

2012 College Dux Address

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Good morning everyone and thank you for having me.

Initial Memories

I was fortunate enough to complete my entire schooling at St Francis. I started in Reception and some of my earliest memories were running races around the tree in the top courtyard and being convinced that the Convent on the hill was haunted.

I have incredibly fond memories of my primary and middle school years and I was fortunate enough to be taught by some exceptional teachers.

Academically, I was fairly unremarkable during my middle school years, and I was convinced that I would play soccer professionally.

However, through a lack of ability, the dream of soccer stardom quickly faded, and I recall that at the start of Year 10, I made the decision to eventually go to university.

Year 12

During Year 12, I was totally obsessed with achieving the highest ATAR possible. I devoted the entire year to study and academic achievement.

In hindsight, my obsession with achieving the perfect ATAR was borderline unhealthy, but I was steadfast on being the best version of myself.

After graduating school and before my ATAR results were released, I travelled overseas to Vietnam to volunteer at an orphanage for children with disabilities. During this trip, I witnessed some harrowing and tragic sights.

Although this was confronting at the time, it was incredibly important that I received this reality check, especially as I had spent the entirety of Year 12 being self-absorbed.

University and Post Grad

With my ATAR of 98.05, I was accepted into a double degree of a Bachelor of Law and a Bachelor of Media at the University of Adelaide.

My first year of university was overwhelming and I remember my first ever law lecture left me completely traumatised.

My 'Foundations of Law' Lecturer advised us of the over-saturation of law graduates in South Australia. That is, each year, there are enough law graduates from University of Adelaide alone to replace every single position in the entire legal profession. The Lecturer then explained that there are another two law schools in South Australia with the same problem.

Statistically, it was highly unlikely that we would find a job practicing law.

My trepidation was further compounded by the fact that the big law firms in Adelaide would receive over 300 applications for their summer internships each year. They would then only accept 3-4 interns.

Despite this sense of fear, I managed to pass all of my subjects and I graduated with Honours.

Work

During my last year of university, I worked as a law clerk in a firm in the city. This firm specialised in insolvency and corporate restructuring. While it sounds impressive, I absolutely hated it and I was disenchanted with the entire legal profession. I had no idea what type of law I wanted to practice and whether I would even have a job.

Then, on a random Wednesday afternoon, my now mother-in-law sent me a business card of a solicitor named Kylie who was based in Kadina on the Yorke Peninsula. With nothing to lose, I called Kylie that night and asked if I could undertake some work experience with her. Fortunately, Kylie agreed and after my week of work experience, she offered me a job.

In 2018, my wife and I then relocated to Moonta Bay and I started work as a law graduate at this firm.

I then completed my Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice and in November 2018, I was admitted as a barrister and solicitor in the Supreme Court of South Australia. Once admitted, I was able to practice law and I was an official member of the legal fraternity.

I am now a senior associate at that same firm with a primary focus on Family Law, Wills and Estates and Succession Planning. My work provides me with a great deal of satisfaction as I am helping people on a daily basis.

Although I could never have envisioned being a country practitioner, I wouldn't change it for the world. While there are stressful and frustrating days at work, I truly love what I do.

Advice

Now, by way of a conclusion, I would like to offer 5 pieces of advice that I've learnt during my academic and professional journey: -

1. You need to establish and maintain a healthy relationship with yourself.
2. There is no substitute for hard work. I actually found this quite reassuring, as hard work is often the only variable that you can control.
3. Modesty is key. The most intelligent and successful people that I have met have complete control of their ego and are never boastful.
4. Money will not fix anything or anyone.
5. Life will take you where you need to be. I am a firm believer that with hard work and optimism, you will be guided and protected on your journey.