

*Mr Malcolm Hyde AO University of South Australia Graduation Speech  
Wednesday 28 August 2013  
Adelaide Convention Centre*

To the Chancellor, Dr Ian Gould, Vice Chancellor, University officials and academic staff, special guests, graduands and ladies and gentlemen.

This is a significant occasion for those graduating and for your friends and family.

University qualifications have been an important part of my working and personal life. I left school at year 11 to join the police force in Victoria, but I always wanted to go to university. A few years later I studied externally for year 12 and then gained admittance to the law school at Melbourne University where I studied part time while working. It took a number of years. Then I had an opportunity to study for an MBA at Melbourne University which I did.

These studies helped me greatly throughout my career. I applied them to my work as a police officer and they gave me confidence and credibility in my capability to achieve things. This helped to do challenging, interesting and rewarding work. They helped make some aspirations in my career a reality.

No doubt when you enrolled you did so for a purpose.

Some of you may have simply wanted to gain the qualification you were conferred today and you have achieved what you wanted.

Others, most of you, would have seen your studies as an important part of your future.

It is important in life to have a purpose.

This is illustrated by one of the most powerful books I have read – Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl. He was a Jewish psychiatrist in Nazi Germany before WWII, and he had written a manuscript on his theory of why people need a purpose in life, to make sense and understand what happens to them in life. The purpose of each person is unique to them and in finding that purpose, it was necessary to externalise it, to ask what life expects from them, rather than say it is what you want.

He was placed in a concentration camp and his manuscript destroyed. He tested his theory in the camp and found that people who did not have a purpose did not survive. Rewriting his manuscript, he understood was the purpose expected of him, and to do so he needed to survive.

Those graduating will have your own aspirations for life. It will be helpful if you ask yourself, what does life expect from me? The point of Viktor Frankl is not to enter into a debate about existentialism, but to highlight the importance of having purpose in your life.

I have always found it useful to have goals.

I encourage all of you to have some element of your aspirations to help others, to add value to the community. We should all remember that we only pass this way once and we should take every opportunity when we can to help others.

I could do this in my career as a police officer, to help individuals in their time of need when I was in the lower ranks and as I went higher, I could work to help to provide a better police service to the community.

I have been on the Board of St John's Ambulance for more than 10 years. And I have recently become involved in a number of other not-for-profit boards.

You can all provide a service to the community by simply being the best you can at whatever career you chose. The community needs good services from a wide variety of sectors. You can also put some of your time into expressly helping others.

And as you go through life, remember the golden rule – whatever you put in you will get out. This is often expressed in different ways, for example for Beatles fans in a line in the song Abbey Road – the amount of love you take equals the amount of love you make. So if you want friends, be a friend. If you want help, help others. If you want love, love others. If you want your employer to value you, value your employer. Remember though, that people and life are fickle, but this rule will mostly work truly.

Congratulations to you all.

Best wishes on your journey through life – may the sun shine on your face and the wind be at your back.