

## **Speech for Mile Gully Primary Graduation Exercise 2007**

Specially invited guests, Principal Ms. Jennifer Morgan, teachers, parents, graduates and well-wishers. I am very honoured to be here today.

As I thought about what I would say this afternoon, I recalled passing the entrance of Mile Gully school, at what was referred to as Top Gully, twice per day, as I made my way to Bishop Gibson High School in Mandeville each morning and back home to Topsham each evening. Sometimes the journey would be by car and at other times by Bugle Boy bus and in later years Golden Star. I remembered Mr. Charlton, the then principal and his home not far from the school entrance. Then it dawned on me that it was at this same school, the examination centre for students of Coley's Mountain All Age and other small schools, that I sat my Common Entrance examination for the first time, and failed. That was 27 years ago!

As my mind returned to current reality and my eyes found their way back to my computer screen, my office and the large painting hanging on the blue wall before me, it really sank in that time really flies. Time waits on no one, irrespective of who you are. Time wasted can never be regained. Its gone, forever.

Like you graduating here today I walked to primary school each day rain or shine, Monday to Friday. (Although some of you now travel by taxi). I sang 'We build our school on thee or Lord' at devotions, had great fun playing hide and seek, hop scotch, skipping, dandy-shandy and enjoying Sports day activities. But how quickly the months turn into years? Here you are, heading to high school, where a whole new world of learning is awaiting you.

**"...arise, go over this Jordan, you and all the people, to the land which I am giving to them – the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you...."**

**Joshua 1:3-4**

Today, as God commanded Joshua back then, I say to you graduates , ARISE and shine because it is the Father's will to grant you the desires of your heart.

Before we proceed let us define the key words in the charge. ARISE, SHINE and DESIRES

**To Arise is to get up, be noticed, begin to exist. Live your life on purpose, because you were placed on this earth for a purpose.**

**To Shine is to be bright, to glow, to be visible.**

**Desire is a longing, an unsatisfied longing or craving. So in other words I am challenging you, ' to get up and glow, be visible, live your life on purpose because it is God's will to fulfill your desires and make your dreams come through.'** You are special to HIM .

You are no accident! So ARISE!

**So we have defined arise, shine and desire.**

**I want to share with you in the next 20 minutes the five steps to arise.**

The first step to arise is to be **Ambitious**. Ambition is the drive to succeed, a strong desire or a strong aspiration. I am sure you are all familiar with the phrases, 'lawd im no have no ambition' or 'what a way im ambitious eh' and we all know what each phrase means. Which phrase would you like to hear, being spoken about you? You must have a strong desire to succeed. It was Thomas Edison, the man who gave us the light bulb, who said 'If we did all the things we are capable of doing, we would literally shock ourselves.' Can you imagine that?

What would you expect of someone who was expelled from school at the age of 12 because his teachers considered him slow and backward? Well I am sure most would not expect him to become one of the most creative and persistent inventors in the last 150 years. Yet that is what happened to Thomas Alva Edison.

When he was thrown out of school he started work as a paper boy with almost no education.

He set up his own newspaper and eventually a couple of early successful inventions allowed him to set up his own laboratory. He is most famous for his patents for the gramophone and the light bulb. He was persistent in pursuing his inventions and famously was quoted as saying that "Genius is one per cent inspiration and 99 per cent perspiration". Before

he found how to convert electricity to light, he failed thousands of times BUT he was positive in his efforts. He kept telling people that since he knew so many ways that did not work, he must be closer to making a discovery. He was ambitious!

It is critical to know what you want to accomplish and this is true at any stage of one's life, its never too early. What are you going to accomplish in the short term, medium term and long term? You must have a plan for your life. Things will change, and that's O.K. But if you don't know where you are going then any road will get you there. The indispensable first step to getting the things/results you want out of life is this: decide what you want.

Once you have decided why you are here, you have to decide what you want to do, what you want to be and what you want to have.

In the journey from where you are today to where you want to be in the future, you have to decide where you want to be. In other words, what does success mean or look like for you? One of the major reasons why most people don't get what they want, is that they haven't decided what they want. They haven't found their desire. Be Ambitious! If you are going to be powerful and get what you really want out of life, you have to stop saying, 'I don't know', 'I'm not sure', 'It doesn't matter to me' or the newest one 'Whatever'. You should know, you should be sure, it should matter and 'whatever' doesn't cut it. Once you are clear about what you want and keep your mind constantly focused on it, it will show up. So be careful what you feed your mind on because we are what we think about most. Be ambitious!

The second step to arise is **100% responsibility**. Nothing less will do. Take responsibility for your actions. Event + response = outcome. You can't control the event in most cases but you can most definitely determine your response, which always dictates the outcome. It is said that you can't stop the birds of sorrow from flying over your head but you sure can prevent them from building nests there. You are only responsible for your behaviour, no one else's. The truth is, there is only one person responsible for how your life will turn out. That person is YOU. The fact is most of us have been conditioned to blame something or someone for the parts of our life we don't like, like poor results. We can blame our parents, our teachers, our friends, the system, our lack of money, where we were born, anything we can pin the blame on. But we rarely ever want to look at ourselves.

The story is told about a man who is out one night and comes upon another man down on his knees looking for something under the streetlight.

The passerby inquires as to what the other man is looking for. He answers that he is looking for his lost key. The passerby offers to help and gets down on his knees and helps him search for the key. After an hour of fruitless searching, he says, we have looked everywhere for the key and we haven't found it. Are you sure you lost it here? The other man replies, 'No I lost it in my house, but there is more light out here under the streetlight.' We all would agree that this man is quite silly.

To arise you must take 100% responsibility, stop looking outside of yourself for the results you want, - you produce the results and results don't lie.

Gain control of your thoughts, your images, your dreams and daydreams and your behaviour. Take 100% responsibility.

The third step to arise is to be **industrious**. To be industrious is to be diligent ( i.e. to be careful and steady in doing one's work or duty/ showing great care and effort). Be hardworking. If you limit your choices only to what seems possible or reasonable you disconnect yourself from what you truly want.

You see, for most of us the danger is not that we aim too high and we miss, but that we aim too low and we reach it. **(REPEAT)**.

Back in August of 1997 after completing a Master's degree in Business Administration with Nova SouthEastern University, I returned home after my final course to face a dead-end job. There was no scope for promotion, and I felt disappointed that my talents were not being recognized. I wondered when I would get 'my break'. But breaks can be made to order. And that's exactly what I did. I ordered my 'break' from life. I decided to open my own company doing what I know best. Instead of trying to get a big job with a big company I would become the owner of the company and provide the jobs. That should take care of it I thought. So I got to work on my master plan and made the mistake of sharing it with friends.

Almost everyone told me that it was a bad idea and why it was a bad idea. I think telling them was the bad idea.

They said the economy was not doing well, where would the capital come from, we had enough IT companies and the time was not right.

But I did not listen, because I knew what I wanted to do and I knew it would be a success. But, they were not totally wrong, it was difficult. In fact it was very difficult. In the first year I felt like giving up on several occasions, but my desire to succeed kept me going. Ten years later SSP APTEC, the company I started in 1997 is one of the leading Information Technology companies in Jamaica. What if I had given up? If you bargain with life for one cent, that's what you will get. Not a cent more and not a cent less. Put your shoulders to the wheel. Work hard! Be Industrious!

The fourth step to ARISE is to be **steadfast**. To be steadfast is to be consistent, persistent, constant, firm and unwavering. It's the combination of desire and will power which is an irresistible pair.

The majority of people are ready to throw their aims and purposes overboard, and give up at the first sign of difficulty.

A few carry on despite all odds until they attain their goal. Steadfastness is based upon definite causes, among them:

**Definiteness of purpose:** Knowing what one wants is the first and perhaps the most important step towards the development of steadfastness. A strong motive forces one to surmount many difficulties.

**Desire:** It should be easy to acquire and maintain steadfastness in pursuing the object of ones desire.

**Self-reliance:** Belief in one's ability to carry out a plan encourages one to follow the plan through.

**Definiteness of plans:** Organised plans encourage steadfastness.

**Accurate Knowledge:** Knowing that one's plans are sound based upon experience or observation encourages steadfastness.

**Will-power:** The habit of concentrating one's thought upon the building of plans for the attainment of a definite purpose leads to steadfastness

**Habit:** Steadfastness is the direct result of habit. The mind absorbs and becomes a part of the daily experiences upon which it feeds. Too many people refuse to set high goals for themselves, or even neglect selecting a career because they fear the criticism of family and friends who may say 'Don't aim so high, people will think you are crazy.'

The secret is told in the story of the struggle of Fannie Hurst whose persistence conquered Broadway. She came to New York in 1915 to convert her writing skills into great riches. For four years Ms. Hurst walked the sidewalks of New York. She spent her days labouring and her nights hoping. When hope grew dim she did not say 'All right Broadway you win' She said 'Very well, Broadway, you may whip some but not me. I'm going to force you to give up.

One publisher, the Saturday Evening post sent her thirty-six rejection slips, Thirty-six rejection slips, before she broke the ice and got a story across. The average writer, like the average person in other walks of life would have given up when the first rejection slip came. But she kept pounding the pavement for four years because she was determined to win. After that first story the payoff came. The spell had been broken. From that time on Publishers beat a path to her door. Money came so fast she hardly had time to count it. Then the movies discovered her

and money came not in small change, but in floods. Its always easier to give up. But if you cannot be steadfast then you have to revisit your yearnings. They say a small fire gives little heat but a large fire gives much heat.

Maybe your desires are not strong enough to sustain you for the long haul. If that is the case then dream bigger dreams. What if Fannie had given up? She could have.

Never, Never, Never give up. Because its always too soon to quit.

If you meet a hundred persons and ask them what they want most in life, ninety-eight of them will not be able to tell you. If you press them for an answer they will probably say, happiness, money, security, fame, power. But most of them will not be able to precisely define these terms, or give the slightest indication of a plan of action to attain the vaguely expressed wishes. But success does not respond to wishes only to definite plans backed by definite desires through steadfastness. You have to determine you interests, values and goals for the future. Determine the lifestyle you want as an adult and **understand the** components necessary to achieve those outcomes.

Behind every great story of achievement is a story of education, training, practice, discipline, and sacrifice.

Be steadfast!

The fifth step to arise is to be '**Extraordinary**'. To be noticed you must be an extra ordinary person. **Average won't cut it.** Otherwise everyone would be successful. You must have high personal standards

which you should not compromise. Demand it from yourself and also from others around you. You have to go the extra mile. You will be the student who takes the initiative to answer additional questions that were not required by the teacher. You will be the one to investigate a new topic because you want to know more, although no one asked you to.

To demonstrate the concept of being extraordinary let me share with you a story.

Years ago an elderly nun was dying in a poor country many miles from her home.

This nun had spent her whole life in the missions, bringing hope and help to the poor. On her deathbed, the priest giving her the last rites said: 'Are you afraid to die, Sister?' The dying nun replied: 'No, not afraid Father, ashamed to die because I didn't do enough for God.' Here was a woman who spent 55 years of her life working for God, and she felt that her efforts were not enough. That's an extraordinary person. Extraordinary people never stop trying to do more. They go the extra mile, and guess what, it is never crowded along the extra mile.

Always remember that the difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little 'extra'.

Be extraordinary!

### **Recap the main points**

**"...arise, go over this Jordan, you and all the people, to the land which I am giving to them — the children of Israel. Every place**

**that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you....”**

**Joshua 1:3-4**

The five steps to ARISE as Joshua did and conquered the land that was promised to his people are A- Be Ambitious, R- take 100% Responsibility, I- Be Industrious, S – Be Steadfast (firm, unwavering, persistent) and E – Be extraordinary . **The first letter of each word spells the word ARISE, - A-R-I-S-E.**

**Final Point**

So A-R-I-S-E ! Get up and be noticed! Shine like a star! Because it is God’s will to grant you the desires of your heart.

I wish you the very best in life.