

Convocation Address to be delivered

By

Shri Deepak Kumar Hota, CMD BEML Limited

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Dr Karsanbhai K Patel, President Nirma University, Shri K K Patel, Vice President Nirma University, Dr Anup K Singh, Director General Nirma University, distinguished members of Board of Governors, Directors of Institutes, faculty and staff, graduating students and their parents, invited guests, media representatives, ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to be here amidst all of you today, in this world-class institution. The commitment of the University in creating excellent facilities and infrastructure, essential for quality education and all-round development of students is well evident. The campus unmistakably, is providing an ideal environment for the young and enthusiastic students to pursue various graduate, post graduate and doctoral level programmes combining both rigor and relevance.

At the outset, hearty congratulations to each one of the young scholars present here. We today celebrate your accomplishment, of having successfully completed your respective programmes. You need to be justifiably proud of yourselves; having worked hard and imbibed requisite knowledge and skills, enabled by the proficient faculty of this

institution. I am sure and confident that your education and talent will stand you in good stead to face the challenges in the corporate world or in your entrepreneurial journey, which some of you may choose to undertake.

While you are stepping into your professional careers especially in the corporate world, you need to be aware that your approach towards accomplishment of your goals will have to be entirely different from how you have been habituated so far. From early education onwards, each one of you have been coaxed and persuaded to do well in studies and come out on top of the class. You are accustomed to individual effort to be ahead of your fellow students in your academic journey.

However, as a manager and leader, your performance more often than not, will be gauged by your performance as part of a team. Ram Charan, the global business advisor, author and speaker who has served on the Harvard Business School faculty, talks about the six turns in the leadership pipeline which are major life events of a leader and in that, the first 'passage' is from managing self to managing others.

The skills people should learn at this first leadership passage include planning work, assigning work, motivating and measuring the work of others. First-time managers need to learn how to reallocate their time so that they not only complete their assigned work but also help others perform effectively. You cannot allocate all of your time to seizing opportunities and handling tasks yourselves. You need to shift from doing work to getting work done.

Let this also be the beginning of another phase in your lives, of continuous contextual learning. By continuous learning, you should endeavour to constantly develop and improve your skills and knowledge in order to perform effectively and adapt to changes in the workplace.

You should consciously take ownership of your professional development. Professional development will help you feel connected to your career and grow as a professional.

“The learning curve is also the earning curve,” and your augmented proficiency will help you to climb the corporate ladder faster. You should gain access to learning opportunities that your organization offer or take a course online, search for an expert video or podcast to learn a quickly needed skill that fit your individual needs and schedules. According to Deloitte’s Global Human Capital Trends survey 2016 report, more than 40 percent executives view learning as important while another 44 percent see it as a *very* important issue.

A research report, which perhaps is most concerning, colludes that youngsters today, strive for a socially prescribed perfectionism which can lead to anxiety and nervousness. Increasingly, there is a fear that many of today’s young people hold irrational ideals for themselves, ideals that manifest in unrealistic expectations for professional achievement. It also transcends to a pre-eminent myth that things, including themselves, should be perfect.

Therefore while embarking in your new careers brimming with ambition to do well, be aware that you need to have your feet on the ground. Whenever you are likely to be stressed out by a looming opportunity, you must try and shift your focus away from the disastrous possibilities of what might go wrong, towards what you might learn from it instead. It would also help if you recalibrate your goals downward and work with them to see stressful events as opportunities to develop.

Do not brood over what could have been or should have been, and experience anxiety and even shame and guilt about lost possibilities.

Failure is not weakness. You have been living our educational culture which is success-focused, and rewards “high achievement.” But any leadership position requires putting yourself on the line, consistently taking risks, and without exception, sooner or later . . . failing.

“Be like the sun and meadow, which are not in the least concerned about the coming winter”

George Bernard Shaw

While being engaged in the present do not lose sight of the big picture. Focus on where you want to be, rather than where you are now. You need to be future oriented. If you have solid long-term goals, and you can see how your present work fits in to them, you will be able to handle ‘lows’ in work life easier. Lay out the steps you need to achieve the goal on a flowchart. Take steps each day that advance you toward your goal. Charles Darwin famously said *“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change”*. Learning is important, at every stage, since it will help you to adapt to the disruptive changes that is sweeping across every functional area.

We all know that any change is tough; because we are habituated to do the same thing over and over, regardless if that activity is good or bad for you. The process of change is challenging, but the positive consequence is really awesome. *“People don’t resist change. They resist being changed.”* Peter M. Senge

We are in the midst of a new era of revolutionary technology being spearheaded by the bright new younger generation. According to a research finding, eight in 10 older adults think that you, the millennials, are equipped with advanced technological skills that will allow you to get ahead in the workplace. It is presumed that in few years the brains of multitasking teens and young adults will be wired differently from those aged over 35 years. These resultant changes in learning behaviors and

cognition is expected to be positively impactful, although the defining factor between winners and losers in the coming years is likely to be the capacity to be aware of the surroundings; mindfulness in the new environment. Mindfulness is moment-to-moment awareness, being in the here and now, relaxing fully into the present.

We can equate mindfulness with good feeling emotions such as joy, relaxation, and happiness. However, becoming truly mindful and aware also means that we are able to experience things when we are angry, sad, jealous, anxious, vulnerable, or lonely. Therefore, by having an increased capacity to face the full spectrum of being human, experiencing the good, the bad, and the ugly, you can learn to be less reactive so that you can make better choices each day.

While the world is getting more and more technologically connected, many of us seem to be feeling more mentally disconnected—from others, and from ourselves. The ubiquity of always-connected mobile devices is leading to societal exhaustion. If you look around, people walking around on the street, people at restaurants, even parks, waiting lounge; nobody is having conversations anymore. All are sitting and having their dinner looking at their phones, because our brain is so addicted to it.

It is common to take pride that one has many friends, on Face book; but how many friends do you actually have. Indra Nooyi Chairperson and CEO of PepsiCo, in an interview talked about her little daughter calling up to ask if she can speak to her. We are not having face to face communication anymore. Less mindfulness and less social interaction would diminish the ability to communicate effectively and impactfully. Therefore make genuine effort to connect with people face to face.

As you develop your career you will find that effective communication skills are important and that good reading, writing, speaking and

listening skills are essential for tasks to be completed and goals achieved. Innovation and creativity, solving big problems, leveraging opportunities – all of these demand highly developed language skills. You will need to request information, discuss problems, give instructions, work in teams, interact with colleagues and clients. If you are to be seen as a valued member of the organisation, it is important not just to be able to do your job well, but also to communicate your thoughts on how the processes and products or services can be improved. Without powerful language skills, you could struggle to gather resources, to bring clarity to action and to lead the kinds of conversations that cause innovative action.

As your formal academic pursuit in this institution is coming to an end, you all would be feeling that huge weight is being lifted off your shoulders, but not entirely. You are going to spend daily, similar amount of time you spent in your class rooms or may be even more, making a career.

The way you had chosen your stream of study based on your liking and aptitude, you would have chosen your placement or job. It is therefore important that you continue to love what you do. Many organizations make it possible for the employees to bring their whole self to work; some call it advocating a culture of performance with a purpose. You will need to find a purpose in what you do at work and you should feel good about going to work.

There is a quote by Julissa Loaiza which says: "*I know people who graduated college at 21, and didn't get a salary job until they were 27. I know people who graduated at 25 and already had a salary job*". He goes on to say that he knows people whose had experiences and timelines in their personal lives have been quite different from what they wanted. Everything in life happens according to our time, our clock. You

may look at your friends and some may seem to be ahead or behind you, but they're not. They're living according to the pace of their clock. You're not falling behind, it's just not your time; so you need to be patient.

You should not feel depressed if you seem to be falling behind, it's not just your time yet! You should not compare yourselves to everyone else. What tomorrow holds in store for you, you would not know! The important point to remember is that you have chosen your own path. Along that path you would choose your own way. Everyone has something different and unique in them and you won't reach where you want to be, all at the same time. You therefore, need focus more on the outcomes, i.e. creating meaningful, purposeful and fulfilling lives for yourselves. And also learn to use that to make an impact; a difference in the lives of others and the society. That is true success.

Once again, I am grateful and honoured to have been invited to speak to you today. Let me conclude by wishing each one of you all the best in your future endeavours. May you all flourish in which ever path you choose and bring glory to your alma mater.

Thank you