

'Chancellor, Mr John Stanhope AM; Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jane den Hollander AO; academic staff, distinguished guests, graduands, family and friends'

I would like to thank Deakin University for two honours – first for conferring upon me the Alfred Deakin¹ Professorship, and second for the honour of being able to address those assembled who are graduating from Deakin University today.

1 Our values

You have attended a University that aspires to display the values of excellence, ethics, inclusiveness and sustainability.

Excellence - Striving for excellence in our work and taking pride in being the best we can be.

Ethics - Adopting the highest standards of professional behaviour and integrity.

Inclusiveness- Embrace and value diversity, and so nurture an integrated, safe and respectful community.

Sustainability- working towards a future that promotes economic, environmental and social sustainability

We, your University, your Alma Mater – if you will forgive my Latin – hope these values will influence and inspire your attitudes and behaviours throughout your careers.

At Deakin University you have all worked hard to acquire knowledge and skills. How you use & adapt the knowledge and skills in life, is influenced by your attitudes, whilst your performance will be judged by others on your behaviours. Your attitudes and behaviours will be inspired by your values.

2 Our attitudes and behaviours

I would like to encourage each of you as you look forward to the future, to be positive, to be patient, to be professional and to be polite.

2.1 Be positive

Your University Degree has placed you on a promising trajectory,

So that although you have no right to feel “entitled”, you have every right to be confident your future will work out for the best.

2.1a You will experience moments of self-doubt, as the world of work often appears uncertain, and sometimes harsh.

¹ Alfred Deakin was born 3 August, 1856 and died 7 October, 1919. Deakin was the Prime Minister of Australia on three separate occasions: 24 September, 1903 to 27 April, 1904; 5 July, 1905 to 13 November, 1908; and 2 June, 1909 to 29 April, 1910. He was Leader of the Protectionist Party 1901 to 1910 and of the Liberal “Fusion” Party 1909 to 1910. Deakin represented the electorate of Ballarat, Victoria 1901 to 1913.

In these moments of self-doubt you need be self-aware, and perform a reality check.

Remember who you are, your character strengths, what skills you have, and stay true to the values you hold dear.

2.1b The world of work is dynamic and ever-changing, so never be too proud to acquire new knowledge and skills.

But with the right values, your attitudes should not change, and they will guide how you adapt your behaviours to each situation.

2.1c In reality the world of work is vast, awash with opportunity, But climbing the first rungs on your career ladder may take time, you may be tempted to doubt, so

2.2 Be patient

You may not know where you are bound [Tom Paxton] – a period of wandering and wondering is a common experience.

Give yourself time to find out what you really want to do – you will.

There are enough jobs in the world for each one of you to be professionally satisfied.

Allow the opportunities inherent in the 'flow of life' to guide you in partnership with your own goals, some of which you will realise in retrospect, were better refined or replaced.

There will be times when you will need to start afresh, travel in a different direction. You need patience and perseverance when these changes are challenging.

"in every life you have some trouble, when you worry you make it double" [Bob Marley}

2.3 Be professional

And in your world of work be professional. Be inspired by the Deakin values of excellence, ethics, inclusiveness and sustainability.

2.3.1 Walk in everyday – no matter how miserable you are feeling

2.3.2 Regard your colleagues as your allies. Celebrate each others' success even though there will be those moments when you think "that would be great if that would have been me." Although you will be in competition with colleagues for a promotion, do not let this undermine your humanity. There will be plenty of opportunities coming your way – don't be afraid of competition and don't be ugly because of competition.

2.3.3 Respond constructively to feedback and criticism. Be grateful for feedback even when it is critical. It gives you an opportunity to improve – take it.

Being professional means having the insight and awareness to learn from failure. Failing can be humbling, but for those who do not puff themselves up too much, failing should not end in humiliation. You will often learn more from failure than success.

2.3.4 Being Professional will sometimes mean advocating for yourself

“This is my skillset

This is what I can do

Let me try and prove myself”

2.3.5 Don't be arrogant, don't lack insight about your abilities, don't be afraid to admit
“I need advice”

2.4 Be polite – it's about respect

2.4.1 Treat everyone with respect no matter who they are. At work and in life, say please, say thank-you, realise your superiors may be struggling too. Start by knowing everyone's names, and without prying try to make a connection.

2.4.2 If you want others to be good to you – be good to them. Develop your Emotional Intelligence, a term coined in 1995 by Daniel Goleman:
Recognising your own and others emotions and managing them constructively towards a good outcome.²

2.4.3 Don't undermine your professionalism. There's no better way than by losing your temper. If you are tempted, close the door, and make sure no one can hear you!

Avoid being defensive, wary or aggressive behavior. These will undermine your performance, no matter how skilled [competent you think] you are.

2.4.5 Part of being polite is being punctual – for work and for meetings and appointments - If you are late you are saying your time is more important than that everyone else; you show a lack of respect.

3 So in summary,

Stay true to your values, including the Deakin values of excellence, ethics, inclusiveness and sustainability. As you use and adapt your knowledge and skills, your achievements and your likeability will depend on your attitudes and behaviours: so be positive, be patient, be professional and be polite.

² The term EI was first coined by psychologist Daniel Goleman in his seminal book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* in 1995. This was further popularised and became the dominant leadership theory by his Harvard Business review article *What makes a leader?* In 1998.

I congratulate each of you graduating today; I wish you a successful professional career, and also a happy and fulfilling life. Please help make the world a better, and more sustainable place.