

SPEECH BY AMREF INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY (AMIU) PARTNER REPRESENTATIVE DURING THE 3RD AMIU GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD ON FRIDAY 10TH JUNE, 2022 AT AMIU GROUNDS NAIROBI, KENYA

To the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Board of Trustees, and entire administration of AMIU I say thank you for inviting me to speak today.

I would like to impart to you, the graduates, some of the wisdom I have gained in my 73 years. Trust me, it won't take long. Research tells us that you have a five minute attention span and it will only take me five minutes to enlighten you.

For instance, my wife tells me that I am getting very grouchy as I age. The truth is, once you get old you stop being polite and start being honest! Also, as I have grown older I have learned that pleasing everyone is impossible but getting everyone upset at you is quite easy.

Seriously, I do want to share some thoughts.

But first, allow me to congratulate all who are graduating today. It represents an accomplishment to be very proud of. I want to especially congratulate the Physiotherapy graduates. My wife and I, and most of these graduates, have worked 11 Years for this day to come. It feels so sweet! Congratulations.

So, on to the wisdom. Would it be valuable to you if I teach you the secret of happiness and success in five minutes?

First, you are all very happy today but true and lasting happiness does not come from accomplishments. I'll bet you thought it did, but it doesn't. Life is a journey, not a destination. Life is a series of accomplishments. Each will bring you joy in the moment but it won't make you happy. You have arrived at this degree and tomorrow you will set your sights on another goal, and then another and so on.

So, where does true happiness come from?

That, my friends, is the key to understanding life itself. Happiness comes from focusing on positive thoughts and positive people and positive actions. Every day, every week, every month for the rest of your life.

There is an immutable law of the universe that I need to share with you. That is...the Universe, (God if you will), presents you with what you need to complete yourself. Let me repeat that. Universe, (God), presents you with what you need to complete yourself. You create your own reality with the thoughts in your mind and the actions you take. Over time, thoughts create form. Positive thoughts over time create positive experiences. Positive experiences and positive relationships make you happy. It is that simple.

Likewise, negative thoughts produce negative experience. You all know people who are basically negative thinkers. They are not happy people. Have you ever seen a negative person who is happy?

Negative people think that the world is against them. They don't understand that their mindset is the problem.

You and only you are responsible for your life. Stay focused on your dreams, stay focused on the positive and good things will happen. Be patient, you can't force the universe. It cannot be manipulated. Good things take time.

I said at the start that your life is a journey. I have also said that the God will present you with what you need to complete yourself.

The CATCH is that you don't always recognize the hand of God.

Events that happen one day may not be understood or bear fruit until years later. **In 1978 I worked with a tutor at KMTC** named Ngatia. In 2010 Anna and I were invited to KMTC to find a way to start a BSc upgrade for physiotherapists. We worked eight years approaching Universities and could not find interest anywhere. Four years ago we met Ngatia, who was then the Vice Chancellor of AMIU. That is how this program was born, through my friendship with him. Forty years for that relationship to bear fruit. The Universe at work.

Finally, a word about regrets. You do not want to arrive at my age and have any regrets in life. You don't want to end your life with saying **"I WISH THAT I WOULD HAVE"**

As I look at the few regrets that I have it is because the Universe/God presented me with an opportunity and I said NO. I did not act on the opportunity. It was usually because it involved too much work or too much uncertainty. To avoid regrets later in life and to live a full and productive life, one that ensures happiness, I urge you to just say YES. When the Universe comes at you, JUST SAY YES.

No closes doors, yes opens doors. That is a simple fact of life. If you ever want to say no, you better have a good reason, because you did not open the door. Of course, there are times when it is appropriate to say no. For instance, a stranger asks you for 50,000 shillings. It is wise to say NO. Maybe someone asks if you need to go to the bathroom. It is OK to say no.

There is no such thing as luck. Luck is opportunity acted upon. When you had the opportunity to join AMIU you said YES. It was hard work and you are here today. Because you said yes to that opportunity more doors will open in your life.

Dream big, stay positive at all times, say yes to opportunity and you will find success and happiness in life.

Thank you.

Dr Richard Jackson
President, The Jackson Foundation and Clinics