

## GRADUATION SPEECH

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JUNE 27, 2019

Distinguished Guests, Dr. Moacdieh, Dear Teachers and Staff, Dear Parents and Class of 2019.

I am truly honored and blessed to be standing here this evening as the special speaker for this special occasion and I sincerely thank my dear good friend and colleague, Principal Dr. Chris for inviting me.

Dear Graduates. You are today at a very important crossroad and milestone in your lives. It is true that you have completed one important chapter and will soon embark on another, but you are now at the crossroad of choices, and the choices you make in the coming months will shape and determine the rest of your lives.

Many questions are now raised. What to major in? Which university to join and whether to stay in the country or travel? Let me give you seven advices that will help you in your forthcoming academic journey. Seven pointers that may equip you with the required tools for a successful life.

### **1. Follow your Heart.**

Most students are under a lot of pressure from their families, teachers and society in general about which course of study to follow. On one hand there is what you want and on the other what the market imposes or what makes you gain money. My advice is to follow your heart, study a discipline that you love, that you enjoy, that you do not detest. Goethe, the famous German poet in his masterpiece Faust says and I quote: *It is only what comes from the heart that reaches the heart*". I have spent over 40 years of my life teaching university students, if my heart was not engaged in it, it would have been a life career but a life sentence. So major in what you love and give it all your love.

### **2. Pick a University with a conscience.**

There are many universities today at home and abroad that offer degrees, but not all of them offer an education with ethical values and a conscience. Nowadays, information can be obtained while sitting at home but a proper education requires a solid foundation. Read the Mission of the university that you have chosen, see if it has values mentioned in it. What is the value of a degree in Computer Science if it prepares you to become a hacker or spread viruses?

What is the greatness in becoming a biologist if it prepares you to create Frankensteins in your lab or mutilate human bodies. ***what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul?***

So rule number 2 – get an education with a conscience.

### **3. Be an Actor and not a Spectator.**

When you join a university, you have two options: either to live passively, marginally and go through academic life as a spectator watching a movie, or you can be an active participant, an engaged, committed actor in your university life. In his play *As you like it*, William Shakespeare says *All the world's a stage, and all men and women are players*. Be an active participant in the classroom, ask questions, debate critically, object, don't consider all that the professor says as descended truths, check it out. As for the extra curricular activities, join in as many clubs as you can, participate in sports and live your life to the fullest.

If you do not like the current situation, change it. Be the change you want to see. God Gave each of you talents according to his ability, don't waste them, use them and multiply them.

### **4. Appreciate Unity in Diversity.**

You are lucky to be graduating from an excellent high school with high standards and clean atmosphere. But the world out there is not so sheltered and you may have to step out of your cocoons. In university or at work, You may for the first time meet someone from another culture, another religion or even of different color. Do not be afraid from "the other" - remember the first article of the Declaration of the Bill of Human Rights: "All Human beings are born free and equal in dignity and Rights. Many people think that the 18 denominations of Lebanon is our curse, but I personally think that it is a blessing. It is such a great wealth to be able for all of us to live all of us together and have unity in diversity. Remember, that had it not been for its different colors, a rainbow would have never been perceived. Look at a symphony orchestra, each musician plays a different instrument but we all play the same tunes. Let us then achieve unity in diversity.

### **5. Be a boomerang and not an arrow.**

You may choose soon to leave this country and emigrate. Or maybe you will just go abroad to study. As Tayeb Saleh says the famous Sudanese Writer said it may be "A season of Migration". Gebran Khalil Gebran says that you are the living like arrows which are set forth from the bows of your parents, be arrows that soar high built also be boomerangs as well, For an arrow goes forth but does not come back. Whereas the boomerang is a tool which always returns to the point of its initial launching. Lebanon's biggest industry is the exportation of the best of its graduates and brains. This country needs your expertise, your brilliance and creativity, So if you opt to go out, Go, specialize but always come back.

6. **Be GLOCAL.** Think Globally, act Locally. In the history of the Middle East, we have always had extreme views in our outlook towards the West or the North. Some consider that whatever is foreign is perfect and whatever is local is inferior in quality. Others are totally the opposite. They have a xenophobia, a fear of all that is foreign, or strange. My advice to you is to be Glocal. Think Globally - Act Locally. Look what is globally happening in the modern world, what are its innovations, what are the new updated sciences, adopt them, but act locally, apply only whatever works, whatever your culture and values can tolerate, be selective, but be selective in excellence and not in mediocrity.
7. Finally, my last advice to today is to **Count your Blessings** - Bless the Lord every day. Thank the Lord for his blessings, for giving you the parents you have, the teachers, the choices and the light to guide you through the darkness of life. Remember you are a special, unique human being, you are a graduate of CTI, you have been well prepared for the challenges of life and you are not alone. Like Beacons in the dark go and shine and spread your good will all thought out the world.

Congratulations Class of 2019 again and best of luck.

Thank You