



19 May 2012
Fraser Coast Graduation Ceremony
Guest Speech

Nigel Chong

Good morning Chancellor Mrs Brazil, Vice Chancellor Professor Thomas, Faculty, Honoured guests, Ladies and gentleman, and especially, Graduands of 2012.

I would like to start by thanking the Chancellor, Mrs Brazil & the VC Professor Thomas for this incredible invitation and their kind words in the opening address. It is a great honour to be invited to present the graduation speech at what I consider to be “my University and my campus”.

In 2002 I turned 42 and I was the stereotypical mature age student, married, 3 children and living off one income. From a family perspective it was tough, but from a personal perspective – “I did it” and I hope today you all feel something of what I did ...empowered with a little a touch of relief.

In 2002, I embarked on a journey. The journey started at USQ/Fraser Coast in the BN program. I completed my degree at the end of 2004 of which my family and I moved home to Southern NSW/ Nth Western Victoria, where I was offered a graduate year as a Registered nurse.

The next 3 years I progressed from graduate RN to associate charge/ clinical educator within the hospitals operating theatre suite. I also attained my certification in Dialysis Nursing along with specialities in accident and emergency and retrieval, which complemented my qualifications as a qualified paramedic.

In 2007 my journey put my family and I on another road to Tasmania, where both Sarah and I took up positions at the University of Tasmania (UTas) School of Nursing and Midwifery (SNM). My wife Sarah was offered a position with UTas as a level B academic within the school, and I was quite happy to work as a part time academic and RN at the local base hospital, but this was not meant to be.

The journey from what I perceived to be the ideal life style changed direction quite significantly leading to my current position as Academic, Manager of National Simulation Operations and Development for the School of Nursing & Midwifery.

To describe in detail this journey would take more time than we have here today, but hear is the abridged version. In 2008 I was offered a teaching fellow position to develop high fidelity simulation based clinical education into the curriculum. In 2009 due to the success of this project I was appointed as coordinator of simulation operations to design, consult on infrastructure and simulation curriculum development in the undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing program across all 4 campuses. In 2010 I was appointed into my current role managing the simulation portfolio for the SNM as well as advising the faculty and partners in health. In the past 2 years the recognised success of our programs in simulated based education has gained national and international recognition, has given me the opportunity to travel to America twice, and more recently as opening key note speak at international teaching conferences in San Diego, San Francisco along with New Zealand and the Asia Pacific in 2013. I am proud of my contribution that I have made

to nursing and clinical education developments here in Australia and internationally. When I graduated from USQ Fraser coast I never dreamed that I would be invited to present to academic colleagues at internationally renowned universities such as Stanford, the University of San Francisco, and most recently completing the Instructor training program facilitated by the Centre for Medical Simulation, Harvard.

So where will your journey take you? Which road will you choose to travel? Or will the road choose you? Sometimes the best challenges, the best journeys, are the ones that came along unexpectedly. The role I now undertake for UTas, came along completely unexpectedly. This road chose me, you could say, I was in the right place at the right time. But in saying that, I was the right person for that place at that time. It's the unexpected that has brought me, full circle, back here today with the honour of talking to you all.

For all of you, today, no matter which discipline, graduate, postgraduate, you have reached a junction- a give way sign- but definitely not a stop sign. Today is not the end of your journey but just the beginning of a new journey. No matter where you go, the key to your individual success will be to develop yourselves as a leader in your chosen career. Carve a niche for yourself, don't just be content just to follow, continue to challenge yourselves, take some risks, some will work and some may not, but all will be a learning experience to enhance your underpinning knowledge and add to help you to grow further as an individual.

Steve Jobs in his opening address at Stanford University said....

“Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma - which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition”

As I reflect on Steve's words, I say to you, take the time to learn about yourself, understand your strengths but also acknowledge your weaknesses. This will allow you to focus on where you can improve to meet your individual needs.

Graduands from business, do a SWOT analysis on yourself. Nursing check your vital signs regularly, lawyers, cross examine yourself occasionally, commerce don't always believe what you see, always have that critical eye and education do a lesson plan on yourselves rather than your students.

Sitting here today in front of me I can see graduands from a variety of schools and faculties. All your degrees are different and there is a representation of all levels of academic achievement. Yet you all have one thing in common.

We all...are member of the University of Southern Queensland Alumni. We are the product of a great institution which has its grounding reputation in producing leaders of the future and experts in their chosen field. By being here today you... have proven that you have achieved what is required to be part of this prestigious group. I

hope you will cherish the memories and hold in high esteem those academics that have nurtured, mentored you to this very moment of your journey.

On the stage behind me there is a very special person to whom I am proud to know, who mentored me and gave me the guidance and the occasional firm hand, which gave me the foundations to continue on my journey. Our graduate year affectionately called her mum, you know her as Fraser coast Acting Provost Trudy Yuginovich. I am sure you all have someone who has changed your lives whilst on this journey.

Last evening my wife and I arrived on the coast and came straight to the Uni campus to witness the nursing graduates receive their school awards. Unfortunately we arrived towards the end of the ceremony. But at the end of proceedings Sarah and I stepped into the auditorium and were greeted with the warmth and affection of a family member who had just returned from a long journey. That is what USQ is about. It will always be the home away from home. The place where you started your journey, the place that will always be there for you personally and scholastically. A fellow graduate of 2004 and dear friend Keppel Schafer gave the function address last night, he is here today. We have not seen each other for 8 years, but for us, we have spent the time together reminiscing the wonderful memories of our years as undergraduates of this university, and like us, It is now a lifelong influence in “your” life.

That is why in my opening statement I said I consider this to be “my university and my campus”, as now it is for you. As you leave here today you will take with you the foundations from your education at USQ, which will empower you to grow, but you have also left a small piece of you in this universities soul, that makes USQ what it is today.

My journey, I am sure will make many more changes in direction. I am excited as to what the future may bring, I am driven, to be empowered by the experience.

In closing

Live your dreams; thank those who have supported you in achieving this goal.
Continue to be true to yourself.

I leave you with 2 quotes:

Mother Teresa said:

“I can do what you cannot. You can do what I cannot, but together we can do great things”

And the second quote is from me:

“Remember on your life long Journey there are no such thing as obstacles, just challenges that lead to endless possibilities”

Thank you.