

Uni. SA. Graduation Speech. 16th April 2019

Firstly acknowledge

I would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land we gather on today the Kuarna people .

Chancellor Ms Pauline Carr .

Professor David Lloyd Vice Chancellor and President;

Members of the University Council; Doctors,  
Emeritus Professors, Fellows,  
and Senior Management staff of the University;

most importantly  
the Graduates of 2018 .

I would like to thank UNI SA for this prestigious award.  
It's a great honour to be here today.

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Now I have to start my speech.3-4mins. Approx  
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Key life lessons messages the graduates can take away and learn from...

What can you learn from a former professional athlete ?

In professional sport you are faced with many challenges and disappointments sport is not just about winning —who crosses the finish line first but mostly it's about getting back up after being defeated knocked down and then finding the motivation to continue on ...

I left school with little education no money and all that I was equipped with was were lofty dreams Or we call it goals / ambitions ...

Here is the first lesson.

**Dream big. Have lofty goals ambitions in life .**

My first goal was to compete at the Olympic Games.

I worked at a strawberry farm in Willunga and picked strawberries at 5\$ an HR to fund my first trip to France in order to attempt to qualify for the Olympics.

I finally made it to the Olympics after years of a gruelling training schedule and many sacrifices.....  
they call it the grind.  
Get used to the grind.

Mind you I don't call missing out on social events ....what you may call the Good times .....Such as parties concerts 21st birthday parties ect as sacrifices ...I call it valuable time invested in yourself - ***You will eventually find out in life that ....Time ....is a very valuable commodity.....so don't waste too much of your time on ....party time ....***

I ended up crashing out of my first Olympics.

**Keep in mind it's you and you alone who decides if the journey is over or to keep on going.**  
Failure happens only when you quit.

Athletes are good at this we have a short memory at times  
(some say it's because of our smaller brains ).

.....But sometimes in life we need to have a short memory...  
To forget major setbacks don't linger and move forward —.  
**Keep moving forward don't look back.**  
**Learn from your mistakes and move on .**

My first Tour De France another lofty goal / dream of mine .

The TDF for Europeans is seen as a sporting event that reflects everyday life.

Just like life the TDF has good guys and bad guys winners and losers .

The TDF doesn't stop for the 3 weeks it's on ....even when a riders loses his life the TDF continues on.  
Just like in life.  
There are many mountain passes to climb metaphorically speaking there are many mountains to climb in life as well .

**The only thing that will get you through the TDF is optimism and maybe that's the secret in life too.**

Yep ...you guessed it.  
Another dream of mine became a nightmare. I crashed out of my First TDF too. bloodied / broken  
and only days away from the finish line in Paris .  
So...  
Here I was in my early 20s penniless..... ..no education.

My future was not looking too bright ....

In sport you end up losing more than you win. But you must keep Moving Forward.

You too will crash metaphorically speaking but what's most important is that your spirit must never be broken and you get back up continue moving forward ...

For me the Turning point was ..... So the road to success .....

***Joining the best team in The world to become the best ..***

Take a risk.

I signed a contract for 12 months with the best team in the world.

I knew every other pro cyclist on the planet was desperate to sign for the worlds Nr 1 team.

I took a gamble ....call it a calculated risk a belief in myself and signed a contract not knowing or caring what my salary was to be ....

*So another lesson is ....*

*you must take risks at certain times nothing great has ever been achieved with out some sort of risk*

....

**Keep in mind sometimes there is no plan B**

Next message

**When your young don't let money be the driving force of your decisions if it's only money your after you will eventually fail.**

*Let your inner passion drive your decisions and eventually the money will follow you .*

For myself success came by being surrounded by the winning team as their culture of success their habits will rub off on you winning is also a state of mind .

**Surround yourself with optimistic positive thinking people . In that environment you will learn and grow .**

Stay far away from pessimistic negative people.

Within 2 years of being surrounded by the best in my profession I made it to the top of my game I eventually reached my goals and in time was able to fill out my own pay cheque.... so my initial gamble paid of handsomely.

I would like to quickly acknowledge and thank the director of marketing Alan Brideson for initiating Team UNI SAs participation in the Tour Down Under almost 20 years ago now as obviously winning the TDU wearing the colours of UNI SA was a great career highlight for me thanks Alan for creating that opportunity.

I wish all the graduates the very best good luck and good bye.