



Cameron Tunno's 2023 Dux Assembly Speech

Good morning Principal Shana Bennett, esteemed college guests, parents, and peers. It is truly humbling to address you today as the college DUX of 2022.

It was a foreboding Monday morning in the early months of 2018. I sat gingerly in a small chair in the corner of the transportable classrooms, trying to attract as little attention as possible as nerves got the better of me. To my left were 3 strangers, all of whom were there for the same reason -we were all successful in our recent testing to take part in an accelerated maths class.

A meek, moustached man entered our classroom, inspecting us, as if coldly calculating the exact number of strands of mathematically geared DNA we each possessed. If it need be said, this man was Mr McManus. He looked disappointed, which did not bode well as we had only yet performed the act of sitting down. We desperately hoped it would not betoken things to come. Beginning a riveting module in financial maths, I recall the first lesson setting the pace. With the big year 9s confidently throwing their hands in the air, answering capably as Neil did his worst with loans and commission, we felt as though we had bitten off more than we could chew as it was clear we did not possess the same familiarity with the content.

After our first lesson, I went home and began planning. Except I wasn't planning any study strategies, nor to improve upon my ability to calculate compound interest, but planning my escape from the clutches of this mathematical madman. In conference with my parents, I was already planning for comfort. "If I get a B in this test," I said, "I'll go back to year 8 maths."

When I look back at these cognitions, and cognitions like these, 4 or 5 years later, I've come to realise one crucial trend. The fear that has always compelled me to formulate contingency plans in preparation for the worst case scenario, has never really subsided. Only now I have realised I never became less fearful, but I did become more brave.

If you're scared, do it scared.

The three I sat beside quickly became 4, who, including me, made 5. Ridheypreet Grover, Lorenzo Moffa, Sebastian Rapuano, Anton Tharakan, and myself. As 5 snivelling nerds, trying to flex our cerebral fortitude at any available opportunity, we grew very close.

We held each other accountable, often scheduling phone calls to quiz each other on upcoming maths, chemistry, physics, or biology tests, or simply to check in on how each other were travelling. It was for this very simple system, held together by a genuine desire for all of us to achieve our goals, that I stand before you today. Those of you who have paid attention to last year's academic results



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may recognise that this core group occupied the top 5 positions in the academic poll, "Show me your friends, and I will show you your future."

It would be ingenuine of me, however, to pretend as though my academic life has been entirely smooth sailing. For example, I failed my specialist mathematics exam with a D- grade in 2021. I vividly recall laughing to myself, partially in disbelief, partially in disappointment, in the middle of the exam, as I stared vacantly into the paper beneath me.

All of this to say I am extremely fallible, as are we all. I didn't do it alone, and I wouldn't recommend trying to. I was fortunate to have a terrific core group of friends which extend beyond those I have mentioned today, and a wildly talented corpus of teachers who all wanted to the best for me. Help yourself by accepting their help in spades. I honestly don't believe there is a school around that fosters a sense of community like Rostrevor, a familiarity among one another that extends beyond mere acquaintance. Use this familiarity as your crutch to get the best out of everybody around you. One thing I'm often asked is something along the lines of, "where do you find the motivation." After a lot of thought, because fundamentally I think it is an important question, I've realised that motivation, my friends, is little more than an ephemeral flicker in your mind's eye. It is a caffeine hit after a sleepless night. The sudden motivational forays that strike you at 2 in the morning after a 7 hour youtube binge are unfortunately, in my experience, pretty unreliable. You cannot permanently rely on coffee to account for a poor night's sleep.

All this said, whilst words matter, there is only one voice that you ought to pay attention to. I can stand before you and offer little piths of wisdom, tell stories, and provide fragments of concrete advice like 'invest in your ability to write,' 'build a strong rapport with your teachers,' and 'relish opportunities to lead,' but I promise you that is not where the rubber hits the road. Until you learn to take responsibility, someone else runs your life. There's a little man in the backseat who's smarter than you give him credit for, let him into the driver's seat when traversing roads both treacherous and tame.

Enter the belly of the beast and sleep there. Do the things you know you ought to be doing, and failure will become an impossibility.

But I get all of this sounds fairly serious. Try and do all of it in the spirit of play. There is no need to wake up at 4:30am each morning, go for a run, come back and master your chi whilst meditating on a bed of hot coals, but some semblance of order can help you give solidity to the chaos you will undoubtedly contend with throughout your time both as a student and beyond. Rostrevor has all the elements needed to cultivate the modern-day renaissance man. Take some time to study and assemble them. You will surprise yourself with how little you need to sacrifice in order to maximise your successes in every facet of life.



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In closing, I must thank a few important people. Foremost, thank you mum and dad, Kate and Dan Tunno, for allowing me to realise my potential and supporting me through both smooth seas and perilous waters.

Thank you to both my longstanding friends, and the ones I have made along the way.
Thank you, teachers, and supporting staff-it is true to say that I would not be giving this address if it were not for your tireless efforts in and out the college confines.

Men, be gentle but fierce in everything you do, and hold yourself to the highest standards. Shoot for the stars and who knows, you might just make it there.

Be safe, thank you, and good luck.

Cameron Tunno

2022 Rostrevor College Dux

