

Text of MCC 2018 Co-Valedictorian Address
Victoria Turk
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My name is Victoria Turk and I am so grateful to be receiving this honor, to be addressing all of you, and to be representing the amazing class of 2018 here at Manchester Community College. I'd like to begin by thanking all of the faculty, administrators, and staff at MCC. Not only are you all knowledgeable and wise, but also enthusiastic, unendingly patient, and eager. You have so deftly prepared us for this moment, and as we leave here today to carry your lessons with us into the world we deeply and wholeheartedly thank you.

When I started my education here in 2015, I can't describe to you how nervous I was. I was an older student, and I hadn't been in a classroom environment in many years. I worried that I wouldn't be smart enough, that I wouldn't make friends. My husband David and my daughter Helena were my cheerleaders at home, salving my anxiety with pep talks and encouragement. My little village came together for me, and I'm so indebted to all of them. However, I immediately discovered that my worry was unnecessary, the people here were so accepting and supportive of each other. My fellow students brought out the best in me, and I can only hope you all feel the same way. In the Radiography program I made friendships that will last a lifetime. I had instructors that didn't just teach, but inspired me to be better, always. They are my mentors and I hope as I go on into my field as a technologist that I can make them proud.

It took a long time for me to get here. I took the long way. I walked a lot of different paths. I took a lot of decisions and choices for granted, as if my outcome were predetermined. Now as a mom, I'm finding myself learning all the time. Today, that is what I'd like to leave you, my fellow students with. Don't just walk through life, lead life. Don't just embrace change, make change. Learn, grow, always. My daughter Helena is nine, almost ten. When she has to make a decision, any decision, it is agonizing for her. Even little things like going the "back way" or the "highway" to go home, she really struggles. And it's because she is so thoughtful, so purposeful. She contemplates all her options and tries to make the right choice. She rolls everything around in her mouth to see what will taste the best. She doesn't just envision the outcome, she imagines the journey. She actually hates actually choosing. Once she commits she worries that she may have liked the other choice more. She is so engaged and present. In that way she has taught me. Making the decision to come to MCC, to change my life, was purposeful. More now than ever, I evaluate my decisions and lead my life with awareness and decisiveness. I have passion for what I do.

Our teachers here have given us knowledge, but they can't give us wisdom. I'd like to share a quote by Kahlil Gibran from The Prophet in which he describes teachers.

“If he is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to
the threshold of your own mind.

The astronomer may speak to you of his understanding of space, but he cannot give you his
understanding.

The musician may sing to you of the rhythm which is in all space, but he cannot give you the ear
which arrests the rhythm nor the voice that echoes it.

And he who is versed in the science of numbers can tell of the regions of weight and measure, but
he cannot conduct you thither.

For the vision of one man lends not its wings to another man.”

We all go from here today taking with us the lessons we have learned from our professors, from our
peers, and from ourselves. Hopefully we also leave wiser, and continue to learn and grow into the future,
living purposefully and with passion, finding our own wings.

I'd like to end by taking a moment to celebrate our accomplishment. All those long nights of
studying, falling asleep in a pile of books or in a chair in front of the computer, all those study sessions in
the library with friends and classmates, highlighters, tests, anxiety, all that coffee, all that work, has led us
here, to this moment. Breath deep. Enjoy this time. And every day after this one. To once again quote
Gibran “Your reason and your passion are the rudder and the sails of your seafaring soul.” Good luck and
thank all of you.