

## WHPS Leavers Dinner 2009

Extract from a speech delivered by Josh Richards to Grade 7 Leavers

Good evening Mr and Mrs Herringer, Members of Council, distinguished guests, parents and Gr 7 School leavers.

Whilst studying for my physics...well....while I was supposed to be studying for my physics exam.....I came across a fascinating theory. So let me give you guys your first theory of physics that will stead you well for high school. Light Travels faster than sound....that is why some people appear to be bright before you hear them speak. It's not found in the text book.....but sadly it is a theory that on occasion does have some substance.....and hopefully this is not one of those occasions.

I have a dream

My parents gave me the greatest gift of all....

You see when I was four...I was not like superman....I WAS Superman. HE flew.....so could I. So I donned my Superman undies and cloak and climbed to the very top of the jungle gym. I took a big thick rope.....tied it around....my waist.....and leapt off on my maiden flight. I flew.....for 2 seconds.....before the laws of physics brought my body and my ego crashing down to earth.

But my parents never screamed at me....or told me that I was stupid.....they just showed me an easier.....more realistic way....to fly....in a helicopter. After that....it was a case of hey....forget superman....I'm going to be an astronaut. And I set my sights on discovering the universe.

The power of that lesson still manifests itself today. I still Dream BIG.....and when things fail or I fall....I will not give up...I will just find another way.

Now to you young grade 7's....a chapter in your life is closing.....and a new one is just about to begin....and YOU guys have the pen....you guys are now the authors of your own lives. Your imagination is your only limitation.

Bill Hicks said, "Life is a dream....and we are the imagination of ourselves."

SO I ask you this.....who are you?

Who are you when you look in the mirror.....do you see the real you....or the you you have been conditioned to believe is you. There is a difference. The truth is that you are a being, a person....with an infinite potential whose only limitation is your imagination. Today...life is often viewed through a screen....a pane of glass.....that allows the audience to view the world without feeling, touching, inhaling the scent of its beauty. Sport is played on a play station, and communication is conversation between invisible voices. Social interaction has been reduced to watching local reality T.V Shows. Spectators!!! We criticise, guffaw and scream..... "loser" when the man stumbles. We give our minds away, conform and become invisible in the sea of society and dance to the popular tune, terrified lest we be the crack in the pane of glass. We prostitute our uniqueness for fear of failure and rejection. God forbid we stand alone...apart. It is more comfortable to be a tree in the forest. The mighty great oak tree was once a nut who held its ground.

Guys you are now heading into high school.....and you will all be faced with many new interesting, different and wonderful experiences. The greatest gift that you have been blessed with is choice. Know yourself....because the choices you make will always have consequences. As you progress through life.....you become more and more responsible for the way it starts to map out by the choices you make. Life is not a rehearsal and often there are no second takes....but there are always consequences. Dare to stand alone and fight for what YOU believe in. Even if you are called a nut!!!! We all know just how tall the nut became after it stood its ground.

Shatter the window and go beyond just being.

If at Primary school you did not receive a trophy....so what!!!! A badge does not make you a leader anymore than a trophy makes you a sportsman. If you did not participate fully in school life in primary school....then you lucky because high school gives you a second chance.

Ah but I'm not talented enough...Baloney man!!!! Talent is overrated and misunderstood. TALENT IS NEVR ENOUGH!!!! If talent were enough then the most powerful and influential people running the world today would not be those people.

Do you know that

More than 50% of all CEOs around the world had a C average. That's 60%  
In college 75% of US presidents came from the lower half club in school.  
More than 50% of millionaires around the world today did not even finish school.

And in our country.....90% of the ANC Youth Leaders.....no I won't go there!!!!

Talent is important yes....but it is your attitude and willingness to learn that is the difference maker. "A winner is someone who knows enough to know how little he knows even though he is considered an expert by others. A loser wants to be considered an expert by others before he knows enough to know how little he knows." Don't let fear of performance or lack thereof, prevent you from participating in life. A performance can be disappointing.....yeah sure....trust me I've been there.....but it can never define WHO YOU ARE. Your character does. A performance can be good or not so good.....it's temporary. Your character is constant. It is the very force that, when you fall 7 times, will make you get up 8.

Erich Fomm said: "The pity in life today is that most of us die before we are fully born."

Guys.....don't miss yourselves.

Do you have what it takes?

Talent is more common than you think. People might not have equal giftedness.....but people have equal VALUE.....remember this!! Don't you dare let anyone make you feel "less than". Some of us have fewer abilities but know this....All of us have something we can do well. I truly

believe that we are born with some special unique talent.....why.....because God said that you are wonderfully made.....And he is one guy that does not lie.

So if you are one of those guys that thinks that you are not good at anything....keep searching and participating until you find it....because you will.

William Byron said: "Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice; it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved.

If I had to ask you.....who would be more successful.....a person who relied on his talents..... or a person, who realises his talents, works hard and develops them. Then I ask each and every one of you.....why do people spend the majority of their time focusing on improving their weaknesses.

As I said earlier...one of the greatest gifts in life is choice.

John Maxwell lists 13 key choices that can maximise any person's talent

- 1.) Belief – in you talents
- 2.) Initiative activates your talents
- 3.) Focus directs your talents
- 4.) Preparation positions your talents
- 5.) Practice sharpens your talent
- 6.) Teachability expands your talents
- 7.) Teamwork multiplies you talents
- 8.) Character protects your talent
- 9.) Passion energises your talent, 1 man with passion is worth more than 99 with mediocrity.
- 10.) Relationships influence your talent
- 11.) Responsibility strengthens your talent
- 12.) Perseverance sustains your talent
- 13.) Courage tests your talent

If you have talent...you stand alone. Combine talent, character, discipline and hard work.....you stand out!

When you are inspired and live with enthusiasm and do the impossible....it does not mean that you will never fail...many times... before getting there.

Sir Edmund Hillary was the first person to reach the summit of Mount Everest. Prior to his success he had attempted to summit the mighty mountain but had failed, and even worse the team had lost one of its members. At a reception held in London, Hillary stood to talk to the audience, behind him was a back drop mount Everest. He turned to face the image and exclaimed: "Mount Everest you have defeated me. But I will return. I will defeat you; because you cannot get any bigger.....and I can!"

I don't know the challenges you face or will be faced with in the near future. They may be getting bigger every day, or they may already be bigger than Mount Everest. But I know this...you don't overcome obstacles by making them smaller.....you just have to become bigger.

Whatever you vividly imagine, ardently desire, sincerely believe and enthusiastically act upon, must inevitably come to pass.

Leave the past

Engage the present

And with God, create the future.

Acknowledge the vision that God has given you and have the courage to go through with it.

Dream Big and always dream beyond your ability. Shoot for the moon, even if you miss....you'll land amongst the stars!!!!