

Good Morning everyone. Welcome back to a new school year and in this assembly we especially welcome our new Form One students into the SPC family. I trust that you have all had an enjoyable and relaxing summer holiday.

Other than travelling, I spent my summer time reading books that I did not have time to read during our hectic 165<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. One of the books that I started, which I am still reading, is "Tudors" by Peter Ackroyd. The House of Tudor ruled England for over one hundred years. What is so exciting about this period is not just the story of King Henry VIII and his six wives but also the transformation of England from a Catholic country to a Protestant stronghold. We also learn of the violent but failed attempt by Queen Mary I, or better known as "Bloody Mary" to restore England to the Catholic faith. If you are a history lover, you will certainly like this book. I especially like the skillful narrative style of the writer in bringing history to life for his readers.

The other book that I have read is called "The Elements of Eloquence" by Mark Forsyth. It is a book that I picked up in a bookstore in Ireland. I do not know much about the writer but he has a very entertaining way of presenting what essentially is a rather boring subject: how to write well. It is about how people can write unforgettable phrases like Shakespeare and Oscar Wilde or write memorable lyrics like John Lennon. Just the title is already a very clever use of alliteration.

I hope you too have made good use of the summer holiday to improve yourselves, and that you are ready to embrace the new challenges that the new academic year will bring.

The beginning of a new school year ought to be an exciting time for everyone because it offers the opportunity to start afresh, set goals and make new resolutions to do better. I cannot emphasize strongly enough the importance of goal setting as a prerequisite for a

successful year. The famous basketball player Michael Jordan wrote the following about goal setting in his book, *I Can't Accept Not Trying: Michael Jordan on the Pursuit of Excellence*:

*I approach everything step by step....I had always set short-term goals. As I look back, each one of the steps or successes led to the next one. When I got cut from the varsity team as a sophomore in high school, I learned something. I knew I never wanted to feel that bad again....So I set a goal of becoming a starter on the varsity. That's what I focused on all summer. When I worked on my game, that's what I thought about. When it happened, I set another goal, a reasonable, manageable goal that I could realistically achieve if I worked hard enough....I guess I approached it with the end in mind. I knew exactly where I wanted to go, and I focused on getting there. As I reached those goals, they built on one another. I gained a little confidence every time I came through.*

*All those steps are like pieces of a puzzle. They all come together to form a picture....Not everyone is going to be the greatest....But you can still be considered a success....Step by step, I can't see any other way of accomplishing anything.*

This of course is a very long quote from Michael Jordan but I think his advice is worth heeding. You need to know what you want and set your goals with the end in mind, take a small step and move forward one step at a time. The first taste of success breeds more success.

Imagine that you were given a bow and an arrow and you were asked to shoot. Your immediate reaction would be "at what?" If you do not set goals for whatever that you do, it is like making random shots, without focus and without direction.

I hope that form teachers and subject teachers can help students with their goal setting at the beginning of the new school year so that our boys have something to focus on during this year. These goals can be related to your academic learning, to your health, to your relationship with people or to your participation in extracurricular activities. Remember

to set **SMART** goals, that is, goals that are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-bound or a deadline for achieving the goal.

Likewise, the school has also set ourselves some goals for the new academic year. We have reached the third and final year of our school development plan and one of the more pressing jobs that we have to do this year is to come up with a development plan setting out our major concerns for the next three year. It is an important document because it provides a blueprint for our school development from 2018 to 2021. We will be doing a large scale evaluation to assess the effectiveness of many of our programmes and initiatives. There will be questionnaires and surveys to solicit your opinions as well as your parents'. If you have any suggestions about ways to make St. Paul's College a better school, an even greater school, please do not hesitate to share your thoughts with us.

Another goal that we would like to work on is the promotion of a reading culture in St. Paul's College. Reading is extremely important for you because it develops your language skills which are necessary for further studies and your future work. Research has shown that teens who choose to pick up a book for pleasure have a higher chance to succeed in life. To me, a book is like a time machine. When you are fully engaged in your reading, it immediately transports you to a different age, a different place, or a different dimension. It is an adventure that you alone can enjoy while you are seated with a book in front of you. Mark Twain, who wrote Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, once said, "A person who won't read has no advantage over one who can't read." I ask that each one of you brings a story book to school to read every day, whether it is in Chinese or in English.

When you start your new school year today, you may have noticed that we have made significant improvements to some of our facilities, including a newly renovated toilet in the covered playground, new classrooms and a brand new snack bar next to the tuck

shop. All the lockers in the classrooms are repaired or replaced. There is now a visualizer in each classroom and new computers with SSD hard disks will be installed in all classrooms within the first two weeks of the new school term. Chromebook computers will also be installed in the Geography room in September. We have been working hard to make sure that you have a good learning environment and I hope you will help us to take good care of all school property, and keep the campus clean and tidy.

Finally, let me introduce to you our new members of staff and they are Ms. Elizabeth Huggett from the UK who is our new English teacher and Ms. Jovita Wong, teaching Biology and Integrated Science. Mr. Roger Lo will be our new CLAP and English language teacher. We also have a number of supporting staff including our new Music Officer Ms. Tracey Pun, our English Language Teaching Assistant Mr. Kaspar Lam and our Sports officer Mr. Ivan Li. We have a new social worker on board and he is Mr. Louis To. You will also see a new face in the College Office, Ms. Kristy Chow, who is our Publicity and Publications Officer. Please join me in giving them a good round of applause to welcome them.

As we begin our new school year, let me wish you all a happy, successful and fruitful year ahead.

*Dennis Yuen*