



Morning Comment

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A wise man on a bus coming back from Lincoln University told me that when you are given a platform to speak your word like this, then you have to get your point across, because you never know when you'll be able to do something like this again. So, to start off this speech I want to make one thing very clear: your history and reputation are two different things.

See, most of you probably know that I was a bit of a trouble maker to say the least in my younger years at St Andrew's. I won't go into depth about the things that I did, but let's just say I was very consistent at being called into Mr Gains office, Head of Boarding's office, Mr van Florenstein's office, Mrs Leighton's office, and at the pinnacle of my career I was called into the Board's office twice. Shelley will be stuck with the memories of me having to sit in her office all day writing apology letters to teachers and students, in fact not only Shelley will have these memories, but a lot of teachers will also have their different opinions on me from different experiences.

However, I want you to think about the people who have made a mark on the world. Many of them didn't start out with perfect records or straight Excellences. They didn't always have their lives together in school. In fact, some of the most successful people we admire today struggled in their early years. Albert Einstein, one of the greatest minds in history, had teachers who thought he was slow. Walt Disney was told he lacked creativity.

This tells us that setbacks and failures do not have the final say. They are not a reflection of who you truly are or what you can achieve.

Your school history is a chapter in your life, but it's not the whole story. It's like a rough draft of your journey, filled with lessons, experiences, and growth opportunities. And the beauty of a rough draft is that it can be revised, improved, and transformed into something extraordinary.



If there are things in your past that you're not proud of, remember that every day is a new chance to write a different story. Your reputation, just like your future, is not set in stone. It's fluid, dynamic, and within your control.

So, how do you move forward from a past that doesn't reflect your best self?

First, forgive yourself. We are all human, and mistakes are a part of life. It's how we learn, adapt, and grow. Instead of dwelling on what you didn't do, focus on what you can do now. Use those experiences to fuel your desire to be better, to work harder, and to achieve more.

Second, embrace a growth mindset. Believe that you can change, improve, and evolve. The person you were yesterday does not have to be the person you are today, and certainly not the person you'll be tomorrow. Every new opportunity is a chance to redefine yourself.

Finally, act. Start small if you need to, but start somewhere. Whether it's setting new goals, seeking out opportunities for growth, or simply committing to a more positive outlook, every step forward counts.

I wish I could give you a straight up and down answer on how to improve yourself as a person, and how to touch up some little bumps and niggles in the story you are currently writing yourself.

However, I cannot. For me I felt like it was finding something with a higher purpose to channel my energy towards, this for me was my friendships; growing new ones and strengthening the ones I already had, or focusing more on a sport. Whatever it is you choose to put energy towards it doesn't matter, I thought of it like this: if I'm going to put my energy into something why not make it worthwhile, so then in the end, if all fails, then at least you have improved in some aspect of life and that's what counts in the long run.

Because people don't remember you for who were, not as much as people say anyway, but the person you are now, the person you have become and the person you will become.

Denzel Washington once said, "Imagine on your death bed and standing around you are all the ghosts of your unfulfilled potential, and they are mad because you didn't turn out to be any of them." My question to you is, how many ghosts will be around your death bed.