

## **Mother and Daughter Breakfast, Thursday 9 June 2022**

### **Amelia Tripodi, 2018 Old Scholar and former College Captain, Address**

Hi everyone, I am honoured to have been asked to come back today to share with you all about my journey after school, and some important life lessons I have learnt in this time. But in reality I wouldn't say my journey has been the conventional one out of school.

I began my school journey right here at St Francis de Sales 16 years ago as 5 year old Reception, that was excited to start school and be a big girl like my three older brothers that were also attending here and boy does that feel like a lifetime ago.

I spent all 13 years of my schooling here as mentioned, with both the College and myself changing and growing over this time. But for me I didn't grow too much and my mum was the winner from that, only having a total of two summer school uniforms as one lasted me nine years by just adjusting the hem until the uniform policy changed and we had to get the white collar dress – I know, has to be the luckiest parent.

I have always loved school, learning was always my thing but Year 12 I have got to say it, and I am sure all the Year 12s in the room agree with me, is stressful. Deciding what you want to do with your life, where you want to do it, what uni you want to do it at, whether you want to go to uni are massive questions to be answering as a 16/17/18 year old.

After graduating in 2018 I knew I was going to begin my next journey in university, however was unsure what I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I was sure I wanted to go into the healthcare sector but couldn't quite put my finger on what I was to do next. After applying to all SA universities I accepted a position to study a Bachelor of Medical Science at Flinders University, in the hopes to one day be a medical researcher. So in 2019, after 6 months of this degree, I realised I hated it! Hated working in a Lab each week cause it was very individualised work and there was to be no talking when in the Labs and from there I knew this was not the job for me.

So I sat down with my family, and friends and said what do I do, I have no idea what I am going to do with the rest of my life and I hate this uni degree I have started. Honestly I felt like I was failing outside of school already! So together we decided to figure out the things I did like doing. I decided that I like working with people, I like learning about health systems and I was not exactly opposed to dealing with gross bodily fluids, so from there I decided that I would apply for a transfer and start a Bachelor of Nursing degree.

So in 2020 I embarked on my career change of nursing and boy did I not realise what was ahead of me! I attended five weeks of classes before the dreaded COVID entered all of our lives. This basically changed everything in my life as I am sure it did to all of you. I was turned into an online robot that had gone from timetable this and schedule that to sitting in my bedroom most days listening to my uni tutorial doing nothing! It was completely un motivating. I didn't do any practical or clinical nursing skills for my entire first year of studies, and I definitely said to myself whose gonna want to have me as a nurse and once again questioned is this right for me, and feeling like again a failure. But I call myself lucky as I had one thing in my life that kept me going, this was Calisthenics!

I have been a dancer since I was three years of age but have been doing Cali since I was eight. It is a sport that has taught me so many values, skills and attributes such as, teamwork, hard work, persistence, time management, passion, competitiveness and leadership through both individual and team competitions. In 2020 I was competing and coaching a team and COVID changed even the Cali lifestyle. Competitions and lessons were postponed, or cancelled and basically I felt like everything was falling apart.

So I rallied. I felt if I was feeling like this, dull and depressed everyone was feeling like this so with the strong Cali community that we are we began zooming lessons. Now for those that don't know much about Cali there are multiple apparatuses involved and gymnastic style moves so to do it in confined rooms is basically impossible but that didn't matter. These zoom lessons kept everyone involved! I got to see my friends we kept updated in life events and we got to hang out. For the girls I was coaching we did stretch and flex classes and competitions to see who could do five push-ups first, just silly little things but for all of us this kept us motivated in such an unmotivating time. And personally this is what got me through what was such a tough year and showed me the importance of having an extracurricular, hobby or outlet does for your lives. Cali kept a spark in my life, kept me connected to my friends and was a motivator that the world will become normal again after this pandemic. Because of Cali I stuck with nursing as it reminded me that COVID life wasn't normal life. It helped me realise that I would go back to in person uni and there I can see if this is this is the right career for me.

So in 2021 I went to my first nursing tutorial and clinical skills lab and thought wow I like this and from there embarked on my first placement as a second year student. I went to Mt Barker Hospital and I remember coming home from my first day and saying to mum - I am the luckiest person I have found the career I want to do for the rest of my life. I was in love! And ever since then I have been in love with my career! I then went on to have a placement at the Gumeracha Hospital and finally this year in my third and final year I have begun a placement at the Women's and Children's Hospital in the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit where I hope to find a job next year or in the Oncology Unit.

I believe I am very lucky that I have found two of the many loves of my life – Cali and nursing and my word of advice for everyone no matter what age is to find your spark, whether it is Netball, Chess, Computer Gaming, Dancing, Cali, Running, Gym-ing, whatever it is is so important. As a child it taught me friendship, as a high school student it taught me time management skills and as an adult and uni student it has taught me passion and commitment. And trust me, I get it at times, I have also been on my way to training thinking all I want to be doing is laying on the couch watching that new episode of Bridgeton or catching up with friends to see that new Top Gun movie but trust me I would not be where I am today or the person I am today without finding my outlet.

At the end of the day my four years out of school have taught me many things.

In my first year I learnt that feeling like a failure wasn't bad but was important and helped me realise that I wasn't satisfied with my career decision and that I needed to seek out a new pathway.

2020 through COVID taught me a new way to learn to persevere and not give up, to find that thing that keeps you motivated and keep going.

2021 was a year that showed me change was for the good. I felt justified in my decision to change my career path and found within myself.

And finally 2022 this is a scary year, I am almost at the end of my journey and is a symbol that hard work pays off.

I hope you can take something out of my story today. I thank St Francis for inviting me back to speak and I wish all students good luck with all their future endeavours. Thank you for listening.