

Angus Giles – Prefect (Student Council)

Keynote Speech 2025

Cherishing and seizing the moments (Do it).

Before we begin, I want to ask you all to do something. I want you to have your feet flat on the floor, your hands still in your lap and then close your eyes. While your eyes are closed, I want you to think about a time you had a moment of happiness—maybe it was laughing with your mates, scoring the winning goal, or just sitting with your family at dinner. Try to visualise it in detail, and see if you can hold onto the feeling. (Do not rush this) Now, open your eyes.

You probably feel different. Just thinking about that moment has changed your breathing and possibly your emotions. The crazy thing is at the time you had no idea that moment was significant. And yet, now it is something you can look back on. Something that means something. But how often are we aware of these moments, while we are actually living them? How often do we actually stop and cherish the time we have, the people around us, and the opportunities right in front of us?

Good morning, Mr Featherston, Mr Angus, Dr Swann, Ms White, my dad, my sister, my nana, and especially boys. Today, I want to share something that is incredibly personal to me. It is the realisation that life is made up of small moments and that these seemingly small things come together to make life beautiful. We need to stop and cherish these moments because they can sustain us when life gets challenging.

Life moves so fast. I am going to say that again. Life. Moves. So. Fast. We rush from one thing to the next, and in the middle of that rushing around and all that urgency, we can forget about the things that matter most. We can be too busy to notice the experiences, or the people who should make us stop. Then in retrospect, we might realise that we have been living without truly paying attention to what we have. So how has it got to this? Why do we get so easily distracted by the immediate and the so called urgent? Things that we will not remember and that do not ultimately fulfill us.

What will fulfill us is love. Sometimes, life will remind us just how precious every moment is. Recently, as some of you know, my family went through something very difficult, the loss of my mum. It was one of those moments that makes everything feel different, like time has paused, and the world is not quite the same. Following the loss of my mum, I was forced to realise just how much the little things matter. As I reflect on the many small moments I had with her, I tend to think about all the little things she did for me, like always giving me my favourite food regardless of the health benefits or leaving a little note in my lunchbox every day. Just a simple, 'Have a great day' or 'Love you.' It meant everything to me.

Going through loss changed more than just how I feel. It reminded me that family, whether by blood or by the people we choose, is what truly matters. In the hardest moments, it is the love and support around us that pulled me through. It is easy to get caught up in everyday life, but these experiences taught me to hold the people we care about a little closer and to appreciate the moments I used to take for granted. It was not always about grand gestures, it was the friends who sat with me in silence when there were no words, the people who checked in even when they did not know what to say, the ones who made me laugh on days when I didn't think I could. It was the small, quiet acts of kindness that reminded me that I was not alone.

And that is the thing, when you realise how precious time is, you stop holding back. I have stopped waiting for the 'right moment' and try to make the most of the ones I have. When there has been something I have been longing to do but felt too scared to do it, I ask myself, am I really afraid of failing, or just of being seen trying?

I used to spend so much time worrying about what others think, about the fear of failing, about whether I am good enough. And I know I am not alone in that. But what if we shifted that energy into just doing? Into taking that risk, stepping onto that stage, putting our hand up, making that move? The truth is most of the things that hold us back exist only in our minds. The doubts, the fears, the second guessing - none of it matters in the long run. What does matter is whether we can look back and say, 'I gave it a go.'

My experience has also taught me that people are kinder than you think. In the past when I would feel self-conscious or scared of getting out there, I would think about what I would think if someone were in my position. And honestly, I would feel proud of them. And I think most people in this hall would feel that too. My experience is that we are a community of really nice people, and the vast majority of us are more interested in pulling you up than bringing you down. That is love right there. And I think we need to trust more in that.

I really believe that every moment we have is a gift. I want to talk to you about someone who needs little introduction. My brother Connor. Connor puts his heart and soul into everything he does, and If you had to ask me, 'who was one person in the world who wouldn't die wondering,' I would say this kid. He is heavily involved in everything. Perhaps, performing arts at an all-boys school hasn't previously fit the typical stereotype, yet he throws himself into every role, every rehearsal, and every chance to make an impact, challenging the previous notions. He does it without fear, and do you know what? People love him for it. He is a reminder that we all have gifts, and it is up to us to use them fully, to live without regrets.

We all have gifts, and we are all living our one precious life. Notice the moments, be kind, be loving and remember Life Moves So Fast.

So, I ask you all: as you walk out of here today, take a second. Reflect on who and what you have in your life. Do not wait until it is too late to realise the value of the time you have been given. Make those small moments count. Love fiercely, forgive quickly, and take every opportunity you can.

Now, can I please ask everyone to stand?

Thank you for taking a risk.

Thank you