

Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, distinguished guests, fellow graduates, University staff and guests. On behalf of the graduates receiving their awards today, I would like to thank Federation University Academic staff whose skill and guidance have helped transform us into the professionals I see here before me.

Also, parents, many in attendance today, whose support throughout this educational journey has been unwavering and steadfast I thank you for being the one constant we can always count on.

Fellow students for your help and support over the years, whether it be in study groups or online, the wisdom of your fellow peers can never be underestimated, success does not happen in isolation.

Three weeks ago, I was at work and after a discussion with my boss, I emailed the university to let them know that due to work commitments I would be unable to attend my graduation ceremony.

The next day I got a phone call asking me to respond on behalf of all graduates attending today's graduation ceremony.

I didn't even talk to my boss, without hesitation, I accepted over the phone. I knew my boss would understand and, sometimes it is easier to ask for forgiveness than ask for permission.

Then the realisation hit me, what was I going to talk about, what could I say to try and inspire and motivate my fellow graduates for a successful move into the next stage of their lives as a graduate of Federation University Australia.

I thought I would start with a few things about my journey to be here today, at least if I am talking about myself, it should sound like I know what I am talking about.

We have all travelled our own journeys to be here today, from every corner of the state, every corner of the country and from every corner of the world,

Looking out at the fresh faces of my fellow graduates I realise some of our journeys may have been a little longer than others,

I look back on my journey, I didn't finish high school, I didn't need to, I was going to join the family business,

My father would say, 'You can't over estimate the value of a trade',

Every male in my family for the past 80 years has been a butcher, and that was the path that I was to follow, don't get me wrong, being a butcher is a very handy skill to have, after all these years I can still go back and do it, because cows are still the same shape.

In the late 80's, I got a chance to get into underground mining and have spent the past 28 years gaining hands on experience, and mining knowledge that resulted in me moving from underground operator to Managing the Technical Services department of our mine.

So, there I was, no technical qualifications but providing guidance and instruction to Engineers, Geologists, and Surveyors,

Although there was never any issue within the team, I always had some self-doubt about the fact I was not qualified and I was giving instruction to a group of people that collectively had over thirty years of tertiary education.

So my Federation University journey began, the nights of cursing and swearing in the middle of the night whilst in my little 3 x 4 room on the mine site, 250km south of Cloncurry in Queensland.

Trying to prompt my brain cells into action, brain cells that I am pretty sure I had killed 30 years ago.

So my journey is back to front, you, my fellow graduates are now qualified and looking toward a long career in your chosen field, I have had a long career in an industry that I truly love working in, and now I am qualified to stand with my peers, without the self-doubt.

We have all gathered here today to celebrate as one, our journey and our accomplishments. We have succeeded, we have achieved our goal and tomorrow we will step out and we will impose our new-found knowledge and belief onto an unsuspecting world.

Irrespective of the discipline you have graduated from, Information Technology, Engineering, Science or Mining, you are now qualified in your chosen field and you are about to embark on a career,

A career that can take you places all around the world, how far you want to go, is up to you, success won't come and get you, you need to continuously strive for it

Don't follow the path, make your own path, you will encounter crossroads, or forks in the path, you will need to have the confidence to make decisions on which direction you travel,

Sometimes you may need a little luck, luck doesn't just happen, luck is where preparation and opportunity meet, preparation will ensure you can maximise the opportunities that come your way

Be humble enough to continue learning, ask for help, as the saying goes, you should strive to learn something new every day, to learn, you need to ask questions, and actively listen to the answers.

Listening is paramount if you have ambitions of being a leader, leaders who don't listen will eventually find themselves surrounded by people who have nothing to say.

Remember, if you are talking, you are just repeating something you already know, so listen and learn.

When my father passed away, folded up in his wallet was a piece of paper that he had carried with him for many years, I will now share with you what was on that precious piece of paper

If you think you are beaten, you are
If you think you dare not, you don't
If you would like to win, but think you can't
It's almost certain you won't

If you think you will lose, you are lost
Since out in our world we find
Success begins with a person's will
It's all in your state of mind

Life's battles don't always go
To the stronger or faster hand
But sooner or later the person who wins
Is the one who thinks..... 'I CAN'

Today is the start of the rest of your life

Thank you

Live Long and Prosper.