

Naparima College Graduation and Prize Giving Function 27th October 2022.

Theme: Illuminating the Pathway to Success.

Good morning, allow me to break with protocol and recognise first the Graduates and other recipients of prizes.

- The RT. Reverend Joy Abdul-Mohan... The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Mr. Ashford Tamby...Chairman of the Presbyterian Secondary Schools Board of Education
- Members of the Presbyterian Secondary Schools Board of Education
- Mrs. Jasmin Ramoutar...Schools Supervisor 3 M.O.E.
- Mr. Roger Ali...Principal (Ag.) Naparima College
- Mr. Rodney Pardasie... Vice Principal (Ag.) Naparima College
- Mr. Ryaad Hosein...NAPSAC President
- Mr. Joel Simmons...NAPS President
- Specially Invited Guests
- Members of Teaching Staff, Office Staff, Ancillary Staff
- Past Principals and Teachers
- Graduating Classes of 2020 & 2022
- Members of the Media
- Parents, ladies and gentlemen.

I am honoured to be here and bring with me the blessings of the classes of '71 and '73.

Congratulations on your individual achievements after many years of pursuing your goals.

EARLY DAYS

When you came to Naps you were thrust into a new space and you had to adjust. In many instances your parents carried your bags, I saw them, gave you a kiss on the cheek and entrusted you to the Custodial Care of Naparima College. Then as time passed you began to develop reaching Adolescence, a few pimples appeared on your face, hair under your arms and you proudly combed the two hairs on your chest. You thought to yourself "I is Man now" and I am on the 'net' so therefore I know everything. "I demand my own space"

Let me digress, for many years there was a large Samaan tree thriving on the edge of the courtyard overlooking the beautiful Gulf of Paria (I pointed to the area). It provided shade to a

fledgling Tamarind tree but blocked its sunlight. One night the Samaan was felled by heavy rain and strong winds and the Tamarind began to flourish. It is your time to surge upward and blossom.

DEVELOPMENT at NAPS

Now unlike that little boy in Form 1 you have been given skills to negotiate the world. Naparima has created an environment that encouraged the :

- Acquisition of knowledge
- Interaction with peers of different ethnicities, religions, political views and cultural practices
- Finding common ground through conflict resolution and friendship
- Uniting you through sports, clubs and projects
- Developing your skills of communication via Public Speaking and Elocution contests
- Guiding you to an appreciation of Music, Art, Drama and the Aesthetics
- Preparing you for the crests and valleys of competition, and
- Strengthening your ability to recover from loss by building Resilience.

WHAT'S NEXT, 8 POINTS

Through these activities you would have grown and developed tolerance, compassion, a sense of fair play, respect for others and a cooperative spirit. So what's next ? You are leaving the classroom and venturing onto the playing field of life. Your training demands that you strive for success, your parents humbly ask that you continue to study so that you can get a job and earn a living. Okay, you may wonder ' how do I accomplish that ?' Is there a Handbook out there entitled 'The Pathway to Success'. Yes there are many, we have

- Full length books, handbooks
- Internet sites with Life Coaches and Experts
- Facebook advice from everyone and the list goes on.

Let me distil and offer eight points for your consideration.

First you must want success you must have the Desire. Let me illustrate. There is a character named 'Tiger' from the novel A Brighter Sun by internationally acclaimed author Samuel Selvon, a Naparima man. The uneducated Tiger speaks to Boysie, "but man Boysie you must

be interested in things. What I want to find out most is about things in general, about people. Like what I doing here now? Why I living? What all ah we doing here ? Why some people rich and some poor? What they fighting a war for?”

Tiger speaks to Joe, “Is just me, inside of me. Things I want to learn, things I want to find out”. He had a thirst for information and so must you.

Secondly, select a program of study that prepares you for your chosen field.

3. Set goals, short, medium and long term and work towards them. If along the path there are obstacles or constraints assess the situation seek advice and move on.

4. Therefore devise a new plan and set your targets again.

5. All through it remember your parents are not the enemy, speak to them they have experience on their side and will help you manage Change.

6. Practise Time Management

7. Learn strategies for Stress Management

8. Attend to your Nutrition and Fitness

In todays world you are not bound to one profession or means of earning money. For example, if you are doing Civil Engineering and realise you want to open a garage that’s fine complete your studies and when you gather capital open the garage.

TO PARENTS

Parents I briefly turn to you. During this period of study and acquisition of skills your support is crucial. Your son needs to know you are there , not hovering over but walking alongside. These are difficult times and it is easy for young people to falter. They may deal with pressure through the use of alcohol and other substances .Deviant behaviour may also be an outcome of underdeveloped Coping Skills. Engender trust and sharing but be Mindful. Back to the young men.

WORK ETHIC

After you have qualified anywhere along that continuum from A to Z, Agriculturalist to Zoologist you then enter the world of work. You would have certain expectations and the employer would have a job description. There isn’t always an easy fit. In our country we have a record of low productivity in many sectors; sometimes due to antiquated facilities ,sometimes

due to poor management but sometimes due to lazy workers. You need to get the basics right. Be punctual, regular at work and productive for the entire day. This sustained effort must become the norm not the exception to the rule. Our Nation requires and demands that you become an agent of Positive Change.

IDENTITY

In your career aspirations do not limit your thinking to Trinidad and Tobago. Your speciality may take you abroad and it is in the nature of man to grasp opportunities that will enrich your life. You can contribute to your country from anywhere. Patriotism is not tied to your geographical location. It is also noble to stay at home and help forge a better society. Get to know the Cultural Diversity of your country to appreciate its rich heritage so that you may be grounded in what is local. We too often easily discard our Identity to adopt a foreign persona. At the same time you must have a world view to understand the interconnected nature of economies and global political decisions as they affect the Caribbean region both in times of war and peace. Never stop learning the world is evolving at a rapid rate.

CONCLUSION

Finally, wherever you may roam the Naparima man must be imbued with a spirit of service to family and the greater community. Truth, Humility and Integrity must be your constant companions as you deal with the vicissitudes of life. In your journey there are many options.

- You may take the known track and be safe
- You may be brave and take the road less travelled, or
- You may be bold and clear a new path.

Whichever you choose carry Naparima in your heart and enrich the world with the values and training you received on the Hill. You are potential leaders make that Possibility a Reality.

Thank you.

David Sammy.