

**ADDRESS BY MR. MATTHEW BOADU ADJEI AT CONGREGATION,
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, NOVEMBER 17,
2017**

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Alumni and Friends of the University

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon. On behalf of the Advisory Board of the College of Humanities of the University, it is my great pleasure to welcome you all to this year's graduation ceremony of the University of Ghana.

At today's ceremony, a few thousand graduands will receive degrees of several kinds signifying the successful completion of their pursuit of knowledge and expertise in various academic and professional disciplines.

The graduands sit here with well-deserved pride and satisfaction as they look back on rigorous courses of study that have required of them discipline, curiosity and perseverance.

They sit here also, with excitement and anticipation as they look ahead to a future spreading out before them full of possibilities, adventure, and the testing of their very mettle.

The graduands sit here as I once sat, many years ago. I remember the mixed feelings my mates and I experienced then about leaving the familiar community of the academic work and facing an unpredictable and largely unknown world. In those days, the late 1990s, Ghana's economy was by all accounts quite small. The economy's output was less than \$5 billion, government and a few large multinationals dominated economic activity, and SMEs accounted for a relatively small portion of national production. In a word, the outlook for the economy was quite bleak then. Despite those circumstances, my mates and I have been able to contribute and deploy the powers of our mind and body to our country. By the grace of God, Ghana's story is much different today.

Today, despite various challenges we face as a nation, our economy is in a much stronger position. Our GDP is more than \$42 billion now—indeed

Ghana is now a lower middle- income country- a status we only dreamt of back in the days. The private sector is larger than the government sector, and technology has transformed the way we live and do business. We are interconnected personally and professionally to an unprecedented level in the history of the world, and even so we are yet to finish exploring all the possibilities that exist for entrepreneurship in this global world. Put simply, opportunity is everywhere. Are you up to the task?

I submit to you that you have everything you need to be successful. Your courses of learning have given you the theories and foundations you need to apply in the world. The family and friends who have joined you here today, have no doubt over the years, helped to ingrain in you the discipline, morality and fortitude required to make it.

Building your future is like building a bridge across the sea; it doesn't appear realistic to many; but your foresight will define the structure of the bridge; your creativity will allow you to build that future you so envision; but it will take your determination to cross over the bridge.

So my young friends, as you depart to commence life, what can I say to you?

Two things.

First, be a do-er.

There is a place for carefully considering your options, for analysis, for talk and discussion. However, after all that is done, my friends, take action. Just Do it!

Eschew procrastination and fear. These two will rob you of your future.

Procrastination will deceive you into thinking that action is imminent. It will fail to let you see that you have actually failed to make a decision. It will lie to you that the future you desire has begun when actually it has not. The future you desire begins when you take action today. As a country we would have gone considerably farther if we had all adopted this orientation to action, if we had all believed that our work was not done until we had taken action. We would have converted the many seminars, conferences, focus groups, even academic research papers into concrete action that would have taken us much higher than we have come now. The work is not done if concrete action has not been taken.

In seeking to 'do', there will often be fear. Fear of making a mistake, fear of failure, fear of the outcome not being exactly as we desire. Act anyway, my young friends, because failure is one of the best ways to learn. Everybody fails at something, and many great & influential people experienced failures

and yet succeeded at life. Those who have never failed, have never acted. I assure you, you do not want to join their ranks.

When fear threatens to overwhelm—whether brought on by yourself or by others—remember the words of this great son of Africa, Mr. Barack Obama, who said almost ten years ago:

“...When we are met with cynicism, and doubt, and those who tell us that we can't, we will respond with that timeless creed that sums up the spirit of a people: Yes, We Can.”

So my first thought to you—Be a Do-er. Don't procrastinate, don't fear.

My second admonition to you is this; Do the right thing. Do the right thing everywhere you go, all the time. Not some of the time, but all of the time.

If that is your attitude, you would cultivate a personal & professional integrity that would make you a true asset to mankind. Do the right thing all of the time.

To help you keep it simple:

One, keep your word. Centuries ago, a man's oral commitment to a transaction was considered legally binding. So my friends, if you commit to

doing something, keep your word. Do not make commitments too easily, but once they are made, be prepared to do all you can do to make good your word. One, two, three instances of you breaking your word makes you an untrustworthy person—that is how character is revealed. Keep your word. If absolutely necessary, seek relief sooner rather than later from those you have committed to. Do this, rather than simply fail to keep your word with no prior warning. We have all been on the receiving end of a broken commitment or promise, without even the courtesy of prior communication. Do not become an untrustworthy person by doing it to others. In business, in our families, in all personal relationships, keep your word and your commitments.

Finally, remember the “Front-Page test”. As you succeed out in the world, you will become a leader responsible for making decisions that affect many people. Do not do anything you wouldn’t want your child to read about on the front page of the newspaper. Does this mean everything you read in the papers is right? No, of course not. But this is a very useful exercise to perform before you take an action. It helps you evaluate how your actions, especially the secret or private ones, will be viewed by those you admire most. If after asking yourself this question—do I want my child to read about this action on the front page of the newspaper? —you are confident that your actions are

borne out of conviction and of courage, by all means go ahead. If you will not be happy to look your child straight in the eye, take pause and do the right thing you know to do.

In conclusion my young friends, the future is yours. You are poised for success. Go and become men and women of action! Go and become do-ers! “Cui Multum Datum” is the motto of my Hall, Legon Hall, and it means -
To whom much is given, much is expected, therefore...

Do the right thing all the time. Be a person of integrity by keeping your word. When in doubt consider how posterity will view your actions. You can do it.

Friends, let me end with one of my favourite scripture.

Philippians 4: 8

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

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