

Good afternoon everyone. Greetings and thank you Mr Sim How Chong, our principal, for this invitation and for the opportunity to speak here today at this auspicious event. My heartfelt greetings to our Alumni President Mr. Roland Wee, our SAC Chairman Mr Lim Song Joo, PSG Chairwoman Ms Jamie Chua, to our teachers, HOD, staff members of the school, parents and most importantly to all of you the wonderful students of Queenstown Secondary School.

It is really a privilege to be part of the QUEST family, as an ex-student, Alumni and a friend to all my young Queenstownians here today.

I am really very happy to be here. Indeed I feel so privileged when I received the invitation. It is really like homecoming to me especially when the last time I can remember I was here was way back in 1979. Indeed that was a long long time ago. The school looked very different then but I can say that the feeling is still the same. When I was preparing this speech one of the things that hit me was that now I can really say for sure is that dreams “really can come true”. My speaking here today is really a “dream come true” for me.

You see when I was here as a kid back in the 70s, I was really just the average guy. I don't think I was anything special. I think I was a good boy though. I did my work and I hand in my homework on time. I got along well with all my teachers and my classmates. I participated in ECA and other activities. Most importantly I managed to pass all my exams. I don't think I ever managed the best scores nor won any excellence awards but I know I got on well day by day. I passed my GCE and I graduated happily. So as the just average guy in the fold, I honestly would never have dreamt back then that someday, many years later, I would come back and be standing here on an occasion like this on this podium and speaking to you.

So this is indeed my homecoming. So thank you Mr Sim, Mr Lim for making my dream come true. My general message to you all is do not be afraid to dream because if the time and the place is right, your dreams can eventually come true, one way or another.

SCHOOL DAYS

Enjoying school life is very important. I most certainly hope that you are enjoying yourself here as a student of this wonderful school. The facilities are nice and the teachers are great. You are all very lucky. Your principal and teachers showed nothing but dedication and commitment to the success of the students and the school. So I would urge you to spend some time to reflect on how wonderful this place is and how you should seek the best out of it.

I know how you all feel about homework, exams and how dreadful it is to wake up and get out of bed in the morning and go to school. Despite all that, I still say that school is a wonderful place. It is a place where we learn and we discover, we tell and we share, we give and we receive, we build and we develop ourselves. All this is to prepare us for the life ahead. Treasure every moment you have here because after you leave here and go into the work life, you will long for and reminisce about how wonderful it was being in school with your buddies and your friends.

CARE ABOUT YOUR WORLD - IT'S ALL ABOUT ATTITUDE

The most important character trait that one should have is always having the correct attitude. In my aviation world, the two most important thing that matters to all aviators is ATTITUDE & SPEED.

Attitude is the angle you put your aircraft at. Point it up to the sky and the aircraft fly up or point it down to the ground and the aircraft flies down. Do it well you will fly or do it badly you will crash! Second is Speed. Speed is energy and if we lose that energy we cannot keep the airplane afloat in the air. So SPEED & ATTITUDE is everything in aviation.

It's the same with life too. You must always have the right attitude and you must keep the right energy to move on forward no matter what.

Through the years many people have asked me what is the best values or the best strategy to have to succeed in whatever you do? So let me just give a simple solution. The answer is "You Need To Care" about things. The opposite of care is apathy and indifference. If you stop caring, nothing good will happen.

When you care about something, you will put in more effort and attention to it. You will put in more time and energy because you will want to see success or fruition in whatever it is you are doing. Mr Sim and the teachers care for this school. From that alone I know that this is a good place to be in. Simply because I can sense the care and the commitment.

So on your part, as a student, perhaps you may have asked yourself how can I improve myself, how can I contribute and make this school a better place and make my time here productive and enjoyable. How can I make a difference both internally and externally?

When you start to care about something, say for example, when you care about yourself would will do something to improve yourself. When you start to care about how you look, then surely you will groom and dress yourself up. When you care about your teachers and classmates, you will start doing things that will make the group happy and even better than it already is. When you care about your grades then you will invest time and energy in studies to see that you will succeed in all the tests and exams.

So if you care enough about yourself, your surroundings, your environment, then you will take action and do something positive and something that matters.

Success does not always means you have to be number one, beating everybody and everything else. Success is about achieving personal goals. Goals that matters to you. Sometimes success does not mean you will always get praises and prizes. It is that satisfaction of seeing something that you care about making it good.

MY CAREER IN AVIATION

I have been fortunate and blessed. I have a career that I love. I joined the airline when I was 26 years old. I was sent to a flying school in Australia where I spent 14 months learning basic aviation. When I graduated from there I came back home to continue my airline transport pilot training for another 2 years.

After almost 12 months I earned my wings and became a operational First Officer

and a professional airline pilot. 8 years later I was promoted to Captain and to date I have been a Captain for 24 years and I have just over 30,000 flying hours

Let me share with you some fun fact about aviation.

1. The average family car travel on the expressway to work at 90 km/h but I travel at 40,000' above at 1000 km/h and that is equivalent to 85% speed of sound.
2. The average family car weighs about 1,500kgs but when I lift off at Changi Airport to go to London I weigh just over 560,000 kgs. That is about 373 family cars in total.
3. The average family car is about 5m long but my Airbus A380 is 70m long and 71m wide and we can put in 70 full grown elephants in it. On a full flight I carry 500 passengers in my cabin.
4. But my airplane consumes about 12,000 kg of fuel per hour. That is almost like drinking up 8 family cars in 1 hour. My flight to London is 13 hours and that means I consume 104 family cars per trip as fuel.

More importantly for me even after 36 years of being in the job, my attitude remains the same. The magic never fades away. Every time I takeoff down the runway there is always that point of magic. The point where when I pull the airplane upwards into the sky, it flies on it's wings. That is pure magic and a technical marvel for me.

So aviation is a wonderful place to be and a good career to choose from. But with the magic comes the responsibilities. One wrong move and you will see a bad accident.

The aviation industry is a big place. You don't necessarily only have to be a pilot because the industry is actually an ecosystem in itself. It's a giant community where team work is key, where every one chip in and do their part to make the industry run like clockwork. You can see the multitude of workers that do their part and make the system work and the industry flourish. Everyone having the correct focus and attitude to achieve a common goal of safety and efficiency.

In my 35 years of experience in the industry there have been plenty moments of joys and happiness, challenges and achievements, setbacks and sacrifices. There have been moments of great reward and also moments of sadness and disappointments. That is life. Life has it's ups and downs. You fall down and you must get up. Sometimes you have only yourself to depend on but sometimes you are lucky that you have someone and some people that cares.

CLOSING

What you learn in school today and what attitude you decide to invest and inculcate yourself with here will be the one that will constantly accompany and guide you in your life's journey and it will help you navigate around the challenges ahead. The principles and the habits you develop and adopt here today will play a huge part in how you will be equipped to face the challenges of tomorrow. Just as QSTS had prepared me in my earlier life in the 70s, I hope that QTSS will carry you upwards and forward towards your own successes, achievements and excellence in the future.

It has been an honour and a privilege to have the opportunity to deliver this speech to all of you.

Wishing everyone good Health & Happiness.

Captain Jaffar Hassan

QTSS Alumni, 1979.

May 23rd, 2025