

Uni SA Graduation Ceremony 8th August 2012

I would like to acknowledge this land that we meet on today is the traditional lands for the Kurna people and that we respect their spiritual relationship with their country. I also acknowledge the Kurna people as the custodians of the Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Kurna people today.

Deputy Chancellor Dr Wendy Craik, Vice Chancellor Professor Peter Høj, distinguished guests, graduands, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for inviting me to say a few words today.

Congratulations on your wonderful achievement in completing requirements for your studies. This is a fantastic recognition of your commitment to pursuing excellence in your chosen fields and I'm sure that you will all be successful in whatever you choose to do next. I would like to acknowledge the depth of skills and talent in the room today and I look forward to seeing the impact that each of you makes as you start the next stage of your life journey.

Today I would like to share with you the 3 key things that I have learned over my career.

Have courage to try new things and get out of your comfort zone:

When I finished studying and started work in the pharmaceutical industry, I had a great boss and mentor who encouraged me to try new roles which took me out of my comfort zone. This allowed me to learn what I liked and what I was good at. I spent 10 years in pharmaceuticals and did everything from IT manager, project manager, business development, research and development and operations. We then moved to Melbourne and I got a job at the ANZ bank. This was a wonderful opportunity to work for a large organisation and further develop my leadership and technical skills. I worked in various roles from corporate and institutional banking, personal banking, Hong Kong for a couple of years and my last role before moving back to Adelaide was Chief Operating Officer for ANZ Pacific. I was grateful for this opportunity to learn about different cultures and be exposed to many challenging situations. 3.5 years ago, we moved back to Adelaide to take up the role in agribusiness with Elders. Personally I have learned so many things through having the courage to develop and practice new skills, listening and acting on feedback, being open to new ideas, different ways of thinking and a love of learning.

Be yourself and you will be happy and successful:

You will have some great ideas about what you want to do now that you have completed your studies and there are probably just as many people telling you that it is a good idea as well as not a good idea! Being yourself and being successful means different things to all of us. You are all successful today, at this point in time, celebrating the achievement of your studies both undergraduate and post graduate. One of the things that I have learned is that you will always be successful doing what you love. Other people may encourage you to do what they love, have courage, learn about yourself and follow your heart. For me it has taken time to learn about myself, what I love and what being myself and being successful means to me. "Being myself" for me is to be of service to others and to do my best to make a positive difference to the world.

Contribute your skills to our community:

The skills that you have developed during your studies are crucial for all of us to learn from. One of the best ways I know to help teach others what you have learned is to volunteer in community and sporting activities. This is a great way of giving back to Australia (and the world) as well as using your skills to make a positive difference. I volunteer with a number of organisations and I am always amazed with how much volunteers contribute to society in general and are so generous with their time, skills and money. Volunteering with an organisation that you are interested in will allow you to put your skills into practice and start getting experience in your field of study.

Life is a gift, make every minute count, you have the gift of knowledge, please choose to share that with us to make the world a better place for all to live.

Congratulations and best wishes for all that you choose to do today and into the future.

Thank you