

Honoured Guests, Parents and Grandparents, Staff and Faculty, Students, and Graduates of the class of 2018,

Last Saturday, I attended a memorial service for a Study alumna, who passed away in her 101st year. Miss Barbara Whitley was born in 1918, and on the day of her memorial service, she was remembered by all attendees as a talented, brilliant, witty, compassionate, humble and caring woman. Who among us can say that we would not wish to be remembered and described, using those words after 100 years of life on earth?

If I had magical qualities, I would give each of you a special gift. My gift to you would be 100 extra years of life, to do with, whatever brought you joy in this world. You would choose your best life, filled with anything and everything that you wanted it to be—anything that would bring you joy. What would you do with 100 extra years of your best life?

I have asked this question of many over the years. Even now, I can observe your eyes brighten with the thought of having 100 extra years to do whatever you wish for. Some of you would want to be making a difference in the world, and some would be choosing to travel, to learn, love, laugh, enjoy life, and to feel exhilarated by all that life has to offer.

Some of you would tell me, “Wow, Mrs. Sweer that would quite an impossible dream”!

I would like you to know that you do not need to imagine this as an impossible dream. If you were to align your emotions with the happiness and joy that you are feeling right now, if you were to imagine every dream as if it were already a reality, if you imagined yourself actually living and feeling your very best life, right now, your chances of attaining that dream would increase, exponentially.

I’m not saying that negative people never achieve, but negativity causes an upstream battle. Think of the difference between saying, “I’m not going to pass this test”, or, “I haven’t studied enough”, and substituting it with, “I’ve got this, I’ve studied”, or, “It feels really good to know that I am prepared, and it feels so good to have an excellent result”, or “I know I’m going to do well”.

Deepak Chopra says, “Negative emotion is incompatible with positive results”. Personally, I have always found that to be true. When you are faced with a negative feeling or experience, try to reach for a better thought until you

are in a more positive emotional place. Difficult though that may be at times, it is the difference between swimming a difficult upstream path and instead, allowing the current of joy to take you where you wish to be.

So- Back to Barbara Whitley, an accomplished actress, a philanthropist, a lover of humanity, a woman filled with passion, and someone who clearly lived her best life, and clearly felt the joy in living, even in the last days of those 100 years. If I could speak with her now, I would ask, "Miss Whitley, how has your life been in these 100 years"? I'm sure she would say, "Mrs. Sweer, it has been a blast- an amazing ride".

Such is my wish for all of you, my girls. I hope that your hearts will always be filled with joy and love in all that you do, and that while you are on the path to living your best life, that you remain in a constant state of positive anticipation, with great enthusiasm and good feeling for all that awaits you in your future.

Graduates, may your lives truly be "a blast", and when all is said and done, may you all be able to say what an amazing ride this was.

Wishing you a life of positivity and good feeling.

Nancy Lewis Sweer
Head of School