

New Plymouth Boys' High School Te Kura Tamatāne o Ngāmotu



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Assembly Speech

Monday, May 11, 2015

“There are no speed limits or short cuts”

Firstly, I wish to congratulate Hamish Philips and Whatu ngatai Tangirua. For their involvement in Mamma Mia, the musical. I was fortunate to go to this production on the weekend and it was fantastic to see two boys at the very top of one of their fields.

Congratulations to Emerson Potts-Broughton. He has been selected as a member of the NZ Basketball Academy U-16 Boys Team, who travel to Las Vegas, USA at the end of July. Well done Emmerson a fantastic achievement.

Well done boys for last Wednesday's Collegiate visit, I know this has already been mentioned on Friday, but a personal thank you from me to you all for being the example. Kia tu hei taurira. I see even rugby league star Jarrod Hayne commented positively about us on Facebook.

I was at the NZ Boys Schools Conference last week with Theo, almost all of the Boys' Schools Headmasters and Head Boys attended. I am proud to tell you we are doing very well as a school and are well respected by the other schools.

All boys' schools are competitive and you need to know that the other schools are working hard lifting their academic standards. We are also working hard to do the same, along with each and every one of you.

You need to remind yourself that improving your knowledge and learning is why you are here first and foremost. It is your first priority. It is not easy, it requires dedication and perseverance.

There is a famous quote by a Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was a famous American Novelist and Poet of the mid-19th Century. Also famous for many quotations, one of my favourites is -

“There are no short cuts on the road to success.” I have modified it to say *“There are no speed limits or short cuts on the road to success.”*

We could equally say *“There are no speed limits or short cuts to being the example”*.

The first part of the quote is really saying don't wait, don't ease into success, demand it and get there fast. The sooner the better. Don't believe people that say you are trying to achieve too soon. Your standards are too high it takes time.

Never accept mediocrity be impatient about your success, impatient about your improvement. Life is short. Apply this to your study and academic achievement. Be impatient to get credits, be impatient to succeed and impatient to learn. Don't leave your run late and limit your options.

The second part is the most important. There are no short cuts. To be truly successful you must work hard. You might have temporary success because you have natural talent and / or luck, but success is earned and requires determination, resilience and commitment.....” **Grit**”.

Nothing is more satisfying than setting a goal working towards it and then achieving it. Whether that is at Level 3 or simply mastering a simply literacy and numeracy task.

Are you taking short cuts? Are you working hard? Are you relying on natural talent and luck? Are you determined are you displaying grit?

Because I can tell you now what **will** enable you to realise your potential, your hopes and dreams is grit and determination. If obstacles and challenges are put in your way do you give up too early? Throw in the towel. It's never too late to turn around your performance.

I have two stories to share with you, one I have already shared with the Sports Leaders, but I will share it again.

2015 AMERICA'S CUP STORY

I am sure most of you watched the America's Cup last year. There is a very good lesson in that event. NZ was leading 8-1 against Oracle. We were in the box seat. We were dominating in control under the captaincy of Dean Barker.

This abrasive unlikeable fellow from Australia, Jimmy Spithill, was at a critical press conference, all the world's media were gathered around and grilling Jimmy, saying throw in the towel mate, you are 8-1 down. Your boat is slower, the Kiwis are un-beatable. They are fast and slick and you aren't. What have you got to say for yourself Jimmy? What message have you got for your crew, what message have you got to say to the NZ'ers, when your morale is so low? Your fortune has run out.

He said perhaps the most genius statement I have ever heard from someone at the top of their game. The most determined and most grit I think I have seen. The most confidence and commitment I think I have seen, and love him or hate him, you have to admire and respect his courage, his resilience.

When the media said to Jimmy Spithill what do you think? He said in his Australian accent - "Yeah but, if you were Dean and NZ wouldn't you hate to lose it from here?"

Wouldn't you hate to lose it from here?

He wasn't about to give up, he wasn't about to throw in the towel, when everyone else had. He certainly wasn't going to take shortcuts. He was going to work harder than anyone else, longer than anyone else, overcome any obstacle and achieve his goal.

He won 9-8. One of the greatest comebacks of all time.

A great lesson.

I have one more story about determination and not giving up. Some of you might have heard it.

DONKEY IN THE WELL

One day a farmer's donkey fell down into a well. The animal cried loudly for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do. Finally he decided the animal was old and the well needed to be covered up anyway, it just wasn't worth it to retrieve the donkey.

He invited all his neighbours to come over and help him. They all grabbed a shovel and began to shovel dirt into the well. At first, the donkey realised what was happening and cried horribly. Then, to everyone's amazement, he quieted down.

A few shovel loads later, the farmer finally looked down the well and was astonished at what he saw. With every shovel of dirt that hit his back, the donkey was doing something amazing. He would shake it off and take a step up. As the farmer's neighbours continued to shovel dirt on top of the animal, he would shake it off and take a step up. Pretty soon, everyone was amazed as the donkey stepped up over the edge of the well and trotted off.

Moral of this story is that - Life is going to shovel dirt on you, all kinds of dirt. The trick to getting out of the well, is to shake it off and take a step up. Each of our troubles is a stepping stone. We can get out of the deepest wells just by not stopping, never giving up! Shake it off and take a step upward! Showing Grit. Displaying determination. Not taking shortcuts.

Remember how you react to challenges, how hard you work, and how determined you are, will determine your success.

There are no speed limits or short cuts on the road to success.

Paul Verić
Headmaster