

Respected Rector Professor Zimmermann, Deans and Members of the Senate of the Medical University of Gdańsk, Distinguished Guests, Families of our Graduates, and – first and foremost – you Dear Graduates of the year 2023, young doctors.

I feel privileged, honoured and very pleased to be with you here today, at this celebrated hour of your formal transition from students to physicians, your special moment of glory and a gate to the rest of your lives immersed in the medical profession.

Congratulations to all of you on successful completion of the demanding process which led you here. There were many challenges on your way, some appeared monstrous, some were totally unexpected. Each year of study had its own legendary subjects, known as very demanding in many ways, not only content-wise. You have been through a lot, and during the several years of your medical studies you went high on various emotions, joy and satisfaction of success, but also sadness and bitter taste of failure and disappointment. And, noteworthy, acquiring the knowledge and skills to the required levels was not the only source of challenge and stress.

Human life resembles a book, and everyone has their own story. When you joined us a few years ago, you already had some chapters done, you came as young adults, with your morals, with your visions of the medical studies at MUG and Gdańsk as your home away from home, with your expectations, hopes and fears. You chose to stay with us and continue to grow here mentally and professionally, ready to give this process quite a few years of your prime time, with trust in the quality of education, living environment, and interpersonal relations.

What makes people ready to rely on each other, even if not knowing each other is the attitude of trust. Trust feeds hope for the best and confidence in others' good intentions. Trust is essential for physician's success at diagnosing and treating their patients. Trust is also essential between students and the university. On this foundation students and staff can effectively cooperate at building the competences of the future healthcare professionals, with the sense of belonging and security. Although students come and go, a university does not exist without them. The student community is the university's blood – tissue that is both vital and constantly renewed. Here, I wish to thank all of you for making our academic community vibrant, enthusiastic, creative and appreciative of diversity in many ways. Thank you for your involvement in student organizations, student scientific groups, charity activities, as well as in the process of making our university a better place. My personal thanks to many of you for inspiring questions and conversations, both during the course of physiology at second year and on various occasions afterwards. Special words of thanks to Dr. Fanny Sunesson.

Various coaches and psychologists advise focusing on here and now, because today, now, each of those tiny fleeting moments, and the place where we are, is indeed the only spacetime where we can make a difference. With the past being a closed chapter and the future being just an abstract concept subject to our hopes, wishes and prayers, it is every “here” and every “now” that we have to plant the seeds of tomorrow. For each thing that happens has a cause, each deed – good or bad – matters, each action taken or abandoned has some impact on ourselves, on the others around us, and even on the world in a larger scale. So, keep writing the new chapters of your book of life, inspired by the beauty and complexity of all creation, by the wisdom and competence of people you respect and admire, but first and foremost – by your inner motivation to bring relief to your patients, their families and your communities. And never allow anyone to steal your pen or take control of your writing hand. Be the best and most dedicated authors of your future, which is created every day.

You are about to enter the medical profession at the time when our human world is confronted with multiple and severe crises. For many, you will be the knowledgeable person to ask for help and advice, the one who can control emotions, use reasoning, and come up with advice and solutions. Do not be afraid to take this role and use your intellect and your morals to make the world better around you.

In the longest-running longitudinal study on adult development Harvard University team headed by Dr. Robert Waldinger, psychiatrist and doctor of zen, confirmed what our grandmothers and grandfathers always knew: ultimately, what matters in life and is the most important source of happiness and satisfaction is the quality of our relations with other people, having someone to love and be loved, friends for a lifetime.

I wish you best of success in your postgraduate medical education to your patients’ benefit and your own satisfaction and best of happiness in your private lives. And I hope you keep in touch with me and the university in your new position of the International Alumni of the Medical University of Gdańsk.

Best of luck to you all, Dear Colleagues!