actually, I don’t know the full story. That can weigh heavily, and it’s something I’m still learning to let go of.

There have been moments in my life, and in School, where I’ve cared far too much about what other people think of me. Over the last few months I’ve walked into rooms worrying about how I’m being perceived before I’ve even said a word. I replay what I might have said to a pupil or a member of staff that didn’t come out quite how I meant it and then find myself overthinking it for the rest of the day, replaying the conversation again and again. Then I wonder if I sounded confident enough, kind enough, good enough.

And at the very same time, I’ve caught myself doing the opposite, forming opinions about others far too quickly, making quiet judgements without knowing the full story. It made me realise how much energy we spend living in each other’s heads instead of our own. And how heavy that can feel. You have to learn to let go of both, the fear of being judged, and the habit of judging.

So I didn’t come across this message because I had everything sorted. I came across it because I needed it.

Last Term, my dad recommended a book to me, and with him being a wellness coach, I thought I'd give it a try. It's a book by Mel Robbins that centres around a simple idea called "The Let Them Theory." And as I started reading it, I realised I wasn't the only person who struggles with worries like this. It stopped me in my tracks, not because it was complicated, but because it was freeing.

The idea is this:

When something happens that you don't like, don't expect, or can't control – let them.

Let them have their opinion.

Let them go at a different pace to you.

Let them misunderstand you.

Because so much of our stress comes from trying to manage things that were never ours to control in the first place, especially other people.

When I first read that line – "There is nothing you can do that will ever allow you to control the emotional reactions in another human being, no matter how hard you try" – if I'm honest, I felt a bit deflated... and slightly annoyed. I wanted to believe that if I just tried hard enough, said the right thing, or did everything perfectly, I could keep everyone happy.

It helped me realise that while I should always lead with kindness and care, I don't have to carry the weight of managing everyone else's feelings. That weight was never mine to hold.

And when I applied that to the news I had received, when I stopped trying to control how everything would unfold, how everyone would react, something shifted. Instead of asking, "Why is this happening?" I began asking, "What can I do next?"

What is in our control is how we respond.

And there's a line that really stayed with me:

"The only person you are in control of is you. Your thoughts, your actions, your feelings."

When you really sit with that, it's both challenging and comforting. Because it reminds us that our energy is best spent not on managing everyone else – but on shaping who we choose to be.

We can choose how we treat others and how much effort we give.

We can choose whether we speak kindly to ourselves or constantly criticise.

And here's the part I didn't expect: when I started saying "let them," I began to see possibility instead of panic. I realised there were opportunities I hadn't noticed before. I realised I had more to offer than I'd been giving myself credit for. And very luckily, some incredible opportunities have since come my way, not because I controlled everything, but because I chose how to respond.

Success, in any form, rarely happens overnight. It's built quietly - through effort, consistency, patience, and resilience. Through showing up on the days when motivation is low. You need to stick to the plan, not the mood. You need to try again after disappointment. You need to trust that progress still counts, even when it's slow.

And here's the part I find most reassuring, you don't have to have it all figured out and my goodness I need to tell myself that too! You are living your life for the first time. You really don't have to have it all figured out. Of course you're learning. And that is not a weakness. That is called being human.

When other people's actions, words, or expectations begin to weigh you down, remember this: let them. And then gently bring your focus back to yourself; back to what you can control, back to the choices you make, back to the person you are becoming. In doing so, you give yourself something incredibly valuable: space to breathe.

And if, as a School community, we can learn to:

Let go of what drains us and hold onto what builds us, like kindness, effort, courage, perseverance, then we don't just make space for achievement. We make space for joy. And maybe the most important lesson of all is this:

You don't control everything, but you do control how you show up.

And that... is more than enough.