



HIGH ACHIEVERS ASSEMBLY, 2019

Principal's Speech

Good Morning High Achievers 2018, families, staff and students

TODAY

- Important day in our academic calendar across the 1900 students and staff that make Newman College
- Recognizes and celebrates the HIGH ACHIEVERS of 2018 Commitment, hard work, diligence and effort in your studies in your quest for academic excellence over 13 years of education.
- A symbol of hope, of what is doable, what is achievable, what is possible
- We acknowledge those (the rest of the class of 2018) who are not here but worked to their maximum effort. They are to be applauded
- We acknowledge and thank our teachers - their efforts, commitment and care for you, particularly Mr James McLaughlin
- And, of course, we acknowledge our families – for their love and support

Culture

One of the great joys of living in our State was to witness the incredible emotion associated with the AFL Premiership victory of the West Coast Eagles last year. The WA community (perhaps even Fremantle supporters) were swept up in the wave of emotion that proceeded the victory. Much since has been written about the success of the team; more specifically the culture that pervaded the players, coaches and the wider West Coast organisation. Gareth Parker, journalist for the West Australian, wrote:

“Every club makes statements about values and missions, some public, some private. Sometimes they are mere marketing speak, sometimes they are lived and breathed.”

In the video of that jubilant post-premiership meeting of Simpson and his players in the coach's room, Simpson gives the floor to his captain, Shannon Hurn.

“It's all about actions, boys. Not about words,” Hurn says, before ticking the final check box on the whiteboard: Friends, Family, Flags.

Job done, but the captain had a point.

Actions define a culture as they determine the decisions that are made and the relationships that are formed.

A culture will be strong or weak depending on the interactions between the people in the organisation. In a strong culture, there are many overlapping and cohesive interactions among all members of the community. As a result, knowledge about our distinctive character — and what it takes to thrive in it — is widely spread and reinforced. In a weak culture, sparse interactions make it difficult for people to learn the culture, so its character is barely noticeable and the commitment to it is scarce or sporadic.

Beliefs, values, and actions will spread the farthest and be tightly reinforced when everyone is communicating with everyone else. This was the case for the Premiers!

As a Marist College our culture is strengthened and supported by our characteristics of presence, hard work, simplicity, in the way of Mary and family spirit.

It drives the cultural elements that shape who we are.

Br Michael Green in his book *Now with Enthusiasm, Charism, God's mission and Catholic Schools today* argues that for a school's culture to be functional, its rhetoric needs to align with the reality of what happens among its members in their day to day lives and how it impacts on their relationships;

Put simply, that your actions need to be a reflection of what you say.

Culture in our community is shaped by:

1. **Fundamental beliefs and assumptions**, or the things that people at Newman College consider to be true. For example: "All students have the potential to succeed". Our Vision for Learning *Shine through discovery* – let your light shine asks this of us; that we can be excellent; we have license to let our light shine.
2. **Shared values, or the judgments we make about those beliefs and assumptions** — For example: We have a high expectation environment:
 - We Challenge. We Collaborate. We Create. We Celebrate.
3. **Norms, or how members believe they should act and behave, or what they think is expected of them.** In the tangible, what we do: in actions. For example: All students are to attend school, a settled learning environment; participate in school events - whole school Mass, swimming carnival - get involved in co-curricular – NAS, the Production, Remar, Philippines Immersion.

This is what makes our school!

To the high achievers of 2018, you represent the best of what we seek and aim for in this faith and learning community. Your example of excellence is exemplified in what you individually and collectively have achieved. You are acknowledged today because of hard work, belief and faith in what was possible.

Should our current students have the opportunity today, ask our High Achievers:

- About their level of attendance
- About their study routine; did they go to homework clubs; seek teachers out, submit additional essays, maths problems, do an extra rehearsal or work on the major work
- About the teacher, the mentor they sought out to assist them in navigating that assessment, exam or certificate course
- About the teacher, the parent, the friend who inspired them
- About the value of class time
- About the Year 12 Retreat and how they built relationships that were borne out of love, faith and hope. Build on our Marist characteristics of presence and family spirit

It is the sum of these things that matters.

As a school our results were magnificent: 100% WACE completion; median ATAR 84.5, 58 students over 90, Direct entry into university from the General pathway, General exhibition award winners.

Congratulations!

Challenge — Collaborate — Create — Celebrate

TO THE CLASS OF 2018

Your efforts demonstrated by application, resilience, discipline, shared values friendships and self-belief have enhanced our Newman culture.

Thank you for sharing your gifts and talents, for sharing your leadership; your presence today is valued and acknowledged. Let us put our hands together for the Class of 2018.

TO OUR STUDENTS PRESENT IN THE AUDITORIUM TODAY

You carry the same light, be it different because it belongs to you

- Leaders of this community; to set the example - to carry our light; On the bridge - see the future
- Academic Excellence, work hard, set goals, embrace the responsibility and faith and learning opportunities.
- Love your learning, love your school

These expectations of excellence are incumbent on you to champion; to grab the future and make it yours.

CONCLUSION

At Newman College it is our opportunity to animate and empower all members of our community to hope and to dream.

- As a community we seek to support each other to grow in our strengths – students, teachers and families.
- Like the West Coast Eagles - be resilient; seek to overcome adversity; the challenges, the opportunities
- Do what you love to do
- To make a difference in the world, to transform the world and to be an agent of change.

For our High Achievers we wish you all the best in the next stage of your journey. We will pray for you as we do for all ex-students as they seek to make their mark in the world.

In the words of Blessed John Henry Newman:

Let us grow in wisdom and love
and act with courage to choose what is right.
May we always be open to change
and have the strength to accept
what is new and valuable.
Give us peace and happiness in what we do.

We ask this through Jesus, Your Son,
and Mary, our Mother.

Amen.