

Good Morning! !

It is indeed a tremendous honor and a great privilege to be chosen to speak today as a representative of the graduate student body. My fellow graduates, I congratulate all of you today for the hard work and vision, which brought you to this important landmark. I would also like to congratulate all the families who sacrificed a great deal to ensure that their loved ones are well educated. It is a worthwhile investment and I am sure the future will justify the sacrifices you made.

When I was invited to speak at the commencement, I did not know what to say. I am a nurse, a caregiver, not a public speaker. So, I turned to the best resources I have, a very experienced and educated staff and faculty of the School of Nursing, and they told me, "You just speak from your heart." Well, that I can understand - nursing is all about heart.

May is a special month for nurses as well as graduating students. In May we celebrate Nurses week to coincide with Florence Nightingale's birthday. It was Florence whose passion earned recognition for nursing and elevated nursing to a noble profession, not only with caring, but also with counting. She had an extensive background in mathematics and quantified preventable deaths due to unsanitary conditions in hospitals. She also promoted methods to rectify them. Today's hospital improvement efforts are targeted at best practices to achieve those same goals.

We live in a world that is transforming fast, and the stock and quality of human resources has become the key to accelerating growth and reducing suffering. Advances in science and medicine are at the forefront of humanity's efforts to improve and extend life.

This is where Adelphi comes into play. It is the place where students from 40 states and 50 countries meet and flourish. Here we have learned that the commonality of human bond far transcends the cultural differences. Here we also learned to respect each other and to cherish human relationships, which is the most important investment we will ever make.

Adelphi's various schools and programs, such as The College of Arts and Sciences, the Derner Institute of Advanced Psychological Studies, the Honors College, the Ruth S. Ammon School of Education, University College, and the Schools of Business, Nursing, and Social Work offer programs for the full time students and the student with concomitant responsibilities to work and family. The strong moral and academic foundation we have gained at this University is only the first step in helping us work for a better tomorrow and a better life for our society and ourselves.

Education unlocks the door of opportunity. When our learning translates into action, we should be on the look out that the flames of evil do not consume us, and the rising waters of injustice do not overwhelm us.

In these changing times when we use technology and multi-tasking to achieve more and more...recognition, money, status, etc... perhaps we should stop for a moment and take the time to define success. Whatever professional path we travel and successes we achieve, our journey is enhanced with a compassionate outlook (attitude). A listening ear, an encouraging word and a warm heart cannot be replicated in a virtual world. In the words of Mother Teresa: "Little things are indeed little, but to be faithful in little things is a great thing."

Today we have reached a turning point in our lives. It is the culmination of one chapter and the commencement of another. When we spread out our wings and get ready to fly, I urge you all to take into heart the definition of a customer by Mahatma Gandhi:

A customer is the most important visitor on our premises

He is not dependent on us, we are dependent on him

He is not an interruption of our work; he is the purpose of it

He is not an outsider to our business, he is part of it

We are not doing him a favor by serving him

He is doing us a favor by giving us the opportunity to do so.

I have to tell you that I had been witness to the four most remarkable years of my life at Adelphi and I personally experienced this type of a customer relationship at this University.

I take this opportunity to thank the dedicated faculty and staff of Adelphi for helping us become what we are today. More than the knowledge you impart with us, you are a true friend, a counselor, a guide, and above all an example to follow.

In closing again I quote the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "Be the change you want to see in the world" Seek the opportunity, seize the moment and carry forth the education you have received to improve the world we live in. Thank you.