



Morning Comment

International Assembly – Friday 8 August 2025

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Hands up, if you've ever been asked to be brave before? Today, I want to share three times when I had to find courage – when I tried something new, when I took a chance, and when I learned to be myself.

First: *Be brave enough to try something new.*

When I was 15, I made the biggest decision of my life so far. I could stay in China and continue attending my familiar school, or I could accept the plane ticket my parents gave me and go to a new country with a completely different language, culture, and people. I still believe that was a smart decision. Yes, I came here and chose St Andrew's College as my first destination.

On my first day, I felt lost. I could barely understand Mrs Leighton's speech, and the only two English words I recognised were "Welcome" and "Thank you." For the next few days, the only word I used to communicate with my peers was "Yes." Funny, right? Each morning, I focused on listening and repeating new words. Slowly, I began to understand more: classmates, classes, even jokes. In time, I made friends and felt more comfortable. That first experience taught me that taking the first brave step is the hardest, but it can open doors.

Second: *Be brave enough to take opportunities.*

This year has been a real challenge because so many chances appeared. When my teachers asked me to become a peer support leader, I hesitated. I didn't speak English fluently yet. What if I couldn't understand what someone needed? What if I said something inappropriate? Before meeting my assigned class, I worried: What if I'm paired with some naughty kids? What should I do or say? But on the day, I met the last two boys in the line; I dedicated myself to listening and understanding them, and everything just went well. I truly hope I did a good job, because we still have a close friendship. I'm thankful for that opportunity, because I met a group of really interesting young people, and we've built close connections.

Then another opportunity came: I became a coach. At my first practice, I asked myself: Do I look old enough? Am I professional enough? Beforehand, I had planned drills and speeches to stay calm. But when practice began, everything went out the window: balls bounced in unexpected directions, players asked questions I hadn't anticipated, and I realised no plan can replace real experience. So, I took a deep breath, trusted myself, and tried my best. I hope the boys still enjoy having me as their coach. The message I gave to the players was: "Keep trying to make each shot. It's okay to miss a shot; just believe in yourself, and the next one will go in." And whether you believe it or not, in our very first game we lost by 60



points. But look at us now – we're ranked third in the top division, and tonight at 4.00pm we will play our first playoff game.

Finally: *Be brave enough to be yourself.*

I truly love what I am doing now: coaching these young men, chatting with and supporting the Year 9 students, and sharing my stories with you. There is no point in doing something you don't enjoy, or being someone you don't want to be. Steve Jobs once said, "Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life. Don't be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary." Those words hit me hard. I used to hesitate to share my culture and my accent because I worried I would stand out in a bad way. But each time I stayed silent, a part of me slipped away. When I finally embraced who I really am – my traditions, my voice, my story – I felt happier and more confident.

People may remember everything I said today, or they may not remember any of it. But that's okay. I want the young students I have worked with, and all of you, to know one thing: I gave it a go, even when I was scared. And I hope you will do the same.