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I can't remember the person who delivered my own graduation speech. Whether it was because its too long ago, it wasn't that memorable, or I deleted the neurons that very night, I'm not entirely sure, but as I reflected on what I could say to you today one thing was clear. Back then, graduation was a different experience for every individual and it meant very different things. For some, the culmination of long held ambition, for others simply a step forward in their career, for others a sense of deep satisfaction and achievement, and for all I suspect a mixture of those.

This year though, there is a certain glue that holds you all together, that no other graduating class will lay claim to, and that is that you graduated during the first year of a global pandemic. It lends both an added sense of achievement, a recognition of the challenge of your last year, but something deeper than that.

You are a graduating class into a health system that has sustained an almighty and jolting shock. Even in our success as a nation the pandemic has revealed aspects of healthcare that are ripe for change. An example is the advancement of telehealth in our therapeutic arsenal. Equally the recognition that a strong public and private sectors are critical to resilience of our health system. There will be other example that we are not even aware of at the moment though they will be clear in retrospect in the decades to come.

So with this connection you have with each other as the graduating class of the COVID-19 pandemic most of you will enter into the workplace next year. If you indulge me I can offer three small pieces of advice.

For those of you who will have direct contact with patients, that deep privilege of providing advice and care to people in need of your experience and expertise, never forget that the interaction you have with your patients is mainly of a human and emotional rather than a technical interaction. It doesn't matter if you're the most knowledgeable dietician or psychologist if you can't nail the human aspects of your interaction then your patients will only be getting a fraction of the value of your expertise. And I would offer just one piece of advice therein. The last patient of the day and their family will expect you to treat them exactly the same as the first. When you are in that room, they will have no regard for what is going on in your life, or your day, because they are in need of your care. It is one of the expectations that distinguishes healthcare professionals from others. It is both a privilege and a curse. And yet it will mark you out, if you can remember it, to put on your game face when you feel least like doing so in order to effectively care for another human being.

And for those of you who adopt careers that are not in a direct patient care space, the corollary of this advice is how you 'show up' to work. When the chips are down at the end of a tough day, a tough week or a tough month, do you let that grind you down, do you let it distract you, take you

off task? Or are you there, in the moment, doing your job 100% of the time. Of course, we see an example of this every week of the winter season for us AFL fans. We can tell, even in a side that is doing it tough, which of the players are showing up, which of them are still there, focussed, in the moment, and which are letting things grind them down.

Why are both these critically important. Because most of you will be working in organisations, most medium to large, some government, some smaller or private, others in the research sector. And organisations are complex systems of humans being humans. Organisations do well when the humans that form part of them show up, believe in what they are doing, have ambition for themselves and for the team they are working for. Organisations do poorly when people feel trapped, when they feel like prisoners in their workplace, when they don't show up. Of course, we can never expect realistically to show up 100% of the time, and this is when, during your professional career, you need to be able to check your own barometer. It is so critical in the professions where we help others, or we operate in frequently underfunded environments of public and preventive health, that we recognise that the demands on us emotionally and professionally are greater, that we need above all to look after ourselves. And that will require a degree of insight into how you operate as a human. What lights the fire in your belly? What pushes your buttons and frustrates you more than anything? What do you do about it when you are frustrated? What signals will you see in yourself that you may be the one in need of care.

Friends, before the COVID-19 pandemic hit, and I'm not talking the year or the decade before, I'm talking a few weeks before, I was entering into some long needed treatment for what may well be post-traumatic stress disorder related to my stints away with Medecins Sans Frontieres. I had been deeply anxious at work to the point of feeling physically unwell, attended the emergency department here at Canberra Hospital on several occasions, spent entire weekends in bed watching entire TV series to try and distract myself from my own mind. And so when Professor Paul Kelly rang me and asked whether I would join him as another Deputy Chief Medical Officer for the country I, for the first time in my life, deeply doubted whether I could do the job. With the support of my wife, I agreed to take on the position. That first day in the National Incident Room, which by all rights should have sent me into a tail spin of anxiety and self-doubt, was exactly the opposite. In fact, it was like shackles coming off and I felt vibrant, alive and most importantly calm and confident again. I give this insight not because it is now fashionable to discuss ones own mental health, though that in itself is important, but to show you that during your careers there will naturally be soaring highs and deep lows, and that one of the most important pieces of advice I can give you is to take time to look after yourself, to search relentlessly for the things that you enjoy in life and to enjoy the moment once you have found them.

Finally, I would commend to you the opportunity of lifelong learning that a career in the health sciences offers. It is difficult advice to see value in just at the start of your careers. Let me tell you that those who flourish and succeed are frequently those that are able to reinvent themselves, to take new opportunities and continue to learn. Even if you stay in the same job for the next decade make sure you are allowing yourself the opportunity to grow in that job, and if not there, then maintain a healthy set of interests outside your job. Remember that to 'show up' every day regardless of whether the chips are up and down, you will need both balance in your life and inspiration. Don't be afraid to seek inspiration from mentors, people who you look up to and seek to learn from. When I was an intern, my inspiration was Dr Arthur Harris, a genial, gentle physician of the old school, who despite being in his late 60s when I was his intern still beat me in straight sets in tennis and who, during his ward round, would always hold a door open for another staff member to walk through, be it his intern, a cleaner, another health professional. Never a more humble clinician

I have met, and I still constantly try to reach the standard he set. Arthur is now retired in south west western Australia and must be in his late eighties. He got in touch with me during the COVID-19 epidemic and we exchanged details on our lives in the past two decades. When you find that inspiration you will know it and it will shape your careers.

Friends, enjoy this year as your first since graduation from these degrees. Celebrate the great success that yourselves and your University have achieved in graduating during a global pandemic. Congratulations, and I wish you all the very best for a bright future wherever it takes you.