



"Life never asked us to have a perfect plan. Life is messy, it shocks us, it breaks our timelines and yet underneath every disappointment of not arriving where we thought we would, there is a quieter beauty: we are still becoming."

Good evening Mr Shezi, Deputy principals, our honoured guests, dedicated educators, proud parents and most importantly - prize winners of the class of 2026.

We are gathered here tonight for a beautiful reason. Honours Evening is not just about certificates and blazers, it is an evening dedicated to recognizing and appreciating the academic journey of our grade 12's - the years of quiet discipline behind tonight's celebration.

I want to speak tonight about something we do not often celebrate: the beauty of NOT arriving. We were taught that life should go according to plan if you prepare well for it. But, in actual fact, I think we all know that ... it doesn't. It is messy, it is unpredictable, and most especially, shocking. And even in those moments when we are disappointed about not reaching a goal we set - academically or in our personal life - there is a lovely lesson learned underneath.

Allow me to let you in, on the lore of my life. My friends and I walked into high school with one shared drive: we are going to get full colours for academics. THAT was the dream! Then we heard about honours ... we wanted those! Then we heard about a different coloured and designed blazer - and of course we wanted THAT one too. Did we fulfil our high school dreams? That's a story for another day. However, I want to highlight the drive we had ... that right there, is the beauty I'm talking about. Not the award itself or the blazer or the scrolls but the steady inner flame that quietly assured you that you are capable of becoming more - A flame that allows your dreams to be unrestricted by the fear of "what if's" and "I can't." This flame holds no boundary to our capability. That belief is your most precious possession!

I must add, for me personally, Mathematics has always felt like a weapon formed against me (I'm sure most of us can relate considering the stats). For some of you it may be Physics or Maritime or English Paper 3. For me it was Maths. But what I always told my friends after a long venting session and brooding over it – I would say: "all you need is a mustard seed."

It's a little saying I invented this year, influenced by a bible verse that states "faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains." It reminds me that you don't need to have it all figured out. That faith, as little as that is, has the power to revolutionize your whole life. And that tiny faith is what kept me going from grade 8 to this podium.

Years down the line, I have to be honest - I never got the full colours. I'm still stuck in the realm of half colours. I think I have permanent residency there at this point. But I still have faith! I may not have the blazer I wished for, I got an even better one. One I had never imagined on me. Although I did not reach my high school dream exactly the way I pictured it, what of it? It matters not! Because what matters to me is the preservation of that same flame, that same passion and that same resilience that got me here in the first place.

And, to our beloved teachers and parents. I want to say this directly. Sometimes we, as the learners, take the impact of not achieving harder than you do. We not only carry the weight of our own disappointment, but the fear that we have disappointed you too. We see the sacrifices you make - the check-ins, the extra lessons you paid for and the intervention lessons you commit to during holidays. We cannot help but feel that we owe you the result. Please know that your presence here tonight already tells us that you are proud. THAT alone gives us enough courage to keep going.

And to anyone sitting in this hall tonight who felt like they fell short - who didn't get the colours, honours or trophy you tried hard and prayed for. I see you! This evening is still yours. If you still have that small flame inside you, that mustard seed of faith, then you have not failed. You are simply still in the process of becoming.

In closing, on behalf of the class of 2026, I wish to extend our sincere gratitude to our principal and teachers for your steadfast guidance and bountiful encouragement, and to our parents for your unwavering support. Tonight, we honour excellence, and rightly so. To all our awardees – CONGRATULATIONS! You have earned this honour through diligence and perseverance.

May we all leave this hall tonight, holding on to that mustard seed as we reach the finish line.

Thank you ❤️

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