

Title: Life is a Journey

The Vice Chancellor, the University Council, parents and guardians and most importantly, distinguished gradaunds, ladies and gentlemen.

This may sound cliché but I am genuinely honoured to have been chosen to speak to you today. Thank you very much.

I have a simple message to share with you all, **“Life is a Journey and not a destination”**.

I am sure you have all gone through many strenuous nights and days just to get here today.

Well done!!

But I would like to sound a word of caution. This is only the beginning.

I am certain most of you graduands, family members and spouses are extremely proud of yourselves today, which is good but I would like to say, **Yes** give yourselves a pat on the back but this is only beginning of another phase of your life's journey.

One of my bosses Yoosi Amonoo Neizer in the early stages of my career used to say and I paraphrase **“What you do during your school going days determines what is likely to happen to you in your working life and what you do in the working stage of your life determines what or how you will live during your pension.**

You have all come to a successful end of an important stage in your lives
“You have earned a masters degree” – wow.

I am sure however you all had various reasons for pursuing a second degree.

Some of you may have come back to school because;

- You wanted to better yourselves by learning more
- Others may have come back because they wanted a promotion at their work places
- Others came back because it was the “in” thing to do and
- Others just may have come back because they were bored and needed a change.

Whatever your reasons were, it doesn’t really matter.

You have the degree now, how you choose to use it will determine what becomes of you.

You are all adults now and are therefore responsible for the consequence of whatever actions you take. **Choose Right.**

Some of us will think just because we have a Masters Degree we are entitled to a promotion and the corner office. No it doesn’t work out like that.

In the real world meritocracy is the order of the day and in most of the well sort after institutions you may be aspiring to work in or run.

These institutions did not become reputable just because people sat there and did nothing and expected things to just work out.

I dare say that by acquiring a degree we have been equipped with the requisite skills to work better. Contribute your quota to society. Make a conscious effort to improve whatever environment you find yourselves in.

Remember that people will be expecting a lot more from you

Whiles at the Havard Business School, during an executive program this year, the Dean of the Executive Programs narrated a story to us. There was this gentleman who had attended this great institution, had worked very hard for 20 years after his Masters Program. He was goal oriented and probably one of the best at meeting his targets in his work place.

However, when it got to them choosing the next President/C.E.O of the firm, he did not make it. **You know why?** All he did was work.

He didn't create a good network of strategic alliances and as the saying goes, don't just **Work Hard, Work Smart**.

As you go up the corporate ladder, the skills required to survive are different. Your ability to **network** and the need to be **emotionally intelligent** become prime. Some of us are just stuck in the importance of our degrees and past achievements that we forget that the world is a dynamic place and things keep changing. "You need to move with the times".

You need to form strategic alliances and by that I am not talking about meddling in the bad office politics of talking unfavourably about your other colleagues and boot lickers etc.

Be **Honest**, but **Polite**, have a view point but be **Flexible**. Believe in the **Collective Genius** of your team.

By so doing you will create your own cheer leaders who can only give a good review about you when they are asked. That is how you can get to the top.

In this part of the world many people seem to think that someone is supposed to create our future for us. You have all the requisite skills needed to survive in this tough world.

Apply the knowledge you have acquired, **That is Wisdom**, Be patient, as I said earlier on, life is a journey and not a destination.

Be in competition with yourself and no-one else. Be better than who you were yesterday and contribute your quota to society and finally believe in yourself.

I believe I have said a lot and would therefore like to be ending with a few more words. I started my career after my undergrad as a broker with an investment banking firm, opened my mind to absorb as much good behavior as possible, learnt from my mistakes, moved on to my current employer – (I have been there for almost 15 years) and worked myself through the ranks on merit and became the first female director in charge of business.

I deem it a big feat, as in the financial sector, which is very male dominated.
It wasn't easy,

It took **Determination, Hardwork, Integrity, Self Believe** and last but not the least the Grace of God Almighty to be where I am now.

Life is great but it is not perfect.

As Charles Swindoll once said "Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you respond to it".

I urge you all to go out there and shine, make us all proud, make Ghana proud.

Amongst you are future captains of industry, social influences, upright civil servants. You are our future.

Nothing is impossible. You can do it.

Thank you very much and May God Bless us all.