

Closing Ceremony Speech - SGS MUN 2019

We were all here this weekend to represent our countries, push ourselves in debate, and pass good resolutions. But although our success in these things is important to us, I would like to take a few minutes to talk about, not success, but failure.

Having participated in our discussions, we should remember that there is no such thing as an overnight success; it's a fallacy, a myth pedalled in a world where someone may be virally catapulted to fame as an internet phenomenon in a matter of 24 hours. What I would like us to dwell on as this weekend is drawing to a close, is the work, the process that takes us towards success, towards our goals. That process sometimes includes failure. Not winning an award, but focusing on learning and improving.

There was once a lady in a market place, she saw Picasso and asked him for a self-portrait. He agreed...and drew a perfect picture in 30 seconds. He then handed it back to her and asked for \$30,000. She questioned how it could cost that much when it only took him 30 seconds. He replied, "It took me 30 years to be able draw that in 30 seconds".

It's amazing how - so often - the time taken to achieve success is forgotten; how frequently we forget what lies beyond the tip of the iceberg, the shadowy section underneath the water. But that part, the part we don't see, the part full of failure, learning and progress, is absolutely what makes success possible. If we have experienced that success today, it is because we have invested time, valued experience and learned from our mistakes and failures.

When you look at the definition of failure in the dictionary, it is defined by three words: lack of success. If we fear failure and imperfection, it ultimately means that we don't value growth and learning, it means we don't value experience and struggle, and our obsession with winning means that we're actually letting go of what we could be learning at every single point. So I hope that this weekend you have been brave and courageous in your discussions, have not be afraid to express your views. To those of you who did not win awards today, keep trying. There are always more conferences to get involved in. Learn from your mistakes, whether it is improving your public speaking skills, spending more time researching issues or gaining confidence in the committee room. Being open to improvement is important.

But having said this, we cannot assume we have all the time in the world to perfect our skill. Our generation do not – like Picasso – have 30 years to gain experience before we have to sort out the world's problems. Our generation are going to have to deal with several looming crises imminently.

Fortunately, this seems to be a challenge that many young people – people like Greta Thunberg, those attending climate strikes, and also MUNers (people like YOU) – seem be keen to take on. Isn't this why MUN is so important? Being here and doing this gives us the confidence and the skills we will need, the experience of success, of progress, and yes – sometimes of failure – to be able to tackle our generation's issues as soon as we are given the chance.

I am a 13 year old girl, the youngest in my year, and the youngest person to take the role of Secretary General. I, as much as anyone, realise I still have a lot to learn to take on the tasks the world will throw at our generation. That is why I thank you now; I have been inspired by so many of you today, and in the past at other conferences. I am constantly delighted at the level of debate and the skills you show, that I can only feel hope for the future.

I know that I am not as experienced as many others who have filled this role, but it has been an honour being your Secretary General for this weekend's conference. To all those award winners, I congratulate you! To everyone else, I hope you will, as I will, enjoy to continue learning through MUN.

I now declare SGS MUN 2019 closed!

Bella Platt
Secretary General