



2015 DUX SPEECH

“There may come a time during Year 12 when the stresses of VCE become too overwhelming. This is not the time to throw in the towel, but the time to seek help from your family, friends and the staff here at the College. You will be quite astonished as to how many people are experts on it.”

It is a great honour and privilege to be speaking to you on behalf of the graduate class of 2015. Year 12 is a wonderfully rewarding year if you make it so, and a year which can open your eyes to your potential. Attaining an ATAR score in the 90s has some correlation to your ability, but it's just as much a thing you plan. It is also to do with the company you keep, with the people standing by your side through the hardships and the triumphs. To the boys here with me today and those who could not make it, I salute you, I thank you and congratulate all of you in our shared endeavour to do well. There was help from many who didn't get to 90, but succeeded too. It is after all a very arbitrary measure.

None of this would have happened if it wasn't for the support and guidance of the special people in our lives. To my friends, some of whom are here today, I thank you for constantly bringing me back to reality and, despite my frequent absences, showing me that Year 12 comes and goes, but true friends do not.

Throughout our journey we received the support of dedicated people. To the staff who taught us from Year 7, I thank you. To my teachers last year, in particular Ms Marshall, Ms Hubber, Ms Misso, Ms Beurs, Mr Dexter and Mr McDonald, thank you for inspiring me to push past my limits with such nurturing

guidance. A special thank you to Joelle for freeing me from myself, and to the man who discovered the fountain of youth, Mr McKail, who believed in me more than I did myself, and for that I am forever grateful.

I also have to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to a significant few in my life. Firstly, my brothers, Aeshan and Buddhike. They not only responded every time I sought help, but pushed me when I thought I didn't. Over and above this, they also made me an independent learner, and that is priceless. I have followed their advice and their example, and I will follow them once more in thanking, as they did, our simply amazing parents. If I was up early, they would be up that little bit earlier, my misery was their misery, my worry, my tiredness... was theirs. In a nutshell, my sacrifices were without a doubt their sacrifices. It's true of most kids I know that when you go through Year 12 your parents go through it as well. Nothing is ever too much trouble, but in saying this, nothing was ever really good enough. Mum, it is comforting to know that while 99.80 is good 99.85 sounds a little better.

I am reminded again today of the many Dux speeches I have witnessed over the years. In my view, the most significant and memorable part of those speeches was the motivation given to the future



graduates. It worked for me and it worked for many of my friends, who simply wanted to be a little bit better tomorrow than they were today.

I am often asked how I approached Year 12, or what strategies and techniques I implemented to help me prepare for exams. However, my honest advice to all of you is that you must develop your own unique study habits. Experiment and create a distinctive study pattern that you are comfortable with, and progressively alter it as your demands change. Remember that no two individuals are the same, and my unorthodox methods of studying may, or may not, be best suited for you.

Nevertheless, one thing is for certain and that is stress. There may come a time during Year 12 when the stresses of VCE become too overwhelming. This is not the time to throw in the towel, but the time to seek help from your family, friends and the staff here at the College.

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The Dux Proximus for 2015, John Valles, was one of the hardest working members of our cohort. His acceptance into undergraduate medicine at Monash University is testament to his determination. My point is that John was a soldier, and he inspired me with his unceasing work ethic. I encourage all of you to find your own John Valles, and find that inner ambition that pushes you to work hard and never give up, because life doesn't give you what you want. It gives you what you deserve. Ultimately, the four digits you will receive in December may, or may not, be a true reflection of your efforts in Year 12. But if you continually put in the effort, especially when weakness pesters you to stop, you will leave high school with no regrets. Best of all, you will have earned your self-respect. It took me quite

some time to realise this myself, but your ATAR does not define who you are. You define who you are. And it is never too late to change. As Shakespeare once said, "We know what we are, but know not what we may be".

For the past twelve years there has been a member of my family attending Salesian College. Aeshan, who was the College Captain, graduated in 2009, and Buddhike, who was the College Vice-Captain and Dux, graduated in 2011. As the youngest of the three, I would like to thank Salesian College for everything it has done for our family, and say on behalf of us all a very warm goodbye.

Thank you.

Nimesh Kularatne
2015 College Dux