

Kevin Greenidge: Let hard work be your guiding principle

Remarks by Dr Kevin Greenidge, Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados, at the Barbados Youth Advance Corps graduation, 25 August 2023.

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Good day graduands. Today, I focus my remarks on being the best you can be.

Many years ago, I was like you. I was about to finished secondary school having spent one year in fifth form and not entered for any CXC course, and therefore would have left with no certification. I appealed to the principal of my school for a second chance, and he gave it to me. I grasped it, and as they say, the rest is history.

Back then, I committed to becoming the best I could be, envisaged the possibilities, applied myself, worked hard, and today, I am at the pinnacle of my career as the Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados.

You can do the same.

The programme from which you graduate today gave you that second chance. Over the past four months, the National Transformation Initiative (NTI) helped the Barbados Youth Advanced Corps (BYAC) to school you in letter and report writing. NTI exposed you to various experiences and projects to prepare you for the technical and vocational training opportunities you will pursue next. And of major significance, you have designed your vision board, which I hope you will use to guide your career and help you attain success.

The transitional literacy course has equipped you with the skills necessary to pursue higher learning at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute of Technology, the Barbados Community College, the Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity (BIMAP), or the Vocational Training Board.

To become the best at whatever career path you choose, you must build on the foundation that the National Transformation Initiative and the Barbados Youth Advanced Corps laid for you. What is required, though, to solidify that foundation? The answer is simple. You must do a few things to be the best carpenter, cosmetologist, or artisan. Topping the list are setting goals to achieve your vision, working hard, remaining focused, and avoiding distractions.

You've drafted your vision boards already. That's a great start. Now, you must set your goals to achieve those visions. Goal setting helps you to chart a path and to map out how you will travel that road to your desired destination. **Having goals motivates you, gives you a sense of purpose, and helps you to feel accomplished.** The key to goal setting is understanding the why. So, as you prepare to start your vocational training, know why you are pursuing this career path and why it matters.

In addition, break down your goals into small actions and set time frames for achieving them. Large goals may overwhelm you and deter you from going after them. And having time frames keeps you accountable.

Also, remember that life is not a straight road but a journey paved with uncertainties, ups and downs, distractions, disappointments, and pitfalls. So, your plan to help you achieve your goals must include ways to navigate the humps and the bumps. These humps and bumps could be of your own making, or others could cause them. Examples include not having enough funds to complete your studies, not having ample food, or proper shelter, or unexpected illness. They could also cover people underestimating your ability and minimising your worth and value, or allowing past mistakes or failures to paralyse you into inaction.

Regardless of their origin, be prepared and plan for them and know that you will overcome them. That plan should include mentors or someone to whom you can turn when the going gets tough, someone who cheers you on always, and helps to manage the many naysayers who will try to box you in. **Do not allow anyone to put you in a box.** Use your mentors to give you the drive, to advise and to encourage you. They can be a source of motivation, so identify and use them.

And the plan should help you embrace a positive mindset and a good attitude. A positive mindset and a good attitude mean you say, "Yes, I can," rather than "No, I cannot." They help you focus on completing tasks rather than lamenting why you cannot do them. You can move mountains and do the impossible with a positive mindset and a good attitude. They build the confidence, character, and courage required to achieve your goals. So, invest in them.

To be the best in life also requires hard work. I can tell you achieving greatness does not come easy. Remember the story I referred to at the beginning of this conversation? When the principal of the Alleyne School gave me a second opportunity to succeed, I buckled down and worked hard, and I determined there and then that I would soar. And throughout my life, as I set myself various goals, I put in the work and the time to achieve them. Sometimes the hard work meant I had to sacrifice some things. And sacrifice I did. At university, for instance, I discovered I needed a first-class honours degree so I can join the CBB upon graduation. First-class honours requires at least 12 A's out of 20 courses. I was however determined to get more than the 12 A's since I also knew that the CBB only took one graduate each year. Therefore, I refused to party, reduced the limes, and immersed myself in my work. I did not get 12 A's; I got 20 out of 21 courses. A remarkable feat that I attribute to hard work and sacrifice.

I am not the only one. Other successful people, including athletes, performing artistes, tradesmen and women, and businesspeople put in the time, the energy, and the effort.

The good book supports working hard. Colossians 3: 23-24 states, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward." And if you think that the inheritance the good book is talking about is when you get to heaven, it is not. It is talking about right here on earth. For the good book also says in Proverbs 22:29 "Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings; He will not stand before unknown men." So, my friends, **let hard work be your guiding principle.**

Building communities among yourselves would help as well. These communities should function like support groups. Such groups provide motivation, encouragement, and

backing to its members, and would serve you well as you embark on your vocational studies.

You can also use these groups to collaborate and pool resources to build integrated businesses later in life. For example, the future carpenters in this class can and should team up with the masons, plumbers, and admin officers to form a one-stop construction company. In this way, you own the business.

To the parents in the room, I urge you to fortify your support for your children as they begin a new chapter. They are taking advantage of this second opportunity to improve their fortunes. They will need you to help them stay on track and to assist them if they falter. That support could be financial. Or it could be motivational or spiritual. Be there for them in good and in difficult times. You must be their biggest cheerleader. And you must show them they can achieve what may seem impossible, and encourage them to persevere and stay the course. Parents, you have a tremendous role to play if your children are to be the best they can be. They are counting on you. The Barbados Youth Advanced Corps is counting on you. I am counting on you.

I am also willing to help. I am pleased to announce my charity to assist young people like you financially and to motivate, mentor, and advise you on career and other matters. I shall reveal details about the Kevin Greenidge Charitable Trust soon.

Finally, I thank the National Transformation Initiative for working with the Barbados Youth Advanced Corps to conceptualise and execute this programme that gives our young people a second chance at life. As I said at the beginning of my remarks, I got a second chance as a teenager and have proven through my success that people deserve another opportunity. The recipients of that second opportunity must, however, grasp it. So, to all of you in this room, I say seize the moment. This NTI/BYAC programme is like the mustard seed. It's small but could mushroom into something huge by unearthing/creating the many vocational and technical skills this country needs to build new industries or expand existing ones to propel Barbados' economic growth and development. So, students, this programme is not only contributing to your personal development but is also supporting national development. Well done, National Transformation Initiative and the Barbados Youth Advance Corps! Good luck and congrats to all students. Go forth and become the best that you can be. You have the tools to do so.

I thank you.