

Psi Chi Ceremony Speech: Melissa Olson

Good evening and Welcome!

I am **honored** and **humbled** to speak here before you this evening at our 6th Annual Psi Chi Induction Ceremony surrounded by **so many** supportive faculty, staff, family members, friends, and significant others, who have **made it possible** for each of us to **rise to our fullest potential** and continue to, as we pursue **our passion** in the field of psychology.

And tonight, we are here to acknowledge the newest members for **their perseverance in academia** as they become lifelong members into Psi Chi, The International Honor Society in Psychology. Tonight, I prepared this speech **especially for our inductees**.

As our commencement ceremony quickly approaches, I can almost bet that **most of us** are focused on completing our Research Papers and Group Detective Projects this upcoming week. **But trust me**, it will **hit you soon**...if it has not already. What I'm referring to is which each of our professors have been **preparing us for** these past years. **Our next step**. Specifically, Junior Seminar with Dr. K and our "RoadMap". We have been **given the knowledge** and **direction to become unstoppable**. And the **greatest part is**, our professors **will always** be here for us if **we ever need** a letter of recommendation or advice. They truly want each and every one of us **to succeed**. As for your classmates, **remember this** before graduation, the ones that have **helped you through your hurdles**...those are the ones you **want to keep in contact and network with**. As you move on after graduation, junior classmates **may reach out to you**. Be there for them, as others **have been there for you**. My mentor once told me a time or two...he had me agree to mentor **at least two people along the way**. And I have to tell you...**not only has it been a rewarding feeling**; you also learn **much more** along the way.

In class we have **been taught to** ask questions, communicate if something arises, be on time, and turn in quality work. For some... this has been redundant, but this **is the last time** we will experience this dry run before **we cross that stage**. It has **all been practice** as this **sets you apart** from others in the professional field. From experience, by **asking** questions when that gut feeling inside is **not sure**, to **communication** between you and your team, **showing up** prepared and **ready** to work, and **reviewing** your work **before** submitting it; **you will achieve** a high rank or **in our case** the **ideal** professional position.

It's **okay** that we are **not all at the same pace**, or **at the same chapter** in life; and that's what **makes life interesting**. You *are where you are supposed to be*, and **always remember** each of us in the field of psychology are **lifelong learners**.

During my career in the Coast Guard, I **often would say** to junior members; when **they felt** their job was **superior** to another person's job; is that **every job is equally important**, or **our military mission would fail**. And that **is with life**. And as **you** start out; Some took the steps to **apply to graduate school**. Some found **their passion** during a summer internship and **are pursuing it** as a career. Whatever **your path is**; always remember **your WHY**. Remember **this day**. It takes a **team to help people**. This **is why** each and every single one **of us** are pursuing careers **in the helping field**. Ideally the **goal** is to find your **specialty niche** as a psychologist, researcher, professor, and so on. But, **if you find yourself** starting off at a slower pace, **be kind to yourself**. It is okay **to take time** to learn the **many facets** of research and clinical work.

And lastly, I want to leave with you with this. **Your generation** is one of the most fortunate. You've **experienced**, been **exposed**, and have been **impacted** in one way or another to the **many events** that have taken place **in our nation**. By the **choices of how each of us** individually, as a **group**, a **community**, a **culture**, as a **diverse group**...we came **together**, learned to **communicate**, and **listen to one another**, **united**, and still, **we rise** by supporting **one another**. Your resilience is **unapparelled**.

Remember this always. Being of service is what keeps us humble and grounded. Never forget the **figurative pie** we made in Dr. Wade's class. Meaning you can take in **all the career advice** in the world...**but if you are** not taking the time for **your pie** to be equal; by **making time** for physical activity, eating **the right foods**, attending medical appointments, **making time** for family and friends, a **healthy** romantic relationship, doing something that **brings a smile to your face**, gauging **your finances**, or **learning** a new skill. **Trust me...**something in **your life** will have its breaking point, **set you back** in some way and **remind you** it's **so important** to keep **your pie equal**. Which also connects to Dr. Draper's **words of wisdom** regarding a profession as a clinical therapist. And that is **the burnout rate**. It's **not** to scare or detour us. It's to **help make us cognizant** of **how important** self-care and **seeking** therapy is in this profession, because **you're only as good** to your client or patient, **as you are to yourself**. Two things my dad likes to tell me, and it stands true: **Take care of #1** and **the squeaky wheel gets the oil**.

I wish that in my early years **someone would have explained this formula to me** for a healthier balanced life **sooner**, as the focus was to have a **successful career** and **prepare** for retirement. But **what is a successful career** in life **without** your pie? The **result is** that the quality of **every slice drops significantly**. I stand here before you **right now**, I do not regret **any of my past choices** as they have set me up for life. But I **am grateful** for the ah-ha moment I had **2 1/2 years ago** to pursue my passion and **by finally living a balanced life** as my authentic self...as a result of **finally slicing my pie**. It's **never too late** to reinvent yourself. Thank you!