

**Reflection on your role as Head Boy of St Andrew's 2013-2014
and presently as an IB student.**

Seven years. Seven long, difficult, determined years. Seven years of some of the best memories of my life. There are some of you who have been here even longer than I have. But my years tell a story, as I know yours do. Allow me to begin, by sharing some of the favorite memories of seven years at this school.

Mr. Robert Stitch, members of the platform party, board members, faculty members, parents, invited guests, and students, a fantastic good morning to you all.

On my first day of school, two of my new classmates ran over to me with smiles on their faces, lifted me off the ground, placed me in a garbage can, and rolled me down the path outside the MFL block. Needless to say, I thought it would be all downhill from there. At the bottom, they ran towards me again, lifted me up, dusted me off, and offered me handshakes. I'm "Michael Treco", one said. "I'm Luc Schaefer", said the other. The pants that my mum had spent hours ironing were stained, the hair that my mum spent hours combing was a mess, but I had made two friends. Those two guys came to be my best friends through my time at St. Andrew's. This taught me something, a lesson to be

learned.

Although I was asked to reflect on my time as Head Boy, I feel that my experiences in the earlier grades shaped who I was to become in Grade 12. In Grade 8, I found my first girlfriend. The next day, I lost my first girlfriend. 16 hours of bliss. This too, taught me something, another lesson to be learned.

Grades 9 and 10 passed without injury, and these were the years St. Andrew's facilitated my development from a shy and timid teenager, to a confident young man. I owe the majority of this transformation to a man by the name of Darron Turnquest. Hands up if you know Mr. Turnquest. I'm sure all of you would agree when I say that he is one cool fellow. He approached me one day after school and said something that changed my life. He stopped me and said: "Nick, I see something in you. You should try speech and debate." At this point, I did not know the man, nor had I seen him much. But the conviction with which he said those words began a journey that has changed my life.

I had never known what made me unique. Grades and athletics don't mean much in the real world. Knowledge can only take you so far. It is how you apply that knowledge that counts. For the first speech competition, we molded the

perfect speech and practiced for hours until we created the perfect product. We won that competition.

Through countless other endeavours, this man became my mentor, my guide, and now a reference for my dream college. He also taught me something.

Grade 11 was a year hallmarked by countless hours of studying for the BGCSE's. At this point, I must commend the efforts of the current Grade 12 class for another fantastic performance, almost as good as the year before. Even the BGCSE's taught me something.

Seven years. The sixth began unexpectedly. We were so close yet so far from college. We thought we knew our plans for life. It was at this point where I was voted Head Boy of the Upper School. I was thrilled, ecstatic, but realized the next morning, that I didn't know what I was supposed to do. Did a plastic badge distinguish me from everyone else? What was my role as Head Boy?

Then, I remembered, what I had been taught and the lessons I had learned, over the years. Each of my experiences taught me a lesson, and provided a framework for me to live by. My troubles with the trashcan taught me, not only that friends can be found in some truly unexpected places, but also to forgive

mistakes. My gloom with girls taught me that patience is truly a virtue, and that sometimes, friendships are the best relationships. Exams taught me the importance of discipline and focus. In order to get where you want to be, you need to truly want it, desire it, live it. Public speaking taught me the importance of finding what makes you special, finding your passion.

My dad, from a young age, instilled upon me the value of finding something you love to do, and then working at it until you master it. Now from the same person who told me this, let me tell you a story that he told me some years ago. In fact, not to sure if he is getting a bit old now, but he has told me a few times now. He took Spanish in high school, and was fairly good at it. When he took the Spanish BGCSE, he was the only person in his school that received a U, A U. In fact Dad used to kid that he got a UU. As you know, a U does not stand for ultimate, and surely not for unique. It stands for the prestigious unclassified. Needless to say, Spanish was not his passion. In all fairness to my Dad, he did ace his other exams, top in Math, top of St. Augustine's, you know, that other school. His math expertise laid the foundation for a computer science degree and a successful business in computers. And until last year, he would look at me sternly every so often and say: "Son, find your passion."

He doesn't tell me this anymore. I found my passion. Being elected Head Boy wasn't about the badge or the prestige, but rather the position it afforded me to help students. It was little things that taught me the greatest lessons.

It was when grade seven's would ask to be directed to a class, or needed help finding their backpack, or even just needed a fist bump motivation from the seniors to start their day. It was the little interactions that are so often overlooked that revealed so much to me about character. It was the feeling of being a mentor, much as Mr. Turnquest had been to me, to those nervous students before a test, instilling confidence in their ability to perform. My role as an individual within the school facilitated my development towards a more caring student.

As I reflect on my time as Head Boy, I remember meeting new teachers, new faces, and new opportunities within the school. Head Boy does not make you superior, but rather instills upon you an obligation to represent the school in the most positive manner possible. I couldn't be prouder to wear my St. Andrew's uniform at Hands for Hunger events, debates, and ceremonies throughout the year.

But it's important to never fall victim to your own hubris. My best friend, Luc Schaefer himself stopped me one morning and said: "Nick, you're getting a little arrogant, your head is too big. Watch yourself" This was a wake up call of my life, because it meant that I had neglected the lessons that I had been taught throughout my entire lifetime.

The lessons of Grade 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 were a necessary amalgamation of experience, triumph, and failure, but I had forgotten where I began. I had found my passion, but fallen victim to it all. And so when you are broken, you reflect on your beginnings. You travel the uphill path of humility with a load of disappointment on your back. But you reflect, you build upon, you embrace your beginnings.

To those who have received awards today, congratulations! I salute you for your hard work and determination. For everyone, listen, there are many lessons in life to be learned. Most, you will learn at school. My dad always said to me: "I don't care what you do in life, as long as you're the best at it." And so I took up golf. This assembly is in recognition of those who have achieved academic excellence, but what about everyone else? To you, I say, find your passion. Let

this be a lesson learned, if you set your mind to achieving an objective, you are one step closer to finding that passion. It took me seventeen years to discover what made me who I am today. Seventeen years of work, study, and most importantly, lessons learned. And it only gets better. I can stand here and extol the virtues of the lessons learned so far, but I am so much looking forward to the future and all the lessons still be learned, and passions to master.