

Marist-Sion College Address

One of the last times I was on this stage, it was 2011, Adele's new hit 'Someone Like You' had come out and I was singing at school assembly. I remember locking eyes with my ex-boyfriend while singing - and if you don't know the lyrics they are "never mind I'll find someone like you".

I'll keep this brief since I know I'm standing between your freedom to enjoy the best day of the school year. I have three key points to impart, but first, I wanted to share a bit about me in high school.

- I wasn't naturally smart, but I worked hard for good grades.
- I wasn't sporty but loved performing arts.
- Although I had friends, I never felt like fully fit in, and if you feel the same, remember two things: People are generally nicer than you think, it's not weird to change friendship groups mid-way through school and it's something I wish I had done. But also know that the world is vast, and if high school isn't the place, you will find your people.
- My dad passed away when I was in Year 7, and Marist was incredibly supportive. Something I will say though is I do believe pain can really bring purpose. This experience gave me perspective and the silver lining is it led me to find a faith.

Take Opportunities & Get Out of Your Comfort Zone

Marist offers incredible extracurricular opportunities that can really set you up. Academics are important, but I also wanted to share I had a friend who got above 95 ATAR and got high distinctions through university but couldn't get a job for a year after graduating because he had no experience outside academia.

- For me, this looked like debating and theatre studies—skills I use now in presenting at work and in entrepreneurship circles.
- I also took the chance to travel overseas through Marist or parish programs, which gave me the opportunity to see the Pope and sleep on Copacabana beach with 3 million people in Rio de Janeiro Brazil, and meet children who thought I was a ghost in small villages in East Timor because they'd never seen a white person before through alternate schoolies. Putting yourself outside of the Warragul bubble and being in cultures that are completely different to yours will change your view on life. I cannot recommend it enough, and we are so fortunate to have these opportunities so frequently available, whether that's through exchange programs, REMAR camps, sports programs and more.
- No matter what extracurricular activity it is, choose something that sparks your spirit and take advantage. They'll give you valuable experience that academics alone can't provide.

The Power of Association

- Did you know you are the average of the five people you spend the most time with. Whether that's in your grades, your kindness, how athletic you are, your wealth. Who you surround yourself with is so incredibly important. Surround yourself with people who lift you up.
- In my early 20s, a mentor of mine challenged me and asked a question that changed my life. They said everyone always asks you what do you want to do in life, and I'm sure that's a question a lot of you are being asked right now. My mentor said the real question is to ask yourself what kind of life you want. Because sometimes the lifestyle you want doesn't line up with what you want to do. Let's be real, isn't life more about living than working? A mentor changed my perspective, and I encourage you to find one who embodies the life you aspire to.

- I also wanted to share how special having strong relationships with your teachers can be. I had a lot of teachers at Marist I'm so grateful for who were there for me when my dad passed away, spiritual influences like Deacon Mark who encouraged me to go to WYD, and teachers that stayed longer to help me understand concepts I didn't get in class. Teachers are truly amazing, and they want to help you. So don't hold back.

Reframe Failure

- This is something I have really struggled with over the years as a recovering perfectionist and still struggle with now.
- I used to think if you imagine a big scale, failure was on one end and success was on the other. What I've realised is that you are on one end, failure is in the middle, and success is on the other. Without failure there is no success.

So to recap, take opportunities, get outside your comfort zone, make sure you surround yourself with people who build you up, find a mentor who is where you want to be in life, and reframe how you think about failure.

I hope that provided some food for thought, enjoy your Heritage Day.