

SCU Graduation Occasional Address

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BEd (Hons)(USyd), MBA(AGSM)

1.00 pm Saturday, 25 March 2017
Whitebrook Theatre, Lismore Campus

Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Ladies and Gentlemen and, most importantly, Graduates.

Congratulations. Well done. A great achievement.

It seems like only yesterday that I was sitting proudly holding my own newly conferred degree. If only I had known what lay ahead.

I was used to surprises, I had after all had a baby in the middle of my first degree. Then I was awarded the University medal – the first person to have such an honour in my field in 40 years. Then I won the NSW Dept. of Education prize for excellence in educational theory & practice – a the best trainee teacher in the state. I was sure my future in my chosen career was guaranteed. Boy was I wrong. The teachers union had done a deal with the department of education and there would be no teaching jobs for me for 7 years.

Not to worry – my husband was offered a promotion in Darwin and we relocated from Sydney. I called in to the local child care centre to place my daughter in occasional care and emerged having been asked to run Darwin Family Centres, all the child care and family support for the top end of Australia. I had 5 child care centres, 3 family day care scheme, a mobile pre-school unit and a family support unit. In my early 20's I had a job that anywhere else in Australia would have gone to someone in their 40s or 50s.

Some years later I found myself sitting clutching my second degree a Masters of Business Administration. The world class consulting companies McKenzie's and Boston Consulting Group were bidding again the Australia Graduated School of Management for my time and service. Again I knew my future in my chosen field was secure. Again I was wrong.

My 9 year old daughter was taken ill. She had an arrest. Her heart stopped beating and she stopped breathing. I breathed for her and pumped her heart until the ambulance arrived (an interminably long time). My daughter was raced to hospital and for the next 12 months she needed intensive nursing – we weren't sure if she would live or die. So I stayed home and became a full time carer. At the end of that time I gave a speech in Melbourne on Communication. AS the result of that speech I was asked to work with Portland Aluminium smelter, at the time the site with the most industrial unrest of any site in Australia. 18 months later Portland Aluminium smelter

was named the world bench mark culture for an aluminium smelter. I was head hunted to travel the globe and work with the top team of major global enterprises.

My message to you is **expect the unexpected**. Be ready for anything.

Within the next 10 years 40-70% of Australians will lose their jobs to digital disruption. We are in the age of smart machines. They are after YOUR JOB. The ONLY SECURITY is within yourself. Your success rests on your adaptability; your capacity to learn, unlearn and relearn; to train and retrain; to be bold and step out willing into the unknown – self author your life.

The degrees you have worked so hard to attain are but one step in this journey. Your life, your career & your success is 100% in your hands.

Here is my 5 point plan for success:-

1. Do what you love and learn what inspires you even if others put you down, mock or deride you.

One of the speeches I give to corporate audiences is "Could the Taxi Industry have come up with UBER". Logically the answer is yes – taxi drivers often own their own vehicles and are small scale entrepreneurs – however the paradigm prevalent in the Taxi industry would have ensured that anyone raising an UBER-type suggestion from within the taxi industry would have been drowned out by the naysayers.

UBER had to be birthed by outsiders who were IT savvy. People who looked at the world differently. Today thinking outside the box and following your passions are essentials of success.

2. Be brave enough to go where others dare not go.

My son-in law Steve has built himself a highly successful business out of Kingscliff.

A first class honours graduate in engineering and on the fast track at Siemens – a large global conglomerate - Steve decided he would give up his nice safe corporate job to run his own race. So he and a mate started up a little IT business selling sandwiches on line. When the government changed the regulations that made their business profitable they changed gears overnight and sold sandwiches through school canteens. This morphed into them being the financial system for most of the schools in Australia. If you have a school in the ACT or NT you have to use my Son-in-laws company. They have recently launched their system into the NDIS and have acquired shareholders such as Macquarie Bank and Westpac. Steve lives 5 minutes walk from work. He takes his new born son down the hill for coffee and a walk before work. He walks home for lunch and for dinner. He is living the dream because he dared to step outside of the mould and live life on his own terms. This is true for you too. Be brave follow your heart, your passion and your own lead.

3. Never stop growing as a human being.

The only constant in the future will be change and it will only speed up. The human brain doesn't like change. We like authenticity, familiarity and safety, three things that are going to be in increasingly scarce supply. We can however teach our brains to thrive on change. This is a life lesson, not an academic one. It involves our heart, our spirit and our physical body. It is challenging beyond belief. However, it is only those who stay emotionally, spiritually, intellectual and physically healthy who will thrive in the age of digital disruption. Put your health – emotional, spiritual, intellectual and physical as your highest priority. You are what you have to offer the world. Keep you safe and well.

4. Relationship and community is EVERYTHING

To grow a business, succeed in an existing business and be psychologically healthy we need to build healthy, sustainable relationships. Very few of us have learnt to do this – yet it will be the thing that makes or break us. If you are a whiz with people – great – if you are not start learning – now and fast.

5. Don't expect someone to do it for you yet know that you can't do it on your own

Don't expect someone to give you the optimum job, or teach you all you need to know or show you the ropes. You will need to take 100% responsibility for your own success and your own learning. This doesn't mean you have to do it alone, just that as you learn to self-author your life you will have to ask for help (powerful people do that – they ask for help), seek new avenues of learning, be responsible for your own success.

There is a very good chance you will need to start your own business – even if it is a one person business. Our government is removing the safety nets at a time when more and more people are going to need help. It is up to you to be creative, innovative and self-responsible.

I have found that when I live this way life is just really great fun.

Don't sweat the small stuff, know that when you stuff up and if you are to be successful you will stuff up – again and again and again -you can learn your biggest lessons. So relax and enjoy the ride.

Congratulations again on what you have achieved. The game of life awaits. Enjoy.