

2022 Commencement Exercise
Ouided Bouchamaoui
June 11, 2022

Dear Mr. President

Dear AUB Team

Dear Students and Parents

It is a honor to me today to be here with you to celebrate such a milestone in the lives of such wonderful young people!

I would like first to extend my deepest thanks to Dr Fadlo Khuri for the invitation and for allowing me this chance to address fresh graduates full of hope, empowered by knowledge and driven by ambition, young people who are probably now, at this very moment dreaming of how to make this world a better place!

Today, I would like to tell you the story of a young girl who was once quite shy but very observative. Observation is one of the best ways of learning, growing and flying high... Before even graduation, she followed her father everywhere and learned a lot from him. She learned that life is a challenge, that she should never give up, that everything is possible, that where there is will there is a way, no matter what... That hard work and determination, added to knowledge are keys not only to success but also to happiness!

You must have already guessed that the young girl is me! Yes.

Few decades ago, I graduated just like you now and started my life journey just like you are about to do now... I studied marketing and international law at the Institut Supérieur de Gestion of Tunis. Upon my graduation, I carried two Masters: the first was in Commerce and the second in International Law. I was then impatient to apply my knowledge on the field and did several internships in many companies on both local and international levels before I join my father companies. Within my father own companies, I started from scratch. With his brown eyed hard gaze, he overwhelmed me with basic tasks like answering calls, faxing, archiving, filling forms... I enjoyed everything I did as I learned from every little task. Experience is like a huge puzzle that you have to put together bit by bit...

You have to try everything in order to know how everything feels... That's how we become good leaders!

I started working on the puzzle very young... Indeed, my passion for the world of entrepreneurship started very early as I grew up in a family of hard workers and here, I would like to urge you to adopt an entrepreneur mind set whether you are self-employed or an employee. As you step out with your diploma in hand today, think that in order to make of your life time journey a successful one, you should observe these 4 pillars:

Discipline & autoregulation. They are the main key to it all! It has to be maintained all over your career journey. It is what you need to maintain customer, business partner, climb professional ladder and gain trust of collaborators...

Sticking to the big picture. It is that feeling you have deep inside of yourself or what you want to be or what you want to achieve in your life. You should never give it up! NEVER! Keep on seeing the big picture and strive to have it happen. You should never stop aspiring to improve ..

I enrolled at the Harvard Kennedy school at the age of 60 because I still want to learn more as we never stop learning. Never think that getting a diploma means you know it all... knowledge is a long river

Also... and here I address the young girls present in this room:

It was hard for me, particularly as a woman, to climb the ladder of success without getting discouraged. One needs to stay motivated, especially during hard times. I've tried to go past obstacles that prevent women from reaching their full potential and advance to the highest levels. Women all over the world are aspiring to take control of their careers and make the difference, not only for themselves, but also for other women. You should always consider yourself as equal to your male mate and you should never fail to support other women as they strive to lead.

As this is our only way to success

Maintaining a High level of Commitment. There is no success without commitment. Commitment like discipline is what makes of you a trustful person. Respect time, deadlines, promises. Never commit to things you can not do. Learning to say "No" is not easy but it is one of the first and best things you have to learn in your life journey as it keeps you from a lot of hassle.

Last but not least...

Respecting Ethics. Money isn't everything in life even if that is what our modern societies, media, movies are promoting nowadays. Good morals bring you respect. Keep away from injustice, corruption... Be good, humble and fair!

Dear all, As part of the Tunisian Quartet Nobel Peace Prize laureate, I would like to seize this opportunity to wish the best for Lebanon and the Region... A better world is possible. The future lays in the hands of the young generation... in your hands young people and given your intelligence and you high level of competencies, I am today very much optimistic.

Thank you and all the best for the future!