



Speech by

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Dr. Chiu, Supervisor of the School, Mr. Peter Yuen, Principal, SMC members, Teachers, Parents, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be invited to participate in the 1st Speech Day of Stewards Pooi Kei College. I find 2 things interesting while I am presenting the prizes. First, in this school, I find that girls wear ties but boys don't. Second, in over hundreds of students, none of you is called Joseph, like me. This caught me by surprise as I thought I have a very common first name.

About a year ago, around this time, is the last day of the Olympic Games in Beijing. A small Chinese man who weighed about 48 kg won the first ever gold medal in boxing for China. With the national flag on his shoulder and tears in his eyes, he said, "Chinese people are finally standing on their feet 中國人站起來". You may not remember his name, I don't. You may not remember his face, but what he said was very true. Because 100 years after the fall of the Qing Dynasty, and more than 50 years after the Sino-Japanese War, we are no longer called "the sick fellow 東亞病夫" by foreigners. We can finally be proud of our country and of ourselves. What makes China proud is more than her economic growth, more than her technical advancement, and more than the openness of the government; what makes the Beijing Olympics a great success is more than the wonderful stadiums they build, more than the spectacular opening ceremony that we all saw on TV, and even more than the lots of gold medals China has won. The previous Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Mr. Tony Blair, gave a talk at the Yale Schools of Management and Divinity which was subsequently published in the "New York Times". He said, "These people weren't living in fear, but looking forward in hope...that was the spirit of China during this festival of sport, and that is the spirit that will define its future. It is that they mark a new epoch, an opening up of China that can never be reversed. The volunteer force that staged the Games was interested, friendly and helpful. And the people are proud, really and honestly proud, of their country and its progress". What makes China proud is that with all the efforts, and all the enthusiasm that everybody put in, we see a strong nation emerging on the horizon. The Asian Dragon rose again. But ladies and gentlemen, before we can enjoy the fruit of success, we must face many, many failures.

In my early life as a student, as a young doctor in a hospital, as a green scientist, as an inexperienced leader of the department, of the college and of the university, I have encountered many, many challenges. I hit many nails into my forehead. I got myself into some trouble. I put myself in many embarrassing situations in the past which you may not believe. I graduated from a primary school with top grades, in fact I never came second in the class from P.1-6 and landed in a very traditional boys' school in Hong Kong with all top students. So in F.1, while I emerged well in some sports, I ended up last in the class. But with tireless effort, a lot of sweat and tears, I got back to the top of the line when I did my School Certificate Examination in 1976. In the medical school, once again I was a nobody among the top students. But I discovered that my strength was not in memorizing everything in the textbooks, but to create something new and to present myself positively. With this edge, I joined the Department of Medicine as a lecturer and gradually became Professor in Medicine.

During the outbreak of SARS in 2003, long before this school was born, I found that what I had learnt over the years might not be sufficient to save people's lives. In fact, I could not even save my own life. I turned to God for help and He gave me a team of dedicated doctors and nurses. In 5 months' time, we reached clarity and started to see light at the end of the tunnel. When we took off the mask and breathed the first breath of fresh air in September, we knew that with the mercy of God and our efforts put together, nothing was impossible.

The same, ladies and gentlemen, goes for sportsmen, scientists, entrepreneurs and indeed every individual living on the face of the earth. The secret story of the success of Silicon Valley, according to the books from Stanford University, is the willingness to take risks and to react to failure positively. All successful computer products have actually gone through numerous trials, errors and failures before they come into the market. The key to get an Olympic gold medal is to practice day by day, night by night, and get up from where you fail and try again. Do you know of any champions in any fields of sport who have never been defeated, never been injured, and never settled for second best? The famous American President Roosevelt said, "The greatest fear is fear itself". I would say, "The taste of success is never so sweet, if you don't have a failure as a seed". So today I'm talking to you, young men and young ladies, don't be discouraged by your setbacks, which I am sure you will face many, many times in the days to come. This is indeed your path to succeed in the future. If you have not got the best grades this year, work harder, try things differently, and you will improve and next year you will be on the stage with a trophy. If you have not got a scholarship or a prize, observe your teachers and other outstanding people; read some biographies and follow what they do. You will, one day, stand and be proud. We have heard people say, "No pain, no gain". So only if you persevere, you will one day have your efforts paid off. For those who have been awarded for your achievements, this is just a very small step in your career and your life. Don't be complacent, you need more efforts, more attempts and even more failures to achieve your final destination and obtain your largest trophy in life. Obama said, "Change will not come if you wait for some other person, or some other time. We are the one we have been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." Our future is in your hands. Let us work together to make a better future for Hong Kong, for our country and for mankind. If you forget everything that I said today, remember this, "Love yourselves, love your parents, love your teachers, your neighbors, and most of all, love the Almighty. Be thoughtful. And be proud of yourself".