



The Beacon Scholarship Weekend

Saturday 5th October 2013

Good morning everyone and a very warm welcome to you all.

It is lovely to see ten Beacon Scholars sitting here before us at Pembroke House today.

I know that the Beacon Scholarship has been something Mr. Sood has believed in and worked towards for a very long time and to see all his work and initiative coming to fruition like this must be wonderful for him and for us as educationalists we too are very excited.

We as teachers love teaching, we believe wholeheartedly in education which is the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. This means it is our duty to pass on as much knowledge and understanding as we can without concerning ourselves too much as to how it might be specifically useful in the future.

So for you young people sitting here today we have no idea what aspect of what we are teaching you and what you are learning at school will come to the fore front of your lives and be used the most.

What we can say is and I know now, being at least half a century old myself, is that every single thing we can teach you and every single thing you can learn will be useful in some way.

For us all, this quote from Albert Einstein is true,

It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken joy in creative expression and knowledge.

For all teachers to see children find enjoyment and passion in understanding and

trying to know more all the time is very exciting and this is what makes each day at school for us so rewarding.

However, as young people I hope you are all learning in your various schools that ultimately how you live your life is very much up to you. We are trying to teach you to try many things and to put your 'all' into each moment of each day, to get sixty seconds worth of distance run – as Rudyard Kipling would say.

How you live your life, the way you treat people will really affect the life you lead and when you look back at age 60 or 70 or 94 1/2 it will all make up the story you might then tell of your life.

So along with learning things and understanding how to think and reason we, as your teachers are all trying to make each one of you take responsibility for your life, to understand that really everything is 'up to you'.

If you wish people to treat you fairly you must treat others fairly, if you wish for respect you must respect others – all people have something to offer you and you must walk through your life humbly seeking and searching for ways to do things better, ways to make a difference.

This is another very important aspect of Mr. Sood's Scholarship – the Beacon Scholarship – his vision is that you children will all make a difference one day. Some of you may make a difference in a big way – you might become a politician or a World leader but most of you will work more behind the scenes, your contribution will be no less important but you will affect things in many small ways that will add up to make a big difference.

At this point let me ask you to listen to this prayer.

The Stone

The builder laid a stone on the bed of cement.

Then with a precise stroke of the trowel he spread another layer

And without a by your leave he laid on another stone

The foundations grew visibly

The building rose tall and strong for all to see

I thought Lord of that stone buried in the darkness at the base of the building

No one sees it but it accomplishes its task and the other stones need it

Lord what a difference whether I am on the roof top or on the foundations of your building as long as I stand faithfully at the right place. Amen

So leaders and people who contribute to our society come in all shapes and sizes and we all know that each one of you will indeed make a difference to this world we live in.

Before I finish I have two more things to add and I touched on the first point earlier

My first point is that despite the efforts of your teachers how you develop is very much up to you.

Listen to this quote from Confucious – a philosopher and educationalist from long ago

“If I am walking with two other men, each of them will serve as my teacher. I will pick out the good points of the one and imitate them, and the bad points of the other and correct them in myself.”

My own last point to you all today is that in this day and age there is a great deal of talk about ‘happiness’. Of course we all wish to be happy and as adults we all hope to help you children find happiness.

However happiness is an elusive emotion and seeking it only makes it, like a butterfly, flutter away a little further from your grasp.

May I ask each of you to rather consider your lives in terms of duty

It is your duty to be the very best human being you can be

It is our duty to treat others as you would like to be treated

It is your duty to honour your mother and father

It is your duty to make the most of every talent God has given you.

If you look at the world in these terms and allow duty and what is right and wrong to guide you, you will all find happiness on your journey through life.

At Pembroke House we have two readings or pieces of writing that we adhere to and abide by. One is the poem *If* by Rudyard Kipling and the other is *The Desiderata* (appendix 1). We will give each one of you a copy of them both before you leave and I know Scilla will find the right moment to read you *The Desiderata*. *‘If* is the poem I am going to read you now...

Listen to the words – they will serve to guide you and inspire you on your path through life when things are difficult or when you need that little bit of extra support.

'If' by Rudyard Kipling

*If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or, being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;*

*If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with triumph and disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn out tools;*

*If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breath a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on";*

*If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings - nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run -
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And - which is more - you'll be a Man my son*

I know each one of you will go on to make a difference, each one of you will make the most of the education your parents, your schools and the Beacon Scholarship are giving you.

Whatever happens do not tire of always trying to do your best – as Winston Churchill said

‘continuous effort – not strength or intelligence – is the key to unlocking our potential’

So now may I thank Scilla Davey for all her hard work on behalf of us all and more specifically we would all like to thank Scilla for bringing us all together for this time and may I wish you all a very good and inspiring weekend.

DBM 5th October 2013

Appendix 1

Desiderata

Max Erhmann 1927

Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.

As far as possible without surrender be on good terms with all persons. Speak your truth quietly and clearly; and listen to others, even the dull and ignorant; they too have their story.

Avoid loud and aggressive persons, they are vexations to the spirit.

If you compare yourself with others, you may become vain and bitter; for always there will be greater and lesser persons than yourself.

Enjoy your achievements as well as your plans. Keep interested in your career, however humble; it is a real possession in the changing fortunes of time.

Exercise caution in your business affairs; for the world is full of trickery. But let this not blind you to what virtue there is; many persons strive for high ideals; and everywhere life is full of heroism.

Be yourself. Especially, do not feign affection. Neither be critical about love; for in the face of all aridity and disenchantment it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years, gracefully surrendering the things of youth.

Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune. But do not distress yourself with imaginings. Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness. Beyond a wholesome discipline, be gentle with yourself.

You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees and the stars; you have a right to be here. And whether or not it is clear to you, no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God, whatever you conceive Him to be, and whatever your labors and aspirations, in the noisy confusion of life keep peace with your soul. With all its sham, drudgery and broken dreams, it is still a beautiful world. Be careful. Strive to be happy.