

Congratulations, graduates, on your amazing achievement – today you have received your passport to the next phase of your life. Use it well.

It was 30 years ago – virtually to the day – that I was sitting in this same hall where you are sitting now, about to graduate with my Masters of Business Administration. I was about to undergo a significant change in my life as my visa allowing me to work in Australia was about to expire, and I was shortly to return to the UK. I did know what I wanted to do with my life though – my degree was my passport to what I wanted to do – which was to become a management consultant. Within a year of graduating in this hall, I was back in the UK, I had left my previous employer, Shell, and was starting a new career as a consultant with Coopers and Lybrand, and within three years, I was back in the city I had grown to love – Sydney.

Looking back now at my consulting career, that has taken me into factories and boardrooms in all corners of the world, I have learnt a number of principles that have allowed me to not only enjoy my work, but also enjoy my life. I would like to share some of these principles with you today.

The first is to have a plan. This might sound pretty basic, but I do believe that it is better to have an idea of where you want to go in order to get there, than just drift aimlessly. Just as any business should have a plan of what they want to achieve and when, so should every individual. Once I became a consultant, I had a plan that would take me to Partner in Coopers in five years, and I achieved that. I had a vision for the life that I wanted to lead with my family, and we achieved that. So set out your vision, set out your plan – you are then more likely to achieve what you want out of life. Oh – but do be realistic in your plan! I'm afraid that despite our numerous levels of politics in Australia, not all of you can be Prime Minister.

The second thing is be inspiring. What do I mean by that? Be positive, motivating and engaging. Be involved in your work and in the community. Seek out opportunities to improve yourself. A lot of people have said to me that I was lucky in my career and the opportunities I had – but I looked for those opportunities and grabbed them when they came along, including the opportunity to live in Singapore for 6 years. Create your own luck – seek out and grab the opportunities that come your way.

The third thing is to set a high bar – again let me explain. Be honest in everything that you do – covet integrity – in today's world it is so important to have honesty in everything you do as if you don't, you will be found out. You only need to read the press to see time after time how the past catches up with you. Demand the highest standards of yourself and those around you. I have always worked best when I have had a boss I respect and trust – and frankly when I have had a manager who did not live up to my expectations, that is the time to move on. Build trust and, as you grow in your careers, be aware of the impact of what you do on those around you. And as part of that, please be a good time manager. There is nothing I hated more than to be on time for a meeting, only to be kept waiting for another participant to arrive. And especially when you are leading a team. Be aware that by you being late, you are wasting everyone else's time, and frankly it just reflects on your inability to manage time, let alone a team.

There are many other principles that I have learnt over the years, that I do not have time to share with you today, but probably the most important of them all – and if there is one thing I want you to take away from this address – it is to be happy. Be happy in your work. Wake up

on Monday morning wanting to go to work, not waiting for the week to end. And if you are not happy, then move on – find another job or role – find something that you do want to do and pursue that. Frankly, if you are not happy in your work, it will be very difficult for you to succeed.

So, in conclusion, what have I learnt from 30 years of consulting? Firstly, have a plan, secondly, be inspiring, thirdly, set a high bar, but most important of all – be happy.

And my very best wishes to you all as you embark on the next stage of your life as a graduate of this wonderful University of Sydney.