

## Year 12 Speech for Brent Celebration of Achievement

Good afternoon everybody. My name is N and I am 17 years old.

People say I'm articulate but to be honest talking in front of crowds isn't really my thing however, (pause) I'm still up here today. I've been asked to say a few words about my experiences being in care.

I've been in care from the age of 4 and was placed in semi-independent living at 16. Up until Year 9, I was in one placement but then things changed and my school and home placement broke down. It was a difficult time, I moved around a lot and lost myself. I can admit I did a few things that maybe today looking back I wouldn't have done. Even so, I am now at a different point where I realise that there is no reason why I can't be successful.

I was a bit lost for most of my high school years. In year 9, I was excluded from my school-a very good Grammar school in Watford. I was out of school for a long period. During the time I was out of school, I grew lazy and unmotivated. I wouldn't say I was depressed but for a long time I was just not happy.

Thankfully I did get another school placement in year 10. It took me a long time to adjust to school. I wouldn't attend every day and I also just really wasn't used to working and focusing on my studies, so it seemed to be going very downhill. There were a few teachers at my school who were I suppose almost like my 'guardian angel' who watched over me even when I thought they weren't there. Particularly, 'Miss' who even till this day still helps me. She didn't give up on me even when I pushed and pushed and pushed away. I rebelled, didn't attend school and she still fought my corner.

My exams were so much harder than imagined. I scraped through with 5 A to C GCSE passes, which I wouldn't have got without the support of 'Miss'. It took me time to mature but I suppose it takes everyone time. Even last year there were difficulties. In September I had lost my college placement, well it all looked to be going pear shaped. No college would accept me or they didn't have space and well I went into the same unmotivated mode. Even Ben my life-coach, who supported me with college interviews, I think felt a little fed up and frustrated with me!

Around December something changed me. I picked up a book and starting reading again. It almost sparked a motivational flame inside me and I decided

life wasn't over and that I can be successful. With some assistance from Ben and Miss Purtil, I applied for more colleges and sixth forms for next year. I prepared better for the interviews and currently I have three sixth form offers and 1 college offer for this year September coming. I am currently resitting my English and Maths.

In sixth form I'm going to study business media & politics and after that I am hopefully going to complete an international business with French degree abroad. I also have several business ideas/plans which I would like to start, including selling vegan juices & opening a franchise of restaurants. There is no reason not to start your own business now, there are grants you can apply for or even courses which can assist you in starting your own business. With a set goal I feel I now am more in control of sculpting my future.

So I'd like to give a shout out to Ben & 'Miss' for holding me down all this time. Also to the Virtual School for continuing to support and encourage me not just this year but in past years. And lastly to my uncle who treats me like his son and who has made me the person I am today!