

Kevin Greenidge: You can achieve even more

Remarks by Dr Kevin Greenidge, Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados, at the 3rd Annual Resilience Awards, Bridgetown, 28 August 2024.

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Hello, everyone!

It's so great to be here with all of you today at this Third Annual Resilience Ceremony sponsored by the Barbados Association of Social Workers. I want to start by saying how proud I am of each and every one of you. You've all done something amazing- you've worked hard and passed the Barbados Secondary Schools Entrance Examination. Now, you're getting ready to start a new and exciting adventure in secondary school!

I know some of you have faced tough times. Maybe you've had to deal with hardships, violence, or not having enough money. But guess what? You didn't let that stop you. You kept going, and you succeeded. And that's why I believe you can achieve even more!

Why am I here today; why was I invited to speak to you? Let me share a little story with you. When I was your age things weren't always easy for me either. I grew up in a children's home. I struggled in school and sometimes felt like giving up. But I saw other people succeed, and I thought, "If they can do it, so can I!" I decided to work hard and never give up, no matter how hard it got.

I also set myself certain principles which have taken me through life, and now I will share five of those principles with you.

Principle 1: Set Your Goals and Believe in Yourself

Here's a secret: You don't have to be the best at everything right now. What's important is that you set goals for yourself and work towards them.

Think of your goals as a map that guides you to where you want to go. Without a map, you might wander aimlessly, but with a map, you have direction. What do you want to achieve in this new school? It could be as simple as doing better in math, joining a club, making the football/netball team, or reading more books. Whatever your goal, write it down, and keep it where you can see it every day. This will remind you of what you are working towards.

Having these goals will give you a sense of purpose and something to strive for each day. Remember, it's your life, and you have the power to shape it with your goals.

Whatever it is, believe in yourself and know that you can do it.

Principle 2: Stay Positive and Keep on Keeping on!

Sometimes, things won't go the way you want. You might not get the highest marks on a test, or you might feel like things are too hard. That's okay.

That's life. It has many ups and downs. But staying positive is one of the most powerful things you can do. Being positive doesn't mean pretending everything is perfect. It means looking for the good in every situation, no matter how small. A friend called me yesterday- It means believing that things can get better, even when it's hard to see how. Receiving these awards today should signal to you that things can and will get better.

When you feel sad or upset, take a moment to think about something good that has happened to you. Maybe it's a kind word from a friend, a favourite activity you enjoy, or even just the fact that you are here today. Focusing on these positive things can help lift your spirits and give you the strength to keep going. The important thing is to keep trying; keep on keeping on. Every time you fall, get back up. Tell yourself, "I can do this. I can be even better."

Keeping a positive mindset has been a tremendous help. Every morning, I affirm how great I am, how beautiful life is and what wonders I can achieve today. By maintaining this positive outlook daily, I am able to deal with whatever comes my way. Whatever!

Principle 3: Work Hard and Never Give Up

I want to share another secret with you: success doesn't happen by accident. It comes to those who put in the effort. The Bible says "Do you see a man diligent in his work? He will stand in the presence of kings. He will not stand in the presence of the unknown". Your hard work has brought you today before ministers and those in authority. Think about athletes who practice for hours every day, or musicians who spend years mastering their instruments. Their success is the result of dedication and hard work.

You don't have to be perfect, but you do have to try your best. Focus on your studies, participate in class, and ask questions if you don't understand something. There will be times when things get tough, and you might feel like giving up. But remember, every time you push through a challenge, you become stronger and smarter. Hard work builds character, and it pays off in ways you can't even imagine yet.

Think of hard work like planting seeds. At first, you may not see anything happen, but with time and care, those seeds will grow into something amazing. Keep planting those seeds, and you will see your efforts pay off in ways you can't even imagine.

I worked extremely hard to get this job. When I was at university, for example, I wanted to be the best, so I studied a lot. I even skipped some fun things to focus on my studies. But it was all worth it because it helped me get to where I am today, Governor of the Central Bank of Barbados.

Principle 4: Help Others Along the Way

As you achieve your goals, remember to help others too. If you see a friend struggling, lend them a hand. If you learn something new, share it with someone else.

Even if life has been hard for you, you still have something valuable to give. Helping others is one of the best ways to find happiness and purpose. When you help someone else, you make the world a little better, and you also make yourself feel better. Whether it's being kind to a friend, helping a classmate with their homework, or just offering a smile to someone who looks sad, these small acts of kindness make a big difference.

By helping others, you are also helping yourself. You create a community of support, where people look out for each other. And remember, when you are kind to others, kindness has a way of finding its way back to you. Again, a reference from the Bible "A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed".

Principle 5: Look Forward to a Bright Future

Your past may have been difficult, but your future is wide open. You have the power to shape it with the choices you make today. Dream big and believe in yourself. There is a whole world out there waiting for you to explore, and endless opportunities for you to take hold of and grow.

I want you to imagine the kind of life you want to have when you grow up. Think about the things you love to do and the kind of person you want to become. Use these dreams as your motivation to keep going, no matter how hard things get. Education is your ticket to that brighter future, and with determination and hard work, you can achieve anything you set your mind to.

I know starting secondary school is a big step. It can be exciting but also a little scary because you are going to a new school, with new teachers, new friends, and new subjects. Remember, you have the power to determine your future. Make good choices, keep good company, work hard, and stay positive. No matter what challenges come your way, you can overcome them. Think of challenges as chances to grow and learn-to do even better.

That's my advice to you to help you reach new heights.

Before I wrap, I want to thank the Barbados Association of Social Workers for supporting you in this way, honouring you with these resilience rewards. Your recent successes in the Barbados Secondary Schools Entrance Examination despite your various setbacks and challenges prove you are resilient.

I am sure these grants you are receiving today will help you with your back-to-school costs, and will serve to motivate you to improve further, to achieve great things in the future. This is a wonderful act of caring, of which we all should be proud. I appreciate the importance of sharing and caring, so a year ago I started a charity to help vulnerable children with their tertiary education. The Kevin Greenidge Charitable Trust has been working hard like this country's social workers to help people like you.

To the parents, today is a day of celebration and pride, not just for your children, but for you as well. Your children have achieved something remarkable by passing their exams and moving on to secondary school, and they've done so despite facing significant challenges. This success is showing not only their hard work and determination but also your unwavering support, love, and encouragement.

As parents, you are the first teachers, the guiding lights, and the pillars of strength for your children. Your belief in them, your sacrifices, and your support have played a crucial role in helping them reach this milestone. By standing by them, encouraging them to study, and nurturing their dreams, you have provided a foundation that has allowed them to succeed.

Never underestimate the impact of your involvement in their education. Your guidance and motivation have given your children the courage to overcome obstacles and the confidence to believe in their potential. You have shown them that with hard work and perseverance, anything is possible.

While this is a wonderful achievement, it is also the beginning of a new journey. Your children will face new challenges and opportunities in secondary school: bullying, teenagers' crises, difficulties in keeping up with an increase in subjects, new subjects, and the list goes on. As they step into this next phase of their education, your continued encouragement will be essential. Celebrate their successes, no matter how small, and reassure them when they encounter difficulties. Be their sounding board, their cheerleader, and their source of strength.

Encourage them to set new goals and strive for excellence. Help them understand that success is a journey, not just a destination. Remind them that it's okay to make mistakes and that every challenge is an opportunity to learn and grow. Your belief in their abilities will empower them to keep pushing forward, no matter what.

Your children look up to you more than you might realise. Show them the value of education, hard work, and kindness through your actions. Let them see how you handle challenges and be the example of resilience and integrity that they can emulate. Teach them that success is not just about personal achievements, but also about helping others and making a positive impact in the world.

By supporting your children's education and dreams, you are helping to break the cycle of hardship and creating a path to a brighter future. Education is a powerful tool that can open doors to countless opportunities. By ensuring that your children have the best possible start, you are setting them up for success in life.

You are not just changing their lives; you are changing the future for your entire family. The values you instil in them, the encouragement you provide, and the support you offer will resonate for generations to come.

Today, we celebrate your children's achievements, but we also celebrate you—the parents who have stood by their side, guiding them, believing in them, and giving them the courage to succeed. Your children's success is your success, and together, you have shown that no challenge is too much. Continue to love, support, and honour them.

Finally, to you, the students, remember this: You are strong, you are capable, and the future is yours. Believe in yourself, work hard, and go after your dreams. You've already shown that you can do incredible things. Now go out there and be the best you can be because you can achieve even more.

I thank you.

