

Thank you. Good afternoon.

I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Presiding Officer, Deputy Chancellor Richard Freudenstein, presenting Dean of the Faculty, Professor Rae Cooper, Academic Staff, distinguished guests, graduates, your families and friends.

I would also like to acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and their elders past and present upon whose ancestral lands the University of Sydney is built and where we celebrate your graduation today.

To today's graduates, today is indeed a celebration and acknowledgement of what you have achieved at this wonderful institution.

Congratulations to you all and to your families whose support and encouragement will no doubt have been important in helping you get to where you are today.

And this today is indeed a great great institution. I grow more fond of it as the years pass and am delighted to be involved in ways such as this.

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year in a row that I have attended a graduation in the Great Hall as our children graduated here with Economics, Engineering and Project Management degrees in the past 2 years.

So – if you're counting, I've done or paid for 4 degrees here at Sydney University and hence I feel very committed!

I thought today that I would make some brief observations on the topic of "Some things I have learnt in the 37 years since walking out of this very same room like you will today".

Much of what I will say will relate to the workplace, to your vocations.

I am conscious that some of you have – or will – join large companies like mine or some smaller companies including maybe some start-ups, some to the public sector, some to the private, some more immediately to further study, perhaps academia, travel etc. I have framed what I say in the hope that some things in particular will resonate with you, as they have with me.

I'll give you some of the best quotes I have ever heard on the subject of what it takes to be successful (and not just in the workplace).

Because – now is the time for you to be successful in the next phases of your lives both personally and professionally and I am sure you all want that.

The first thing I would say is that your prospects of success will not be defined by your background or your postcode and nor should they be of course.

They will however be defined by things such as the following:

- Your values and integrity
- Your attitude
- Your discipline and self motivation
- Your ability to get on with people, including to display respect – building good relationships at all levels including in the workplace is so important – if nothing else, it makes your work life more enjoyable and can help get things done
- Your ability to focus on what is important
- Being the best you can
- And being a good person.

Which brings us to reputation and that issue of integrity.

The reputation you earn particularly for integrity can be built quite quickly actually – but it is commonly said that it is built over time – but that it can be lost in an instant.

Your reputation is surely something to treasure.

Be respectful but put yourselves out there to ask questions, to listen and learn and before you know it, you'll have the confidence to meaningfully contribute in whatever work environment you are in. Curiosity is a great thing – including asking people about themselves, their families, their interests etc. Asking questions makes you better informed and builds that confidence.

A great quote “The smartest person in the room isn’t the one who thinks they have all the answers – but rather the one who knows the right questions to ask to get to the right outcomes”.

And out of all this, you will be noticed for all the right things.

Some other observations from my experience:

People are often told – and you may well have been – find out what you love doing – and do that.

But logically it can take just a little time to work out exactly what that is.

So my advice is, don't give in too easily on your first job / your first employer if you don't love it straight away.

I nearly walked away a few times and am so very glad I didn't.

In the same vein – if promotions and recognition don't always come as quickly as you'd like, don't necessarily worry too much – good people and good talent almost always gets identified and rewarded.

Sometimes you will actually find a role that you love so much you don't want or need a promotion and that's fine.

In my Economics degree here, I studied Industrial Sociology – Mazlow's hierarchy of needs – no. 1 after safety / security / family etc is "Self-Actualisation, The Feeling of Achievement": You'll know it when you feel it.

Which reminds me – we can't all be leaders – i.e. in leadership roles – the maths don't work. There are fantastic and rewarding jobs and indeed careers in non-leadership roles.

Some quotes "successful people do what unsuccessful people aren't prepared to do" and "success is nothing more than a few simple disciplines practiced every day".

So – in any role whatever you do – my advice would be to find out what the measures of success are, what is expected to be achieved – and what outperformance would look like – and go do that.

Strive in whatever you do to make best practice common practice and act with what my CEO calls "pace" – that is – with the right level of urgency.

You'll get to know your strengths and weaknesses – play to your strengths and train your weaknesses.

The best quote I've ever heard for what senior people look for in young people "those who exhibit Ability plus Motivation plus Confidence multiplied by Accurate Role Perception.

Everyone here has ability but having the motivation to use that ability is obviously very important and developing confidence to really nail it.

Accurate role perception includes the must do's in the roles, the things you don't do etc and in turn critically what more you can do in the role to further the interests of your customer, your employer and in turn your career.

Second lastly, be a student of people's body language – it will tell you more than their words as to what they are thinking and help guide your approach to dealing with them.

Lastly, a career and work life, no matter in what area is like sport. Being in the contest is something to enjoy. You never know what is going to happen until you go on to the field.

Much of what I've spoken about today are some perspectives on some ways via which you may give yourselves the best chances of success.

Thank you very much for listening to me. Congratulations once again on one of the greatest and most memorable days of your lives.

Every best wish for the future wherever your paths may lead to.