

Thank you. Good Afternoon

Deputy Chancellor, Pro Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, members of the Schools, within the Division of Health and Sciences and the Division of Business, graduands, proud parents, family and friends.

Graduation Day is a great time to savor your efforts, celebrate knowledge gained, your achievements and thank family and friends who have supported, encouraged, pushed you along over the last few years.

However, the knowledge that you have gained is not *really* yours to keep. It needs to be shared, given away. Having it can seem powerful but sharing, giving it away for the good of people in the community, is a much more powerful experience - as we get so much back.

UniSA has a tradition of encouraging staff, students, and graduates to give back to the community in some way.

They recognise that we do have a social responsibility to use our knowledge, voluntarily, for the benefit of others.

I feel very honoured to be asked to give this Occasional Address. At the same time, highly intimidated!

In the process of thinking what I might speak about today, I realized that I could'nt remember a single word from what I had heard at my own graduation.

So a little perspective came into play!

Also, a little clarity.

The Schools represented here are essentially people centred - people focused areas of work. As professionals your business will be to respond to, get results, for the people/companies/organisations that you work with.

I have been immersed in the people business for the last 27 years. Based on that, I believe there are two essential people business elements - the Power of Regard and the Importance of Self-Intimidation.

Firstly, the Power of Regard

Regard for the 'other' is an attitude, a belief system - it brings an elemental sense of our connectedness as humans.

Regard begins with the recognition that each of us carries a story, the story of our *unique* life circumstance, the story that has shaped *who* we are today.

I believe Regard is *more* than respect, being non-judgmental, being accepting as professionals. It is much more alive. It's a powerful engagement strategy, a vibrant tool.

At Catherine House, we keenly promote a model of Regard for clients, staff and volunteers. It particularly applies to how we initially engage with clients, how we proactively seek out innovative services/programs, aimed at ending women's homelessness.

As well as, the value we put on providing an attractive, safe, welcoming physical environment for clients.

We work with over 700 women, affected by homelessness, each year.

Women come to us with numerous problem-centred labels: medical, mental health, substance misuse, behavioural, social status *labels*.

Labels that have been assigned to them by professional assessment, or other social processes, they have encountered.

Labels can inhibit Regard prevent us as professionals from finding who the person *really* is – the *person* behind the label.

People are much, much, more than the sum of their presenting issues/problems.

The Power of Regard – embracing the value of finding who the person is *first*, through listening - *hearing* - their story, leads to a different approach to problem solving.

It's not new. It is just the same as getting to know what your customer wants in business, in marketing.

No business relationship, marketing campaign, can start without a lot of research and analysis; leading to the development of a strategy designed to deliver the best possible results for the customer.

Nothing mysterious about it.

I would argue that the Power of Regard – the time spent in *really* hearing a person's story, giving honour to their life experience, has the greatest potential to achieve better outcomes for clients, for business and undoubtedly more satisfaction for us as practitioners in the people business.

The second element, the Importance of Self-Intimidation – heavy language! Initially, I was going to use the word challenge.

The importance of challenge in our life. However, I feel the word challenge has been somewhat neutered, hijacked, has almost become passive.

It has become a catch-call for so much. It has such a wide spectrum of meaning. Challenge might be applied to not having a biscuit with my coffee, or at the other end of the scale - climbing a mountain!

Self-intimidation is a much more confronting concept!

For me, self-intimidation is about being open to the adventure of life, being vulnerable to its possibilities. Taking control, responsibility - adding richness to my life.

Letting go of the 'timid' self!

Saying *Yes* to the unknown. Being ready to go into that fearful place where we are out of our comfort zone, ready to grab life's opportunities – even the scary ones – stretch our sense of self!

Today's career marketplace is one of constant change. It requires us to be responsive, flexible, adaptable. Prepared to change jobs, do further study, re-invent career paths.

My career, my life story is replete with 'self-intimidating' moments of change and growth. To date - I have had five quite different, fascinating, careers.

It took me almost 12 months to accept the role of Director at Catherine House. It was a highly intimidating time. I just loved my job working with the corporate sector. I had no real reason to move on.

A big block for me was that I had no experience in the homelessness field.

However, I came to see that in each of my previous four roles, it had been exactly the same. Each had also been a brand new area of work.

So I went for it. Self-intimidated myself into saying, Yes.

It paid off!! Again!

It has been quite an amazing journey, I have learnt so much.

In my first 2 years in the role I met 6 women that I knew personally - including one from my time at UniSA. I quickly came to see that homelessness defies class and social standing in our community.

If I had not been at Catherine House I would never have trekked/climbed to Mt. Everest Base Camp - as a complete, utter, novice in March 2004. To raise funds to establish our Vocational Education and Employment Centre.

It would not have happened.

The Importance of Self-Intimidation as a strategy to take you higher, where you never imagined, to your full human potential – cannot be underestimated.

Passion for life and work is a great gift. It can often take some effort to find it, courage to embrace it, energy to hang on to its rollercoaster effect but what a buzz when you do!

Passion is the parent of Regard and Self-intimidation.

I thank the university, especially Dr Anna Ciccarelli, for the invitation to speak to you. It has been a fine intimidating experience!

I also thank her, and other staff at UniSA, for their interest in helping Catherine House to find the right level, type, of support for women entering university from our vocational educational program.

I sincerely wish you all well.

I regard you highly, as one UniSA graduate to another, and I wish you all a *keenly* self-intimidating life!

Thank you.