



**THROUGH EDUCATION, CHAINS AND SHACKLES OF
POVERTY WILL BE ELIMINATED**

BY

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TIME: 10H00**

1. INTRODUCTION

The Honourable Chancellor, Chairperson of Council, Members of Council, Members of Senate, Members of Executive Management Committee, Members of the Academic Staff, Members of the Students Representative Council, Members of the Organised Labour, Distinguished Guests, Representatives from other Sister Institutions, Members of the Media, Captains of Industry, Parents, Sponsors, Ladies and Gentlemen, and last but by no means least, our Guest of Honour, the Graduands, let me at the very outset express my profound gratitude to the University for having afforded me the opportunity to say a few words of motivation and encouragement to our new graduates.

This is an honour I do not deserve, and I have accordingly not taken it lightly and to this end, my message to our young graduates gathered here today is:

THROUGH EDUCATION, CHAINS AND SHACKLES OF POVERTY WILL BE ELIMINATED

I am therefore exceedingly delighted to be here today and to have been specifically asked to share with you some motivational and inspirational words of wisdom as you are beginning a journey that will see you helping the Nation recognise the value and worth of Education as you shall be entering the rat-race of the Business Environment. Not only will you be taking after the Chief Albert Luthuli's of this world, Nelson Mandela's of this world, the Robert Sobukwe's, the Griffiths Mxenge's, the Steve Bikos

and indeed our very own current Business and Political Leaders, but you are in your own rights charting a new economic, social and political trajectory for yourselves.

I salute you for having concentrated in your studies and for having realised that the key to success is education and therefore academic development for the promotion of the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment. In this way, you will be able to unlock the many barriers and stumbling blocks that the apartheid regime deliberately and systematically put in the Blackman's path towards self-development and realisation. Through Education, stumbling blocks of the past have now been transformed into stepping stones of a brighter future.

Not many people realise that the best way to serve our country in these changing and challenging times is to acquire knowledge and expertise, in order to be better equipped to solve fundamental social problems facing our Country, like poverty, diseases, homelessness, unemployment, sexual molestation and abuse of women and children, to mention but a few socio-political and economic challenges facing us today. As new Graduates, you shall be expected to directly contribute towards improving the lives of so many people out there who may not have had the opportunity of registering at a University and qualifying with a genuine University Degree. Walking across the stage and kneeling in front of the Chancellor is a confirmation as it is an affirmation of burning the midnight oil. Your degrees are not fake degrees. These are genuine degrees! Be proud of yourselves for you have worked so hard to achieve and to be awarded these qualifications! Give yourselves a big round of applause!

2. GRADUATION CEREMONY

To every Graduate, this is a very special and a moving moment. You share dreams of your success with all those who contributed to your education and particularly the members of the community in which you live, your parents as well as your sponsors. Today when you get home or before starting with your braais and parties, just turn to your parents or guardians and say” “Thank You Dad, Mom, Uncle, Aunt for making my dream come true!

During this moment, dreams come true and stir the heart. To you, life is fresh and exciting and everything seems wonderful. However, even during this moment of ecstasy, especially that you are today graduating, always remember those who have been less fortunate than yourselves.

The glory of success and contentment is not the gown and the hood you wear, but the true glory of success is the going on and on and the innovative contribution you shall be making to society. As you shall be unlocking the many barriers that were systematically put in the economic path of our forebears by colonialism and apartheid, always say to yourselves:

“Almighty, All Powerful One

Let me be the instrument of

your desires and wishes

and instil in me the wisdom

and the

**patience to help my fellow
human beings, As I grow to
realise the significance of
the leadership role you
have placed on my
shoulders”**

Therefore, I challenge you to add to the lamp of knowledge and the fuel of Human understanding, courage, compassion and its light will serve you well through the joys and challenges of life that lie ahead. To you, the motto of the future should be:

“Sacrifice, Service and Success”

The Degrees and Diplomas you are getting today, should enable you to add value to society. Do not be an ivory-tower but the accessible to people at all times and in this way you will be able to make a difference. In this regard, please remember and consider the philosophy of the late King Sobhuza II, to wit: **“Asusiko Kwami Kwebantfu”** (it is not about me, it is about the people).

As a chosen and a select group of the South African Intelligentsia, you will have a responsibility of transforming and revolutionising our country and we cannot always point fingers at Government. To reinforce the role played by Intellectuals in shaping and transforming an education system, Xolela Mangcu (2014:56) posits:

**“Intellectuals have been at
the centre of all social
revolutions simply because
every revolution or renaissance
requires changes in cultural
assumptions about the world”**

A challenge facing us as intellectuals, produced, nurtured and cooked in African pots is to be results and solution-driven and not to be afraid of rocking the boat – if all that is done with the sole purpose of contributing to the knowledge economy of our country which would lead to the knowledge – production and knowledge-dissemination, which I believe would contribute towards the upliftment of a values-driven society. The voice of the Intelligentsia must be heard and cannot be muted forever. Why come to University for all these years and only to keep your knowledge, views and ideas to yourself? Again, Mangcu laments the muted voice of the intellectuals as he observes:

**“One often senses a creeping
anti-intellectualism in broader
South African society.
Business deals dominate our
public life. Any discussion of**

**ideas for their own sake is
frowned upon as being too
theoretical and intangible.”**

For you to take up your rightful leadership roles in society, you should be able to stand up straight in an upside down environment, and show the world that you do not play in the space of mediocrity, but that you play in the space of the winning team of the South African Intelligentsia poised to take-off the chains and the shackles of poverty.

The transformational political era we are living in, dictates that we should develop intelligent, courageous and dedicated hegemony. You are being counted amongst this cadre of our African Intelligentsia, only if you use your acquired knowledge and skills for the betterment of society.

As you are forging ahead into a bright future, do not forget your roots and your past when your chosen careers bring forth fresh smell of roses and lilies. Remembering the past, and living in the present, helps you to anticipate and embrace the future. Norman Nel (2003.26), in his book **Never Give up on Your Dreams**, says:

“Honour the past by all means

do not become a slave to it.

yesterday’s and today’s achievements

are our gateway to tomorrow, but

they do not provide a blue-print

**for the future. Our world demands
new ways of doing things sometimes
just doing the normal thing in a
different way, new inventions,
new methods, a new making approach,
new books. For a good leader, there
is no end to success. Success never
remains absent from those who dream.”**

The relevance as well as the importance of our past is further reinforced by Mathata Tsedu in a foreword in M Mangena’s book **Triumph and Headaches** (2015:vii), as he states:

**“Only people who know their
proud history can be proud of
themselves. And that pride is
the prerequisite for self-worth
and dignity.”**

This is a profound statement made by one of the best Journalist this country has ever produced. The statement by Tsedu does indeed encourage you to value your past and to appreciate your roots and not to be swallowed in by the glittering city lights you will come to enjoy when

moving into the city of Good. Respect and appreciate the past but do not be slaves to it.

You must believe in what you set out to do. Do not allow yourself to be influenced by doom and gloom that is so popularly advanced by the masses because the gloom of today is universally the boom of tomorrow. If you want to be a leader, you must be motivated, possess common sense and have the ability to persevere. You are not a negative of something, you are the original and so always look on the brighter side and pride. Be what you want to be even if there is no one around you. You are what you are, for what you are is what makes you to be. Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment deals require men and women of great intellect, capacity and ethical considerations and values to be able to create job opportunities for the masses of our people who did not have the opportunity to wear the gowns and the hoods you are wearing. Be warned however, of clandestine and opportunistic BBBEE deals. They may appear to be good gains for now but will be pains in the future, and so be very careful in whatever you do!

When Rev. Frank Chikane was inaugurated as the Secretary General of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), before he became the Director General in the Office of the then President, he burst into a moving rendition and said:

“Let this little light of mine shine!

Let this little light of mine shine!

Let this little light of mine shine!

Let it shine!

Let it shine!

Let it shine!”

Now allow me as I conclude to pass on these words of encouragement, motivation and inspiration to you as I say:

“Let this little light of yours shine!

Let this little light of yours shine!

Let this little light of yours shine!

Let it shine!

Let it shine!

Let it shine!”

A shining star always provide a glimmer of hope. It is therefore crucial that you should live your dreams to the full. Every dream that you have within your heart holds the seed of potential. And when that potential is watered and nourished with faith and hope, dreams can take root and grow up like cottonseeds planted in a well prepared field. Your desires and wishes can grow your seeds of potential into fields of dreams. Indeed, your dreams can become a reality only if you remain focused. (Edmonson, J: 2003. P 39).

Whenever I am requested to convey words of motivation to all kinds of occasions, I always like to conclude by quoting the words of that famous Italian American Motivational Speaker, the late Leo Buschaglia who would always conclude his motivational speeches by saying:

“Only You can make a difference”

- You alone can bring magic – and humour, and joy to the people you encounter;
- Anything you dream, by the very nature that you can dream it, makes it possible;
- The purpose of life is to help others and if you can't help them, would you at least not hurt them!
- You can make things happen that you never thought you could!
- The greatest risk in life is to risk nothing. The person who risks nothing, does nothing, has nothing and is nothing;
- To be is to do – and to do is to do now because tomorrow might not be there;
- You have everything you need to be so much.... don't settle for less!
- There is no end to human potential – and there's so much more to learn;
- The time for action is now – and only you can make the difference

I THANK YOU

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