

Westville Boys High

4 December 2018

In the year 2030

- We will see a world that integrates between the world as we know today and the world of artificial intelligence.
- We will have predictive medicine... that is we will be able to know in advance what we are likely to suffer from and will be able to treat it ahead of time
- There will be more millionaires and billionaires per captor than ever before
- There will be a massive resurgence in religion
- Corporate Social Responsibility will be at key focus for all
- Responsible management of all resources will be one of the world's most pressing concerns

Some interesting shorter term realities include:

- By 2022 10% of the world's clothes will be connected to the internet
- 2025 will see a commercially available implantable mobile phone
- Self-driving cars, drones, home shopping all things that were concepts 10 years ago are here with us today

For a brief moment let's have a look at what brought us to this moment in time.

The First Industrial Revolution

1760 to 1840

Was a time when man discovered how the use of water and steam could power and mechanize production.

The Second Industrial Revolution

1870 and 1914

This came about as man now discovered electricity and found out how this could be used to create mass production.

The Third Industrial Revolution – The Digital Revolution

1950 to today

Started to create our modern world that we know today. Electronics and information technology were used to automate, simplify and speed up most everything in our lives.

The Fourth Industrial Revolution

It is either here or its almost here

Building on the Third, the digital revolution. It is predicted that this forth revolution will be characterized by a fusion of technologies. That is and will blure the lines between the physical, digital and biological spheres.

In summary this means that It took man 1000's of years to find steam power.

A further 100 odd years to find electricity.

30 odd years later we introduced electronics and technology

The BIG question is, is what do the next 10 or 20 years hold instore for us.

It is believed that Humanity will change more in the next 20 years than in all of human history.

It is said that 85% of jobs available in 2030 do not yet exist.

What does all this mean for you, the young men being recognized tonight, what does it mean to me, your parents and to the management, the teachers and the staff of the school?

This truly represents unprecedented change. We will all have get educated and then re educated and then re educated again, if we are to keep pace with the rapidly changing world.

The major challenge facing educators is how can we teach skills that you will be required to have tomorrow if we do not yet know what the world will require.

The rate of change is certainly increasing, but change is a constant that man has always lived with. On the other side of change there is opportunities. With great and rapid change comes great and rapid opportunities.

Over time the people and companies who best survived the world as it changed were those who positively embraced the change and decided to prospered from it. They all showed similar traits:

- They were adaptive
- They rose to the stood up to meet the change as opposed to moaning and fighting it
- They saw opportunity while others saw danger
- They took initiative
- They were innovators
- They worked hard and always went the extra mile

- They loved to learn and they loved to teach

It is here that I would like to spend a few moments to explain my life's journey and what I have done in life to have been invited to talk at this prestigious event.

I attended Westville Boys High for 5 years from 1983 to 1987. I had many proud moments here at school and I am eternally grateful for the opportunity my parents gave me to attend Westville.

When I left school the post school education system in South Africa was going through radical change. I enrolled at a college that offered support to student that were studying towards University of South Africa qualifications.

During my 2nd year I was attending a friend's 21st birthday party. At the party I met her dad and he told me he was a lecture.

Two weeks after the party, the college that I was studying at closed down. Me and my college friends were left stranded mid-year. With no other option I contacted my friend's dad (the one that lectured and that I met two weeks before). I asked him if he could help get some lectures. I then went to St Johns Ambulance Center in town and rented one lecture room from them. I borrowed R10 000, from my dad. Within 3 of been told our college was closed we opened a new college.

So, in 1991, at the age of 21, with 3 weeks of planning, we enrolled 17 student and Varsity College was born.

People told me I was crazy. After all what did I know about running a college. Well to be honest, not that much – but I did not let that stop me.

- I had to embrace the radical change this I was presented with. My college closed down.
- I had to take initiative in a world that I knew very little about. At a fairly young age I had to open a college
- The approach that we used when we opened, addressed a need in the market place. We turned our small and unknown college into a place where people wanted to study.

- While my mates were partying I had to work. With little or no money (remember our start up capital was R10 000), we had to put in long hours, many late nights and most weekend.
- I used to drive up to JHB every Friday. Sleep on a mattress on the floor at a mate that was studying medicine at Wits. I would interview perspective students on a Saturday morning and then drive back down home to Durban
- I learnt so much from so many people that guided and mentored me
- It was never easy but it was a lot of fun

After many years of hard work, we turned Varsity College in to a national business and got it to a stage where it was the largest private college in South Africa. I eventually sold Varsity College to Advtech, a company listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Then in 2010, after 20 years at Varsity College and at the age of 40 I decided to retire.

As it turns out 40 was too young to retire. I felt that there was a lot more I still wanted to do. So, bit by bit I started getting back into the working world. This has seen me get involved in the pharmaceutical industry, with a company called BFC Pharma.

I have become an investor in private equity transactions.

After an 8-year gap from private education I have decided it is time to do it again. My main drive for getting back into education is that I am so excited about the change that is coming and I know I want to be part of the 4th industrial revolution.

The brand I am launching is called NewBridge. We intend for NewBridge to challenge norms and disrupt the status quo. We want to be a brand that prepares students for the unknown and develops thinkers that embrace change and lifelong learning.

As educators, we know that we need to adapt to this changing world. It is our job to prepare students that are innovative, creative and forward thinking. Education today cannot prepare you for jobs that do not yet exist. So, we need to prepare students and equip them with skills that the world requires them to have today,

while also preparing students to be adaptive thinkers that know how to acquire the skills that the changing world will require from them tomorrow.

I know that I am going to need to learn more in the next 20 years, than years than any learning that I have done to date.

I am inspired by the energy and the confidence that young men like you have. Just as you can learn from guys like me, I know I will learn from guys like you.

Just as Westville teaches you today, we will all need show character, resilience, discipline and respect and do it all with humility, if we want to succeed.

I count as my greatest blessings the people that I have met and the people that I have learnt from. Many of my business associates and closest friends that I have today are people that I met while I was at school here at Westville.

It is with gratitude that I look to the leadership of the school and the teachers that taught me during the days I had here at Westville Boys High. Some of those teaches whom taught me are still here today.

Legends like Mr Hall, Rev Miller, Mr Robertson and Mr Lichkus.

As a scholar we sometimes forget that the men and woman that dedicate their lives to have taught us or to teach us, do it as a calling and with great dedication. So, from myself and on behalf each young man and their parents sitting here I would like to thank the staff at WBHS for all that they have done for all past pupils and for all that they are doing for the young men here and those that will be coming to this "Dam Fine Institution" in the future.

While you young men who have achieved so well and are being recognized here tonight it is you teachers that must share in your recognition, they sit here tonight as the silent heroes.

Gentlemen when I talk about the change that is coming, get ready for it, be ready for it and you will love the ride.

You will be required to show all of the skills that you have learnt here at Westville and many of the skills that I have mentioned. You will have to embark on a journey of lifelong learning.

Stand tall and be proud. Follow your passion, give it your all, and make sure you take advantage of opportunities that come your way.

To all the young men in this hall tonight, all your lives are a book waiting to be written. What you do in the years ahead will determine how exciting your book will be, how much fun and how much success you will be able to write about.

Most importantly I ask you as you continue to please make sure that the book about your life will be a book that you will be so happy and proud of that you will present it to your parents, and one day your wife and your kids, read.

I am humbled to be among so many great achievers that are being recognised tonight. Keep up the awesome work, I look forward to learning from you and seeing what you achieve. Most of all I look forward to seeing how you will change this world of ours, in the years to come.

My days at Westville taught me how to live up to our school's motto. My hope going forward is that we can all live by our motto. That's me, that's the young men present, that's your parents and the awesome dedicated staff of the school
"incepto ne desistam" - May we not shrink from our purpose.