

# VALEDICTORIAN'S ADDRESS

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Respected Chief Guest, Prof. Joachim Holtz, Guest of Honour, Shri M. Natarajan, Director of our institute IIT Mandi, Prof. T. A. Gonsalves, Chairman Board of Governors, members of Board of Governors, and the members of the Senate of the Institute, distinguished guests, the graduating students and their family members, faculty and staff members - it gives me a great pleasure to extend a very warm welcome to you all on the occasion of the Fourth Convocation Ceremony of the Indian Institute of Technology Mandi.

When I was told to prepare a speech as the valedictorian, no words came to me at all. All I could comprehend was a fur ball of events, emotions, people and times. It was impossible to pick and choose the moments to speak about and to pick out each and every hair from this would take me another 4 years. I obviously don't plan on forcing you listen for that long. Nevertheless, do bear with me.

Standing here, in the presence of my fellow batch-mates, parents takes me back to the orientation day, the very first day at IIT Mandi. I can distinctly recall myself giving one of the freshers speeches on the stage. And now, that I am here addressing the batch for one last time, it feels like we are back to the same place, but as completely different people. We have come a long way in the last 4 years; right from being clueless students to clueless Professionals, clueless Engineers, clueless Educators and in some cases clueless students again. Mind you, I use the word clueless in an entirely different sense. Being clueless is one of the greatest assets of any IIT Mandi student. As a new university, we didn't have any set systems, traditions or such things. Whilst doing anything for the first time, we have definitely been clueless at some point or the other. And it is exactly THAT feeling which has driven us to ideate, experiment and improve. We have had the opportunity to pave the first path. Be it having to set up a fest at Kamand Campus, starting a new club and having setting up the quiz-endsem distribution for a course. And obviously when we went wrong, we also got an opportunity to break it and redesign.

No matter how whacky any idea would sound, it has not shied us away from believing in it and working on it. The best example for me being my transfer from electrical to mechanical. Being clueless has made us bolder and confident while trying things and wiser along time. I can proudly say that IIT Mandi has taught me how to handle being clueless. It has taught us how to venture into unknown realms and create opportunities for oneself not having to care about any rule of thumb or standard, but at most times create one ourselves. This is an ideology that I will be taking back from my four years at the college.

We all have at some point gotten apprehensive about our decision to come to IIT Mandi. But today, I will not be talking about that. I will instead, talk about how I was NOT apprehensive about coming to IIT Mandi. Everyone will tell you about their fears about IIT Mandi being in a remote location and away from all the major cities and resources and commodities like McDonalds, multiplexes and what not. But that was not the only thought that crossed my mind. I happened to visit Himachal one month before IITJEE results. I did ponder upon the novel idea of being in an institution that with such serenity and peace in one of the most exotic landscapes of India. I imagined how I would get the two most

ultimate resources for any student: time and freedom. When the time had come when I had to pick, I didn't think twice before putting IIT Mandi as my preference. And it is one of the best decisions I've taken yet.

As one of the last points, I would like to thank the people of Kamand and Mandi, for their immense support and toleration. I can imagine how difficult it would have been for them to suddenly one day wake up to see a huge institution with more students than their own population coming up right in their backyard. They invited us with open arms and at the same time we helped them out with our strengths namely education and technology. I would definitely urge everyone to take away this attitude to wherever you go in the future and act accordingly. We are now going to be global citizens and our lives inadvertently do affect a lakh others as well. We need to do our part to give back to the society and that too not just for free Coldplay tickets.

In IIT Mandi we did things, some that we wish we had never done, some that we wish we could replay a million times in our heads. But standing here, I have no regrets. They all make us who we are, and in the end they shape every detail about us. If we were to reverse any of them, we wouldn't be the person we are. So just live. Make mistakes. Have wonderful memories, but do not second guess who you are and where you have been and most importantly where you are going.

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