

Senior Last Lecture
Miami University
Student Comments
Relationships: Throughout the Future Chapters of Our Lives
Tahia Harley (Miami '07)

I'm here before you today to act only as a guide of reflection, a guide that can spark your own personal journey back throughout the previous 4, 5, or 6 years. Easy said right? I wish! There are so many great accomplishments, challenges and events that have happened since stumbling into our first year dorms, to now, confidently standing in the middle of Yager Stadium, next Saturday. After trying to brainstorm the list of attributes that's made us the Class of 2007, I'm satisfied with two words that I think ties it all together...Preparation and Experience. Miami has both prepared us all and given us the experience needed to be successful in the future. But neither of these would be possible without relationships. The relationships that we've gained throughout our time here, has prepared us and offered experiences never before imagined. So together today, we will reflect on those personal relationships we cherish with friends, the professional relationships we rely on with professors and mentors and the bonds we have generated with our team members, organization members and advisors.

When entering Miami, I remember feeling a rush of anxiety from being new, pressure to excel and distance from those with whom I was familiar. I too, like many other first year students searched McBride Hall to find others to latch onto and accompany. Fortunately, I was successful. Those same two girls that I stayed up talking to for hours every night are the same two women I stay up talking to hours today. The relationships between the three of us have been stretched, twisted, molded, and have grown to more than just friendship. We've established a support system that is dependable, accredited and unbreakable. We all have found those personal relationships full of extraordinary experiences that we treasure and will nourish throughout the future chapters of our lives.

Getting acquainted with my major, I then sought an advisor, a professor, a mentor, and similar relationships that have provided knowledge, expertise, and experience. I do visit the same advisor I've come to trust, 4 years later...even though she technically isn't an academic advisor anymore! I do sit down and visit my favorite professor to discuss analytical papers about the racial separation on episodes of 'Survivor', or just whine, because I haven't found a job in my field yet. I have, for some reason, taken 3 classes and 1 independent study with the same production mentor, besides the fact that our personalities, behaviors and techniques are on complete opposite ends of the spectrum. But, I have learned to rely on these sources and cherish these relationships. They all have provided me with many opportunities and acknowledgments in my department, plus practicum experience and advice for my career exploration. We all hope to create and sustain such influential relationships throughout the future chapters of our lives.

Once settled into this bubble, I jumped into community involvement and participation. So since Miami only has somewhere around 300 organizations, I only joined 8 of them,

including my sorority. I began to develop leadership skills from taking on various responsibilities and holding executive positions. Co-members and I quickly formed bonds that were unique to our other types of relationships. I quickly realized, that the 8, 25, or sometimes 100 of you, were all working towards the same goal and purpose. These individuals are your teammates, your sorority sisters, and your exec board members. In five years, I probably won't remember the late nights working on award presentations for next week's conference or annoyingly baking treats for another bake sale, but I will remember the people I stayed up late with and the people who were right there with me decorating cookies. Those advisors that treated us like family members, offering organizational, career, and life advice are also our role models. These relationships have generated some of the best preparation and most unique experiences, that aid us as reflective tools throughout the future chapters of our lives.

So now that I've hopefully sparked your own personal reflection on recent relationships that have both prepared, and offered us amazing experiences, you will further seek out similar support systems, resources and bonds in the next chapter of your life. We must realize that it's okay to let go or just move over some of these present relationships that we have in our lives and to make room for new ones in our approaching career fields, family and friends, and graduate studies. Albert Camus, the famous French author perfectly summarizes my message to you. He said, "Human relationships always help us to carry on, because they always presuppose further development, a future..."