

2018 HSC COLLEGE DUX SPEECH – AHMED KHAN

Good morning, Mr Ronchetti, students, teachers, parents, and distinguished guests. It is with great privilege that I stand before you today in the 60th year of St Dominic's College history, honoured at being the DUX for 2018. It fills me with great pride to be able to celebrate and recognise not only the myriad of academic awards here but also the efforts and achievements of all the students of the 2018 graduated class. Today I would like to share with you my experiences that got me to this position, in hopes to provide advice for the whole cohort assembled here today, that can be used not only in academics but any aspect of life.

I would like to mention that throughout my schooling I was never the smartest kid, but I always was the hardest working, thus I knew I was going to do quite well in my HSC, but never did I think I was going to attain an ATAR so high. Like many of you sitting here today, I remember watching the DUX speeches and pondering upon how does one do so well? Did you have to be a person that never goes out and locks themselves in a room studying nonstop? Or was it possible to have a grouse weekend with the lads and still be able to do well? I wondered this for years, but upon reflection I realised there were 3 vital components that allowed me to receive a 99.50 ATAR and study Medicine and fortunately for everyone here I shall provide this advice for free. Furthermore, just to restate, this advice doesn't only apply to studies but can be used for whatever goals you have in life whether it is to become a sportsman, musician, actor, or businessman.

My first and most important tip for success is to find your 'why', which is the reason you are wanting to do whatever it is you want to do. And no, it's not as simple as saying 'because I want to make first grade' or 'because I'm interested in studying engineering'. They are just goals, it has to be bigger than that and it has to be specific. Once you find this purpose, make sure you write it down or put it as your phone screensaver so that in the process of achieving your goals when times get hard or when you want to quit you can look back at it to see why you started in the first place. Therefore, it allows you to always be giving 100% and allows you to never be satisfied until the goal is achieved, thus stopping you from becoming complacent and keeping you grounded and humble when successfully completing short term goals. For instance, my goal was to study medicine and become a surgeon but my 'why/purpose' stemmed from a trip to Pakistan at the start of year 11, which allowed me to see where my fate could have lied if it wasn't for my father making the bold trip to Australia. Seeing the conditions over there resonated with me as that's where I could have been living. This experience allowed me to become grateful and form my 'why' which was to 'take advantage of the opportunity of a lifetime in the lifetime of the opportunity'. I knew I wasn't going to be in high school forever, and it was a couple short years that could give me a large head start on life in terms of setting myself up. I knew I had to go 100% hard out because I lived in such an amazing country such as Australia and I knew my situation could have been much worse.

And that leads me to my second tip for success which is 'become obsessed'. Now what I mean by this is to completely shift your mindset and focus on the one goal you have. Make it the first thing you think of when you wake up and last thing you think of before you go to sleep. Saturate yourself with things that can assist you in achieving your goals. Choose your circle

wisely. It's about doing all the small things right. For example, during my HSC year I would do anything and everything to assist in my studies like waking up early, seeking constant feedback from teachers, missing out on weekends with the lads, and even doing every question in HSC past papers and textbooks. I knew I had to be like this because I had the likes of Trent and Thomas after me, so I appreciate you guys for pushing me.

My final tip is to never doubt yourself and always back yourself in every situation, whether faced with failures or immense pressures, you are human and you are enough to accomplish anything, always stay positive as God has a plan for you. I remember before my half yearly for English I had a really bad panic type attack because I was so nervous and it didn't help that Mr Ronchetti had me hooked on coffee, but I ended up getting 100% on that exam and after that I realised the importance of positive thinking.

I would now like to thank the people who made it possible for me to be here, this could take a while.

To my dearest mother I appreciate everything you have done for me, even the little things like waking me up early in the morning, pushing me to always be my best, paying for all my resources, driving me to wherever I needed, cooking me amazing meals and just providing the greatest support, I love you and will never be able to describe it in words.

To my dad, without you there is no way I would even be in this position, so I am forever in your debt, I love you so much and you're the best dad a son could ask for.

To my big bro bazzie, everything I've ever wanted to do in life is after you and I appreciate you for being such a great role model for me, you're a real one.

To all the lads that came today, Manny, Sam, Tinashe, Keenan and to all the lads that couldn't, thanks for always holding it down and keeping me humble and allowing me to relax and have a good time in my time off from studies.

To all the Staff at St Dominic's, I appreciate all of you for showing up each day and making it possible for this school to run, you truly are our greatest resource. I won't have time to name all of you but if we have ever had a chat in the yard or you've assisted me in thinking about my future I thank you a lot.

To Mr Gorton I appreciate all the hard work you put in to ensure that we were ready for the HSC year. Mr Turner, by far the scariest man I've laid eyes on who is actually a big softie, thank you for controlling the whole year group in all aspects of life, not only pushing us to do our best but being a good bloke with little things like checking up on us regularly and having a chat. Mr Ronchetti, I appreciate the direction you are moving the school into, constantly reminding us to be our best but putting focuses on all dimensions of schooling life really has assisted in turning these boys to men. To Mrs Edwards, Mr Culican and Mr Wakefield I appreciate all the hard work you have put in to ensure that I achieved the best results in my subjects.

To Mr Gerlach, without you for all I know I could have dropped out in year 10. Thank you for guiding me in the correct direction at a young age and consistently pushing me and assisting

in whatever queries I had. We have had some great banter and some great lessons, and who could ever forget the greatest class which was the accelerated one. Ill cut a bit of my check off and give you some to fix that hole in the wall. Whether it was the late arvos or regular emails, thanks for taking time out of your day for me.

To the Pe Boys, Mr Borg, but you truly are one of the most skilled teachers I've had the pleasure of working with, whether it was the pelvic thrust in first aid which was very topical or the regular referral to a weekend warrior, you truly demonstrated great teaching. To Mr Kilbourne and MacKinnon, I appreciate the support you two provided in assisting me when Mr Borg was unavailable. To Mr Peake, you pushed me to my limits, and I was never satisfied with how I performed, always saying I could do better and consistently working with me before and after school, so I truly thank you.

To Ms Torpy, even though I was late to nearly every class, I will truly cherish the times we had. You've taught me a lot whether its relevant to school work or about life in general. You've dug me out of a lot of holes even after school finished, I could honestly write a whole speech of all you've done for me. You truly are for the students first, treating them like one of your own and ensuring every student is performing at their personal best.

To finish off I'm going to keep the tradition and end on a quote to inspire all student in their learning. In the words of the late great Tupac Shakur, 'No matter how hard it gets, keep your chest out, keep your head up and handle it.'.