

## Graduation 2012 Acceptance Speech from Honorary Graduate Rosie Stancer

Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Professor Sellens and everyone who has graduated today. Thank you very much, it is a great honour to be here, unaccustomed as I am to the temperatures in here. It was certainly rather more symbolically a very hard, cold and sometimes rather frightening, journey I had to make to this lectern, but here I am with this great important, and quite unanticipated, honour.

But that is one of the great joys of exploration. It's the surprises, the unanticipated rewards.

And all of us, all of us here today, are all embarking on different stages of expeditions of our lives, especially today, all of you who have graduated by hard work and more sweat than I have put into mine. Congratulations.

Because, I applaud you, I believe that in fact there is an explorer in all and each of us. And the good news is, as I clearly did not inherit my grandfathers' genes at six foot four, to be qualified as an explorer you don't have to be superwoman, or tinkerbelle or even the terminator. Because exploration is not just about staggering or staffing or conquering your way to a point on a map like the poles. There's much more to it than that.

It's about exploration of your potential, when you really put your all into a goal. You push harder than you ever thought you could, past those boundaries that not just others have pegged out for you as limitations, but you have put out yourself. Once we've pushed those boundaries back, we are exploring and discovering the power of our potential.

Of course, if every one of us is a potential explorer, there are those who stay in their own comfort zone, safe within their boundaries. And for them the explorer will remain dormant.

But for those others of us who dare to push back our own boundaries, what does it actually take? How would somebody like me, for instance, a perfectly ordinary woman, housewife, mother – how do I come to stretch out to such a far off dream and come so close? Well, I think we go back to what the Chancellor referred to as some really basic valuable values in life.

First of all it is belief: A belief in yourself. The belief in your dream, your goal. But it has to come with passion, lots of passion, and the ability to see beyond each goal that you set yourself.

A dollop of humour, a sense of humour: You can only be your own worst enemy, nobody and nothing else, through your own negativity.

And courage, valour: I'm not talking of the sort of stuff in the cartoon superwoman comics, but a quieter courage, an inner strength that you need to push you through the times when you are filled with fear. And there wasn't a day on the arctic ice that I wasn't at some point scared witless. But what propelled me on, was that focus on my dream, my end goal. And there are all sorts of fears: there was not just the fear of the physicality of the Arctic Ocean, but there was a fear of making a fool of myself, there was a fear of failure. If you let that get the better of you, you will never even take your first step in your journey.

Now, I don't actually believe in failure anymore. Did Sir Ernest Shackleton ever reach a Pole? No. Is he regarded as a failure? No. Even he had no idea of the richness of the legacy that he left to illuminate all of our lives. For he taught us that it is not just that end goal, that destination and realising it. It is also all about the journey there.

We are all going to encounter in our next stages of our adventure obstacles and problems and fear too. But that is what exploration is all about. Take it or leave it. But I would urge you to go out there and to enjoy the challenges ahead, and to awaken the explorer in you as well.

Thank you.