

## Presentation Night Speech 2015 - Clare Entwisle

On my wedding day, I hoped for a long and happy life with the man I loved. When my first child was born and he nestled in, I was over whelmed with love and I had high hopes for this little man. And so I did with my subsequent children. As the years passed I hoped they would overcome adversity, persevere through a rough patch, do well at school, have friends, remain healthy.

When I held my grandchildren, with the wisdom of years I hoped their lives would be replete with plenty of laughter, love and that their dreams would be fulfilled. I still hold that hope

After my mother died, I hoped my Father would be able to overcome his grief and still enjoy the last years left to him. On hearing the prognosis that my sister had early onset alzheimers I hoped that the progress would be slow. Another sister received grim news and I hoped the course of her illness would not be predictable. Hope sustains us in difficult times I still hope for advances in medicine, for cures to be found,. I hold onto the belief that where there is life there is hope.

When someone is unwell, we send our hope for a speedy recovery. A friend experiences difficulties, a rough patch and we hope they persist. A colleague retires or moves from employment, we hope they thrive. Someone marries, has a child, graduates and we wish them well in each stage of their lives. We genuinely express our hope for them and for positive outcomes.

I buy a tattslotto ticket in the hope a fortune will be bestowed on me. When the staff purchase a lotto ticket, they buy shares in hope.

I head off to the footy in all my colours and hope again that the team plays well and wins the four points. Past results have seen that I am fuelled by false hope.

As Principal at Kew I hope we have created an excellent school with a strong culture and authentic values, that we meet the needs of our students, that they feel safe and connected, that the teachers have developed strong bonds with them, that they are engaged and motivated. I have high hope that the cohort of students graduating tonight is well prepared and capable of forging their successful futures

But no matter how much I hope, how intensely I hope, I cannot transfer that to someone else. I cannot effect change because I offer hope, or have a burning desire for something for someone else. I only have a limited locus of control.

The hope that drives us and impacts on our lives, has to come from within, emanate from our core. It cannot be relayed or transmitted from someone else.

For Plato hope was a foolish counsellor. Sophocles held that human suffering was prolonged by hope. Others articulated that hope is an illusion. I choose to disagree. Scientific examinations of hope commenced in the 1950s when it was defined in terms of goal expectancies and subsequently in the 1990s the hope theory was developed.

Hope becomes reality when you set appropriate goals and monitor your progress. People with hope have the will, the pathways and strategies necessary to achieve their goals. They recognise that they have agency, an ability to shape what happens in the everyday. Hope is a belief your future will be better than the present, plus a belief that you can make it so. Hope is the state of mind that helps you navigate life's twists or turns and motivates you to move forward when times are rough.

We have all manner of medical tests to gauge our health but the best test as an indicator of a fulfilled life is the hope test.

Hope is an attribute that can be measured and increased. The research has shown that those who score higher on the hope scale

- Cope better with injuries and pain
- Score higher in satisfaction, self esteem and optimism
- Perform better in sport and
- Excel in academics

Hopeful thinkers experience more happiness, achieve and accomplish more and are physically and psychologically healthier (Snyder). Hope lifts your spirits, buoys your energy, changes your day to day behaviours, making life worth living.

*The capacity for hope is the most significant fact of life. It provides human beings with a sense of destination and the energy to get started* (Norman Cousins)

The British patriotic first world war song *Keep the Home Fires Burning*, includes the lyrics *Turn the dark cloud inside out until the boys come home*. It called on their kin to remain positive, to hold out hope that their sons and daughters would return to their embrace. All they could depend on was that flicker of hope.

*Man of La Mancha*, based on a Miguel de Cervantes 1615 masterpiece, recounts the story of Don Quixote who holds up the bright light of hope against the backdrop of the Spanish Inquisition in a time when there was little reason to hope. It highlights *man's unquenchable spirit. Man's idealism, his ability to dream the impossible dream, the quest to follow the star, no matter how hopeless, no matter how far.*

History gives endless examples of campaigns driven by individuals hoping for change.

Eddie Mabo, a Torres Strait Islander, campaigned passionately for Indigenous land rights and saw his hopes were realised in a landmark decision of the High Court of Australia.

A recently aired 4 Corners program relayed the story of a secret network which liberated over 500 women and children mostly from the minority Yazidi population. The leader, Khalil, was inspired to give people hope that for them a bright light is on the horizon.

Aung San Suu Kyi was sustained her fervour through years of persecution but her hope came to fruition on the fifth anniversary of her release from house arrest as she led her democracy party to win the unwinnable election.

Aid agencies in the refugee camps in Middle East and Africa are *hungry for hope*, but fear time and resources are running out

*Hope in A divided country* was the headline and the story behind it described Israel's West Bank and the hope that drives people to continue existing there even in extreme and unsafe conditions.

Clive James, the celebrated Australian writer and broadcaster, is terminally ill, but has written poetry expressing the slender thread of hope that keeps him alive:

*Come Autumn and its leaves will turn to flame*

*What I must do*

*Is live to see that. That will end the game.....*

The yellow ribbon has been adopted as the symbol of hope for various campaigns from suicide prevention to national road safety and by the Sierra Leone journalists dreaming of an end to the disease of Ebola.

What drives people to risk their lives making a hazardous journey in an overcrowded, insecure and leaky boat to reach a foreign land, except for hope of a better life. People mass on the borders in Eastern Europe, scale barbed wire fences, accepting the possibility of an exchange with guards and police who will transport them back if they are captured- all because they believe, they trust, they hope for a new existence. These people hope against hope when all seems lost. This faint hope is enough to spur them on.

I pass hesitantly by the beggars in the streets of Ho Chi Minh City and wonder how long can hope sustain them. Is there indeed a time limit on hope?

“A man devoid of hope and conscious of being so has ceased to belong to the future.” (Albert Camus)

Today we see people who are overcome with utter hopelessness. Some have dashed hope or realise they hoped in vain. People sustain a broken heart - a heart devoid of hope.

But what is it that stops some people from being driven to despair? Just a glimmer of hope that things will improve.

People cling to a hope for the best even in the face of adversity (Alexander Pope) for hope breathes eternal.

We see photos of strife overseas, war, destruction, people fleeing their home land with few possessions. What did the majority of us do to earn a life in such a privileged place? It is the luck of the draw that we are born here, in what has been deemed the world's most liveable city. Our National Anthem talks about our land that abounds in nature's gifts of beauty rich and rare. We should regularly be thankful for our lot and seek to support others as a result.

As a child I was reared with certain rituals. Before a meal we said our thankyou for the abundance of food we were about to receive.

At night, before bed, it was expected that we said 'thankyou' for the day we had experienced, with all its ups and downs.

As I receive a gift, a kind word, a helping hand, an act of generosity I say 'thanks' as I have been raised to do. But for some even the common 'please' and 'thankyou', are missing from their daily vocabulary. Things are taken for granted.

We are ensconced in the "must haves", we have redefined the list of absolute essentials and we forget the true essentials. We feel we have a right to it all. It is the era of entitlement. There is a distinct lack of gratitude for the riches we have.

*Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not; remember that what you now have was once among the things you only hoped for.*(Epicurus)

In the recent surfing championships, Mick Fanning managed to punch the shark who came dangerously near. An ordeal like that, a close shave, will prompt gratitude, but we should not wait for the wakeup call to realise that life is precious, to be thankful for each day.

Perhaps we should follow the US and celebrate Thanksgiving day, ensuring that at least once a year gratitude is our focus.

*Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues but the parent of all others.* (Marcus Tullius Cicero)

Sometimes I sit on the beach after a hectic week, taking in the surroundings. I inhale deeply and as my worries dissipate, I am consciously thankful for my occupation, my colleagues, my family, my friends and my health. I remind myself not to be so busy that I forget to relish what I have.

As a common habit each day, reflect on your riches, on what providence has provided, express true gratitude for the prosperity you have, all that has come your way, in order to put the rest of the days in perspective.

Cultivating an attitude of gratitude has been linked to better health, sounder sleep, less anxiety and depression and higher long term satisfaction. (Article by John Tierney) It leads to optimistic futures. The more you are thankful, the more you have to be thankful for.

*No one who achieves success does so without the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude.* (Alfred North Whitehead)

Be grateful for your chances, experiences and opportunities, for your education, your learning, the people with whom you have come in contact, those who went out of their way for you, the teachers, family and friends who recognised your abilities and accepted you as an individual. Be thankful that you can make a unique contribution and affect change.

*The greatest blessings of mankind are within us and within our reach. A wise man is content with his lot, whatever it may be, without wishing for what he has not.* (Lucius Anneus Seneca)

You are our hope for the future.

Throughout your days, be grateful for all that life brings and build your capacity for hope which is so necessary to sustain you in difficult times. Remember with each new day, each sunrise brings with it renewed hope.

Rely on the cornerstones of hope and gratitude, the 2 pillars essential on which to build a positive and fulfilled life.