

Good afternoon. And congratulations on your achievement.

I'm not going to give you 5 post-graduation clues to fame and fortune. I don't have them. And to be honest, right now, in a 2018 world and beyond, we don't need more of that. There's plenty around already and it's not doing us much collective good. I'll talk instead about values: about honesty, kindness, integrity, creativity, public responsibility and about finding your place in the kind of society that values its people.

You will be leaders. Because you are graduating today, here in Australia, recently named as the wealthiest country in the world, you are already wildly fortunate compared to those who have no access to education, even to food water and safety.

Please, use your fortune well.

Today, you are graduating in your field where you may find your future. You may have a job already, or will be returning to work. Your home might be here, or a long way away.

You're graduating today because you know your area well. You've persevered.

But who really knows what's next?

You may, like me, follow a career quite distant from your university studies, from your graduation today. Many things are possible.

I'm going to tell you my story, and a few things I've learned.

I was a secondary school teacher of music and drama. I never felt right constrained by a classroom. I was frustrated, forced into my work by parental pressure but not yet strong enough to make my own choices. Eventually I took a year off paid work, so money was scarce, and volunteered in different jobs. Right at the end of that year, quite unexpectedly and through music in fact, I found myself in a radio studio. Who would have guessed? I certainly wouldn't have.

I thought I was in heaven. Everything that is me, that I love and value was right there : interesting colleagues with ideas and open minds, politics, creativity, intense communication with fascinating people, fun, technical skills I never imagined I could learn. And it was music that opened the door. So university had helped, as had my life experiences. For the first time, my deep voice was a plus rather than an embarrassment.

If I hadn't slid up my personal periscope, if I hadn't been really looking outside my safe box, if I hadn't taken some risks or trusted that feeling when I first entered a studio and sat down behind the microphone, I wouldn't have had the career I loved so much.

On-air, every word you say is public and that bears considerable responsibility. You get a lot of feedback from your audience : a humbling experience! If they don't like what you're doing, they don't hesitate to tell you. Some years ago, a man, let's call him Ken, rang me and

said “Hello Julia. My name’s Ken and I’ve only got one ear. About 10 years ago you chewed the other one off”.

He went on in honest good humor to tell me that he found me wiser and warmer since I’d become a mother. We laughed and I thanked him. I still thank him. I probably had become a little lost in the media world of strong opinion, of “tough is good”, of believing my own publicity as my husband likes to remind me. It can be a trap in any career. There’s nothing like changing a poeey nappy at 3 am to put your feet firmly back on the ground.

I had no formal media training. I soaked up everything I could from experienced people around me. I tried to ignore the horrible ones: the ignorant, the dishonest, the fakes, the bullies. And there were plenty of them. I bluffed my way into my early media jobs. I worked really hard, I failed sometimes, I was often scared and learned to cover that, (crying in the toilets worked fairly well, often with other young women as we raged and wept, then brushed ourselves down and went out for more) and eventually I gathered enough experience, skill confidence and luck to get the jobs I really loved.

If we find paid work, we are fortunate. If we find work we love, we are possibly blessed. Search for that. It’s worth it. Work out what your values are and use them to guide you. Trust yourself when things feel right, or not right. Try and help shape the kind of future we need.

Gender does matter. In Australia, men still on average earn more than women for the same work. Women on average in Australia retire with half the superannuation accumulated by men. If you’re a man, be truly respectful to the women in your life, and by what you say and do, be an example to other men you know. Lives depend on it.

If you’re a woman, ask for that pay rise, speak up loudly slowly and clearly, go for those senior jobs if you want to, put that money aside for later if you can and believe that you are probably better than you think.

I’ll end with 2 quotations for you to consider. Both deal with information, data, knowledge - commodities I know you’re familiar with.

“Sometimes, we disagree with the facts”. Think very hard about that. It’s our world, your world, and it’s serious. That was from Donald Trump’s former Press Secretary.

And finally, an observation from Clifford Stoll, astronomer author and teacher.

“Data is not information, information is not knowledge, knowledge is not understanding, understanding is not wisdom.”

May you ride over the rough waves. Trust yourself, be a wise and compassionate citizen and have fun. All the best.