

PRINCIPAL'S ADDRESS TO PARENTS & LEARNERS:
AWARDS CEREMONY 2013 ON THURSDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2013:

Chairperson of our School Governing Body, Governing Body Members, School Management, Parents, Educators, Learners, Family members of Learners, Visitors, Ushers, my wife Chantelle, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am very pleased to be part of this important celebration and for the support your presence offers the school and our learners. I acknowledge the hard work of all those who are here, not just the winners of the academic and special awards.

Many of the learners will have strived to do their best in order to be part of this ceremony and I believe they represent the true spirit of our school: "STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE". That motto also applies to the staff and parents to whom I am very grateful for their contribution, teaching and guiding these boys and girls to very well deserved academic success. At Kuils River Technical High we aim high, strongly driven by our core values, where the dignity of work in pursuit of excellence reflects our enduring belief in hard work and that every learner got gift.

Principals' awards ceremony speeches tend to be a litany of achievements of learners and of their school. While it is really gratifying to do that, if I were to mention everything that we did well this year, instead of the few minutes I have been given, we would be here till midnight. I am certain that you would have all visited our website where you have seen and read about such successes. However, I would be remiss, if I did not mention a few co-curricular and extra-curricular achievements. The **TOASTMASTERS DEBATING SOCIETY** has indeed made a huge contribution to most society members discovering themselves and undeniably some of SPEAKER talents. The Siemens Toastmasters event in Platteklouf was indeed one of the highlights worth mentioning. Indeed the Siemens Cyber Junkyard Electrical Competition and our school runners up award, in the provincial round is certainly a great achievement as well. I would like to cite our chess club, our sports day, cross country club events, ballroom club, soccer club activities and also the connect outreach programme as deserving of mentioning and excellence.

Parents tonight the accolade your child will be receiving is a tremendous endorsement of your efforts and your high expectations and aspiration for your child. The example we set as parents and

educators are strong motivators that make learners push themselves to achieve their full potential.

The same applies for academic study. Completing school work, practising on examples, fixing mistakes, revising for tests and exams, make the difference between “achieved” and “excellence”. On one hand we need to get our boys and girls to move away from the fear of failing, which causes embarrassment, or the fear of succeeding as this stops them from even trying. On the other hand, we have to be careful we do not become obsessed with the need to achieve at all costs as this also affects their performance.

For some, “good” is what they are capable of and one has to accept that. But it would be extremely disheartening and frustrating to see some learners who due to a poor attitude, an allergy to hard work, disorganisation, questionable decision making and wrong priorities end up settling for “achieved” when “excellence” is definitely within their grasp.

Therefore learners, if tonight’s accolade is ‘achieved’ for you, then certainly you are well on your way to excellence. For you I quote the words of Gordon B. Hinckley: **“Mediocrity will never do. You are capable of something better.”**

On the other hand, if tonight award is 'excellence' to you; then you need all the praise you deserve. To you I also quote a few wise words from Gordon B. Hinckley: "**Do your best, and be a little better than you are.**"

Learners, YOU HAVE UNIQUE GIFTS. So all of you are deserving of something BETTER and BIGGER. I encourage you to use your minds for INNOVATION, rather than MEMORIZATION, for CREATIVITY rather than FUTILE ACTIVITY, for REFLECTION & PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT rather than STAGNATION? You are not here merely to achieve a MATRIC CERTIFICATE, to then get a job, then do the **SAME THING** for the REST OF YOUR LIFE! Be a beyonder...A person who see the UNIVERSE as the LIMIT and not only the SKY!

I wish to end off by and briefly share a story I share with the 2012 matriculants at their valedictory last year:

Graduates, Ladies and Gentleman, **there is a story of a young**, but deep Zen student (study to become a Buddhism Practitioner) who approached his teacher, and asked the Master, "If I work very hard and diligently, how long will it take for me to find Zen? The Master thought about this, then replied, "Ten years." The student then said, "But what if I work very, very hard and really apply myself to learn fast – How long then?" Replied the Master, "Well, twenty years."

"But, if I really, really work at it, how long then?" asked the student. "Thirty years," replied the Master. "But, I do not understand," said the disappointed student. "At each time that I say I will work harder, you say it will take me longer. Why do you say that?" Replied the Master, "When you have one eye on the goal, you only have one eye on the path."

This is the dilemma we face within the general education system. We are all so focused on a goal, whether it be passing a test, passing the examination, or graduating as first in the class. However, in this way, we do not really holistically learn. We do whatever it takes to achieve our objective of passing.

I want to encourage our learners to remain focussed. Enjoy the entire school programme. Get involved in one or more of our clubs and societies. Develop yourself holistically. Remain focussed on the path, enjoy the journey and you will achieve your goal (s).

I thank you.