

Value Adding Preposition

Salutations: To the 2019 graduates, parents, our guests, Alumni, Members of Daystar US, faculty, staff, Daystar Company members, Daystar University Council members, the University Senate and Management councils. I salute you this morning and join the 2019 graduating class in welcoming you to the 42nd graduation ceremony. I would especially like to thank the graduation committee for the hard work they have done throughout the year to make this occasion a great event in honor of our graduates.

To all invited guests in your various distinguished capacities, thank you for joining us in this important event. To the graduates, your parents and guardians, congratulations! Ladies and gentlemen in this ceremony that marks our 42nd graduation ceremony, we will release a total of 294 well qualified graduates to the workforce as **'Beacons of light to serve and enhance cohesion in our society'**.

Higher education: Daystar University is well positioned to produce a well-rounded workforce and leaders in their respective disciplines. As a Christian University, Daystar understands better than other institutions of higher education the fact that you reap what you sow. If our graduates are going to be beacons of light to bring cohesion in our society, we need to demonstrate, teach, and live as beacons of light here on campus. The lighting and cohesion process should start here! In addition, as a University that has been preparing and producing great communicators in Africa for over 40 years, Daystar understands that one can excel in any field, if they communicate clearly, build effective relationships, and learn the art and science of problem solving with a growth mindset.

Quality Education is engineered by a purposeful Curriculum: Our faculty is the driving force behind the quality education we offer here at Daystar, that sets our students apart and off to successful career paths. If our faculty are the driving force a good curriculum is the engine of Quality Education. Daystar curriculum is **purposefully**

designed to equip our students with life skills that prepare them to perform competitively, to become effective team players, and more importantly to practice servant leadership. Our curriculum is informed by the industry, cooperate world, and by understanding the work force trends and required skills of today's workforce. Our faculty are engaged as presenters and leaders of international organizations, bringing back international perspectives and emerging trends to the classrooms. Learning at Daystar University is not restricted to the four walls of a classroom. Our graduates are aligned with practicum/internships and service opportunities that help them translate theories into practice. In addition, our students are exposed to a wide variety of leadership opportunities on campus, which affords them a chance to build life skills that every employer is looking for. The combination of sound scientific and theoretical training that includes problem solving, critical thinking, service requirements and self-discovery, equip Daystar graduates with the ability to reinvent themselves and stay relevant over their career lifespan. **(Parents and employers)**

In the remaining few minutes allow me to turn my attention to the 2019 graduates (*after all it is their occasion*). The nature and the human societies have traditionally played a major role in determining the value of a species, a culture or a practice. While a lot of that process used to take place in cultural settings, higher education has become a leading catalyst in determining what the society should value and keep and what need to be lost. Valuable items price themselves nicely. Similarly, value adding people lead and influence what others value. As part of the elite based on your higher education status, your degree gives you an opportunity to be part of the process that determines what will be valued and what will be irrelevant. However, before you can become a contributor to that process, you must pass the test of value preposition yourself.

Starting with your first day at work, you will be under the value determining lenses. As your employer try to determine your value in the organization, your role is to position

yourself as valuable. A value-adding preposition is not merely doing your job but increasing the impact of your organization by adding integrity, profitability, feasibility and more importantly, solve problems by finding ways for organizational efficiency and effectiveness. A value-adding preposition is associated with problem solving skills. Please do not confuse problem solving with problem finding. While problem solvers engage in finding the solution of identified problem, problem finders engage in criticizing others and finding somebody to blame. Problem solvers are both valued and sustainable. Problem solvers have a growth mentality, so they grow in any environment they find themselves. To maximize your value and growth to your career, I encourage you to adapt the rule of the thirds used by photographers in capturing clear objects.

Value addition #1: Commit one third of your energy and life in advancing your career to earn profitably and sustainably—*I agree you cannot be poor all your life*. This calls for application of work ethics, integrity, and more importantly, commitment to continued learning and curiosity. Go beyond the call of duty and you will earn profitably. This leads to the second third of your value addition.

Value addition #2: While a Daystar degree will open the door to your first job, it is your curiosity and continued learning that will help you climb the ladder sustainably. Continuous learning keeps your education both current, relevant, and on the cutting edge. Growth mindset gives you the emotional intelligence that will help you navigate your way with a diverse population and teams. This is the process of reinventing yourself. Failure to keep yourself current results in an irrelevant and unproductive employee that may lose value and related position. Please note that a degree is not a blueprint but a set of tools that you can apply in changing situations. Just remember, you have to keep the tools sharpened! Getting your degree is not the end of learning but the beginning of discovery. Do not stop learning. You are evolving if you have more

questions than answers; make curiosity a priority. Your commitment to continued learning with a growth mindset will combine experience with cutting edge trends that will make you a value to your organization and society. To succeed and survive in an America culture of higher education, I had to reinvent myself from all aspects of life, design and find funding for my research, and publish the findings to the expected standards. My Iowa State University PhD though a valuable key in getting my first position, could not help me get tenure or climb the academic ladders. I had to sharpen the tools and add value to my education. I remember writing a total of 16 grants before I got the first funding, but that was then. For the last 15 years I have had continuous funding towards my research that has totaled to millions of dollars. I had to add value to my education and career.

Value #3 (Service). Whether you are serving your family, your organization, or the less fortunate, serving in whichever capacity is a catalyst of growth that will unlock endless opportunities for your career. As a graduate of Daystar, one of our tenets is servant leadership. The degree you will be awarded in just a few minutes, is embodied with those values. I started my leadership roles as a volunteer in my professional organization. A year ago I finished a three year term as the president of the Society for Nutrition for Behavior Change an international organization where I started as a volunteer. That role added value to my career and through that service, I have been afforded opportunities that I would have never imagined, with funded invitations to South Africa, Israel, Morocco, Mauritius, South Korea, Vietnam and Japan in 2021. Serving will unlock opportunities you would never imagine and add value to your career. Your collection of values become like the North Star in times of darkness. They will light your path and, in the process, you will light the path of others. Remember we buy what we value, we invest in what we value and we sacrifice for what we value. Graduates of 2019, in your determination to become beacons of light, remember what your God requires of you to **act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God! Go add value as you light the world.**