



School Captain's Speech

Styron Augustus
2013 School Captain

Mr Brennan, Fr Papworth, staff of the College, proud parents and above all, graduates.

Giving a farewell speech is a great responsibility, or so I thought until I cast my mind back to my own experiences of listening to them. The speakers include College greats, Ashean Kularatne, Luke Daidone, Patrick Atallah and of course, Con. Their reflections have helped me enormously in writing this one because it turns out, I can't remember a single word they said. But it is a great privilege to be standing before you today. I feel many conflicting emotions: nostalgia, anticipation, accomplishment, and even disbelief as this schooling journey draws to an end. Maybe a place is only as good as the memories you take away from it. I for one, have some fantastic memories, each one unique in its own little way. All of us do.

There are a number of people that need to be thanked and recognised. First and foremost, to the teachers who have been with us every step of the way this year. It is your hard work, dedication and commitment to bringing out the best in your students that drives us to do our best. I believe I speak on behalf of all the boys here today when I say, I hope the results at the end of the year, do justice to the countless hours of preparation and work that goes into us. I would like to say a special thank you to Mr Beurs, Mrs Marshall, Miss Baxter, Mrs Polouse, Mrs Matheson, Miss Saya, and the thorn between the roses, Mr McKail. All of you have helped me immensely throughout this year. Your guidance and support is something I really do appreciate. McKail, you're someone I respect a lot and an absolute champion. I would also like to thank my fellow leadership team of House captains and Vice-captains, especially, Stephen and George. You two have every right to be reading this speech as much as I do. It has been a great privilege to work alongside you and I am really lucky to have had you guys to help along the way.

There are also four main peers I want to recognise.

First up, Tim Wells... Tim has been someone I have looked up to for quite some time. We became quite good friends in Year 9 and he is a really straight up, genuine person who calls it how he sees it. But Tim's greatest strength is his ability to work hard and his being dux of 4/5 subjects this year is a testament to that. Yet, Tim finds it within himself to help others where possible which I think is a really admirable trait. Too often we see people neglecting others when they become 'the next big thing'; but not Tim. You've helped us all mate and the time you have taken to run classes and study sessions is really appreciated. "A true friend never gets in your way unless you are going down". I think at times when it all felt too much, Tim was the one leading from the front academically and reminding us of what a bit of work can achieve.

One thing I have really learnt this year is that every single person has their own story. For some reason, in the hustle and bustle of our own lives, we seem to get so caught up with ourselves that we forget there are others who are doing it just as tough and who are equally important.

Dylan Chow... I have great respect for you. What you have been through this year is nothing short of extraordinary. I cannot imagine facing the troubles and challenges you have endured and still being able to hold your head up high the way you do. Dylan helped me to realise that life isn't always going to be happy times. Whilst many of you will already know that, it doesn't hurt to be reminded that throughout those tough times; it is the way you deal with the situations that makes you the person you are.

Chris Pearson... one of my closest peers who gave me a good lesson in appreciation. I never got to meet the man you once called Dad but I am sure he is up there somewhere looking down on you. Life isn't always going to be fair, but even so, make the days that you have count or more specifically, make your time at Salesian count. Get involved, I can't really say it any other way. Some of the best memories you can have are as part of the footy teams, music bands, social justice activities; whatever it is, get stuck into it and make every minute of it count. Chris is an unsung hero of our College and is a mate who has made this hectic year all the more bearable.

Finally, Mark Harper... My first friend at the College. Mark is someone who has walked this journey with me every step of the way. The thing I love about Mark is there is an innocence about him that is almost infectious. He has his own unique story but Mark taught me resilience. The thing I admire about him is that he is someone who always battles on and will drive himself into the ground to do the best he can. I encourage you all to do the same, work hard and don't give up. Whether it is in sport, music, drama, art or education, it doesn't matter. Be the best version of yourself and you'll be thankful later.

Exhibit humility, I assure you I have made a lot of mistakes. I have done some stupid things. But none of them bother me; all the mistakes, and the dopey things, all the times I was embarrassed, they don't matter. What matters is looking back, I know that, pretty much anytime I got the chance to do something cool, I tried to grab it. And that's where my comfort comes from.

So to the Salesian body of the years to come, if you take nothing away from this speech, at least remember this. You will not learn these lessons in popularity or material objects. Because when you start to look around and put value into things, there is always going to be someone with more than you. But rather you will learn them through interactions with people, because it is relationships with people that ground you and will matter most, when your time comes.

Now to my Mum and Dad, sitting up there.... Well Mum, I did it. I would just like to say I could not have asked for two better people to call Mum and Dad. You are the two most important people in my life. I hope one day I will make you proud and fill you with a sense of joy within yourselves to repay you for all the sacrifices you have made for me and my sister. I cannot thank you enough.

To my fellow Year 12's... Despite how difficult it has been at times and how much you blokes complain, it has been one hell of a ride. I want to thank each and every one of you for making this time one that will be remembered for a long time to come. Yet we are finally here. As we stand on the threshold of what is sometimes called 'real life', I wish you every success and happiness, because you guys are good blokes who I know will always be good blokes. I have been asked to give the final charge to the graduates, yet I assure you it is nothing compared to the charge you have just given me.

And no matter what you do or where you find yourself in the years to come. Remember two things; firstly, you are part of a lifetime brotherhood. You are a part of something big. And no matter what challenges you may face, you will always have something that sets you apart from the rest, you're a Salesian. You're a Chaddy boy. And with that comes a great honour and pride, be proud of it and embrace it.

I don't see you guys as mates, but rather brothers. You've enlightened me in your own unique ways and I won't forget a single one of you.

We are no longer those little boys clinging tightly to our textbooks, we are about to set off and do our own things. And so I would like to leave you with a final reflection. Most of you will know them but they are two of the most perfect quotes. "Hakuna Matata" – it means no worries. Kickback, relax; it'll all sort itself out. And "your heart is free," so have the damn courage to follow it.

Thank you.

