

WINNERS NEVER CHEAT: CHEATERS DON'T WIN

Graduation Speech Giving by Prof. Abdulai at the School of Business Leadership Executive Development Programme Graduation, Midrand, South Africa

Good evening and congratulations to all the graduates of the SBL Executive Development Programmes. Let me also take the opportunity on behalf my colleagues at the SBL of both academic and administrative staff to welcome your parents, wives, partners or significant others to this great day where you are rewarded for your endeavours. I know it has not been easy for you on this journey that you embarked on but they have supported you all the way. This reward is equally theirs.

Graduates:

As you leave here and go into the World and back to your places of work, there is one pearl of wisdom that I want to share with you. It will come handy as you climb the ladder of success. It is a pearl of wisdom that I picked up from an American billionaire Jon M. Huntsman book of the same title: WINNERS NEVER CHEAT.

Graduates:

In our fast paced, dog-eat-dog world of today, most of us want to get to the top, to succeed by all means necessary even if we have to cheat, lie and kill to get there. Damn the consequences.

Graduates:

Most recently, we have all heard of the Sub-Prime crisis, where mortgages were packed and sold to people they know could not afford them. The consequences are clear and still affecting our global financial system today. We have seen in some organisations, ledgers cooked, while auditors look the other way, kickbacks are dime-a-dozen and the dictum of **“thou shall not be found out rules supreme.”**

In doing so, traditional moral values are ignored. Lying and cheating are rationalised, even glorified and accepted as gospel that you have to cheat to stay competitive. For sure, nothing is far from the truth in such a belief. **Dear graduates let me assure you that, for sure the path to perdition as it is often said, is enticing, slippery, and leads all the way downhill.** So here are a few words of wisdom that I picked up from Huntsman book that I want to share with you:

- CHECK YOUR MORAL COMPASS; I am sure that we each know what is right and what is wrong. So I am urging you to do THE RIGHT THING, no matter the consequences. Remember, according to Sophocles, *“there is no witness so terrible or no accuser so powerful as the human conscience.”*
- PLAY BY THE RULES. We can win if we compete fiercely and fairly. Please do not cut corners and don't use short-cuts, for short-cuts are always dangerous. Obviously, cheating and lying eventually will lead to failure.
- Remember, according to the Christian Bible, *“whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”* So do the right things every time and all of the time.
- ALWAYS KEEP YOUR WORD. Your word should not change with the time of the day or kind of weather. Your word should be your bond.
- GRACIOUSNESS IS NEXT TO GODLINESS. Please treat your competitors, colleagues, employees and customers with respect, because every day our eulogies are written.
- Finally, OPERATE BUSINESSES AND ORGANISATION AS IF YOUR NAME WAS ON THE DOOR AND AS IF THEY ARE FAMILY OWNED.

Again congratulations for your achievements and welcome all of this to this graduation event.

Thank You Very Much.

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