



Dear Bennie Class of 2018,

It is almost the end of April, and I write to you today with a sense of anticipation for the future and longing for the past. On the one hand, I miss you. It's been almost a year since we came together at your senior dinner and graduation. On the other hand, I wonder and ask myself how you are. Have there been good times, memories created? Have there been challenging times? If so, are you taking time to take care of you? I guess I literally wish we could come back together again for "Senior Dinner Round #2". If we did, I would still ask you to remember one thing, and that is, never forget you've "Got CSB." But this time around I would change in up a bit. How so?

At your senior dinner, I wanted you to remember that you had displayed courage during your four years on campus, each in your own way. You also showed various forms of strength. Like I said in 2018, you impressed me all four years here with your courage and strength. And lastly, I asked you to remember that you left here with a sense of what it meant to be "Benedictine." More specifically, I asked you to aim for a life that was whole and a true representation of who you are, not someone you pretend to be. A year later, my "letter from home" is still "Got CSB", but I have some different words to share this time around. Here goes....

The first new word I hope is running through your veins is compassion—compassion for yourself and others. I believe with all my heart we must practice compassion day in and day out, starting with ourselves. This does not have to mean grand gestures or big changes. It can be small steps, taken each day, throughout the day, from morning till evening, reminding yourself in ways that make sense to you that you are enough. In a similar manner, I hope you take steps to remind others, even the stranger, that they too are enough.

The second new word is silence. Just like I asked you a year ago to "listen with the ear of your heart," I also want you to spend time in silence—no phones, no social media alerts going off. Just silence. Where you choose to do this is up to you, but learn to be alone with yourself and give yourself time to think, feel, and just be. Do not fear the tears that may come if you are in silence with yourself. They can be cleansing and give you the opportunity to heal.

And the final word I want you to think of when you hear "Got CSB" is brave. In her book, "Daring Greatly," author Brené Brown explains to her readers that one of the most important things we can do in life is show up and be seen. Depending on the time and place, some of us are great at this and some of us struggle at times. I know that there are arenas in my life that I do not always want to practice this. Fear is a real emotion, and it is okay that we have it at times in our lives. In those moments of hesitation, however, I ask that you dig deep inside yourself and dare to show up. Be seen, use your voice. And when you need a push, remember you can always "lean back" to the people, places, and memories that you created during your time at CSB. In other words, CSB remains for you—the faculty and staff that still care about you, the special places on campus where memories were made, etc. So again, just know you can always return to us and ask for help.

In closing, may you know that you are missed, may you feel deep inside your soul you are worth being found, and may you never forget you've "Got CSB."

Always, KSDZ