

I would like to begin by thanking the Principal for this wonderful award, and the University chaplaincy for their continued support, it is a real honour and a privilege to be standing in front of you today.

My years as an undergrad student at Edinburgh were the most formative and inspiring. As you sit here today ready to embark on a similar journey I would ask that you make a commitment that when the opportunity arises to simply go out and do good you do so without condition or qualification.

And that you utilise the countless resources available to you here to create such opportunities yourselves without questioning what is in it for you or whether the hand that is extended for help matches yours in terms of skin colour, education, or any other social construct we use to justify the barriers we put up.

And I also ask that you do not let those constructs dictate your experience here at Edinburgh. Make a commitment that this will be the first of many days that you make the most of the unique environment you are in and let people into your life who you could fully get away with never speaking to. But that you won't do so because your being with those who are different from you will enrich your university experience and enhance your own individual growth.

It was with this spirit that the Syrian tutoring program began, A desire to simply do good and support the Syrian refugee students in the Edinburgh community. It has transformed into a vision of ensuring that the Syrian students despite everything they have been through have a shot at achieving their personal goals and aspirations.

And finally a message to those who may feel out of place, when you venture into places where you may not necessarily see many who are like you, your presence sets a precedence for those who follow to have it that much easier. In order to win the battles you have to fight them first. Thank you.