



St Andrew's College

Founders' Day Assembly – Guest Address

Head of Middle School, Mikae Tuu'u (OC 2003)

Friday 17 March 2023



Kia ora koutou whānau o Hato Anaru. Good morning everybody.

I would like to start by saying what a huge privilege this is to give the Founder's Day address. I would like to acknowledge all the staff, students, families and Old Collegians who are here today.

When I was given the opportunity to give the Founder's Day address, I pondered what I would say to you for quite some time. One morning, while on Papanui Road doing what I would call running but others would call battling, I came up with some ideas on what I could speak about, which pearls of wisdom I could give to you, our rangatahi, our young people.

That evening, I went home and told my wife about my sudden epiphany on what I could talk about. I was feeling so good about myself. I said to her, "Rach, I've got it. I plan on sharing some thoughts on how do students want to be remembered. I summarised it as, 'When I look back on my school days, I don't really remember what people did or what they were good at, I remember how they made me feel.'" I was pumped, excited and feeling extremely original, because this was true. I genuinely remember people by the way they made me feel. She kind of looked at me, that sort of quizzical, funny look and said, 'you stole that off a Maya Angelou quote didn't you?' A google search later, my bubble was burst. Staring at me was the quote,

"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

But anyhow, as I share some thoughts on this, I promise you that I came up with this myself and not copied from the legend Maya Angelou, who was a remarkable woman.

I then read a Rudyard Kipling quote a few weeks ago about 'if history was taught in stories, it would never be forgotten.' I will share my message through stories and experiences during my time here (for those staff who have been here longer than 10 years, I promise there will be no longer boardsailing photos).

In a few weeks' time, you probably won't remember what I said, but I do hope that my message may make you think about some small actions you may take on moving forward.

I would like you all to think about the people around you. Your classmates, tutor buddies, team-mates, year group mates, your friends, even the people sitting around you this morning.

When you think about these people, I can almost guarantee that you will think about them in three ways. In no particular order, you will think about them either by:

Number 1. The way they look. Tall, short, athletic, colour of their hair.

Number 2. What they are good at. They may be super-smart, amazing singers, have good chat or incredible at sport.

Number 3. The type of person that they are and how they make you feel. Inclusive, funny, caring, kind, compassionate, all round good sort. Or on the flip-side, they may be mean, degrading, misogynist, racist, homophobic, they may make you feel uncomfortable.

Of these three things, I am in no doubt that if you were to pick which one you would care about the most if someone was thinking about you, it would be number 3.

You see, when I look back on my fellow classmates, I always remember them for the way they made me feel first, followed a significant distance by the rest.

I had team-mates in the 1st XV who were outstanding rugby players, excellent in their craft, but made me feel uncomfortable by the way they sometimes treated others. I remember one boy in my Year 10 basketball team who couldn't shoot to save himself, but man he had an incredible sense of humour. These last parts are how I remember them most. When I did major productions, which were a huge highlight for me, I felt so included as I was surrounded by people far more gifted in the Arts than I was. And they supported and helped me with my lines and songs.

Many of my classmates made me laugh, were kind and compassionate. Some of them I barely knew in terms of their interests or what they did, but many of them I remember as being all-round good sorts. Unfortunately, I still remember a small few as being unkind, sexist, nasty and uncaring. And this stays with me today.

I think it is worth you asking yourself this question right now.... "If you were to come back for your 10-year reunion, how would people remember you?" What would you want the response to be? Would you want it to be:

- A top academic?
- As the star rugby or netball player?
- Lead role in the production?
- A prefect/Middle School Leader?
- Maybe as a person who made others feel bad?
- Maybe as a bully?

Or, would you prefer the response of:

- A caring person?
- A hard worker with grit and determination?
- Someone with an awesome sense of humour?
- A person who is nice to be around?
- An all-round good person?

Now think about what you can do to be remembered the way you want? You see when you move on from school and into the big world, no one really cares about what you said and what you did, but they will always care about the way you made them feel, and that sticks for a very long time. What can you do right now moving forward to be remembered the way you want to be remembered.

As Middle School students, you have a wee way to go on your journey and maybe you have an image you want to change. Make that change. Or not. Whatever the case, do what you can to be remembered as a good person.

As seniors, you don't have a long way to go. Make your mark on your class-mates and year group mates now. You will soon be Old Collegians and how you make others feel will stay with you for a very long

time.

Now I can't judge how I made others feel while I was a student here because I simply don't know. You would have to ask my classmates or teachers. But what I do hope is that I'm remembered not for playing a bit of sport and doing a few other bits and pieces, but remembered as a good person who cared about others.

I think about some of the students here today and the way they make me feel.

I will always remember the Māori and Pasifika group as talented, hard-working performers who delivered an incredible night on Wednesday night. But what I will remember most about them is the way they made me feel immensely proud to be a part of the StAC community and proud to be Samoan.

When I think about our Rainbow group here at St Andrew's, they make me feel inspired by their courage and determination to represent what they stand for. This is in spite of being on the receiving end of some nasty harassment by a narrow-minded few. Keep flying that flag, you are amazing.

I think about you out there who overcome learning challenges everyday through grit and determination. Gosh you inspire me to better myself every day.

Now, with a wider scope, how does being a student at St Andrew's College make you feel? I hope you feel grateful and special to be a part of this amazing community. It is an incredible place built on the foundations of those who have gone before us.

As a student in the Middle School, you may still be figuring out how this place makes you feel. What I can tell you is that when you leave school, you will most likely feel hugely proud and I hope that you all do your best to add to the legacy that is 'StAC'. Make the most of what happens here. Do stuff, get involved, meet others and embrace this place. I hope you find what makes you feel good about being at this place. Don't sit back and let your schooling years tick by.

As seniors, I hope that you feel hugely proud of being a part of this school. Each time you put on the uniform, costume or sports gear, I hope you get that feeling in your chest that you are a part of something amazing. I hope you have embraced the traditions and culture here and will continue to do so until you leave. You also have a responsibility to lead the way for the younger students.

I know for me, being a part of the College community is one of the greatest privileges I have had bestowed on me. The pride I had when I wore the thistle, put on my blazer or sung the School Song will stay in my memory forever. The pride I have when I see its beautiful legacy carry on through you, our students, is something that makes me feel good every single day.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this address, you probably won't remember much of what I said, but I hope that maybe you may think about some thoughts or actions that reflect:

- How being a student at St Andrew's makes you feel

and

- How you want to be remembered, which is not by what you did or said, but by the way you made other people feel.

I hope this shapes part of the way you embrace your time here at school. St Andrew's is such an amazing place to shine in whatever area you wish, and I hope these words may make even the smallest positive impact in whatever you do.

As an Old Collegian and soon to be ex staff member, thank you all very much for being you and making this place the amazing place that it has, is and always will be. I love this place and am so grateful for the huge part that it has played in my life. I hope that when you look on your time at StAC, you can say the same thing.

Ngā mihi nui, tena koutou katoa.