

LISTEN CAREFULLY

WH | Words by Kyla Hornberger
Illustrations by Gillian Goerz

Powerful words should be savoured - and shared. That's what the *Wider Horizons* team decided after hearing the spoken words of this year's fall valedictorian, Kyla Hornberger (Interior Design Technology 2021) at October's Convocation. Her words resonated so much with us that we wanted to share them with you, with hopes that they move you as well.



KYLA HORNBERGER
~VALEDICTORIAN~

HELLO. WHAT A MOMENT.
LET'S JUST ALL PAUSE FOR A
MOMENT. TAKE A PICTURE
WITH OUR MINDS.



I RETURNED TO SCHOOL AS AN OLDER
STUDENT AND AS SUCH, I AM GOING TO
TAKE THE LIBERTY OF IMPARTING
ADVICE LIKE I AM OLD AND WISE.

HUMOUR ME, AND
LISTEN CAREFULLY.



IF LIFE HAS TAUGHT ME ANYTHING, IT IS THIS:

YOU ARE
A
FORCE

YOU HAVE
A
VOICE

AND MOST
OF ALL

YOU HAVE
A
CHOICE.



YOU ARE A FORCE BY NATURE.

YOU CANNOT ESCAPE IT, IT IS
INHERENT WITH YOUR BIRTH.
SO EMBRACE IT. ENERGY IS YOURS.

YOU HAVE A VOICE. I TRULY BELIEVE WE ALL NEED A STAGE,
AND WE ALL NEED TO BE HEARD.

YOUR STAGE IS YOUR OWN AND
CAN BE FOUND IN WORDS ON A
PAGE, ACTS OF KINDNESS, OR
THE THINGS YOU CREATE.



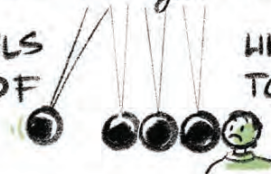
AND TELL US
SOMETHING.
WE ARE LISTENING.



YOU HAVE A CHOICE.

Oh, this one is tricky. Trust me.

LIFE OFTEN FEELS
LIKE IT IS VOID OF
CHOICE.



LIKE IT IS ALL HAPPENING
TO US AND WE ARE JUST
REACTIONS.

NO MATTER YOUR BACKGROUND, YOU HAVE A STORY, A COMMUNITY,
AND A METAPHORICAL BOX THAT HAS BEEN SLOWLY BUILT AROUND YOU.
IT PROTECTS YOU AND HOLDS YOU. IT OFFERS YOU SAFETY.



UNFORTUNATELY, IT CAN ALSO BIND YOU, IT BUILDS WALLS AND
YOU SLOWLY BECOME BLIND TO POSSIBILITIES,
AND SOMETIMES EVEN YOUR FELLOW HUMANS.

AT 36, MY BOX FELL APART,
BLEW TO BITS, CRUMBLED,
IT WAS GUT-WRENCHING
AND SUCKED THE BREATH FROM
MY LUNGS FOR MONTHS.



MY WHOLE WORLD WAS BUILT
ON WHAT I HAD BELIEVED
INSIDE THAT PRETTY
LITTLE, CONFINING BOX.

BUT THEN I GOT TO REBUILD.

AND AS I STARTED TO LOOK AROUND, I BEGAN
TO SEE A WHOLE WORLD THAT I HAD NEVER KNOWN
BEFORE. I DISCOVERED I COULD BE A PART OF IT
LIKE I USED TO DREAM OF AS A KID - AND THE
OPTIONS WERE ENDLESS.



I JUST NEEDED TO CHOOSE.

LEARNING TO CHOOSE IS A NEVER-ENDING JOURNEY
CHOOSE YOUR LIFE. LIVE IT.
LET THE BOX
BE BROKEN.



NOW AT 42, I AM A COLLEGE GRADUATE.
I DID IT! WE DID IT! AND GUESS WHAT?

I'M LEARNING THAT THE BOX NEVER
REALLY WENT AWAY. IT JUST GREW,
OUR WORLD JUST ADJUSTS TO FIT OUR

GROWTH

IN CLOSING, I WILL SAY IT AGAIN:

You are A
FORCE.
you cannot
fight it.

You have a
VOICE.
we are
listening

and

You have a
CHOICE.
I cannot wait
to see what you
decide.

YOU HAVE ALREADY COME THIS FAR!

PLEASE DON'T LET THESE WORDS BRUSH
PAST YOU AND THINK THEY ARE FOR SOMEONE ELSE.
THEY ARE FOR YOU, JUST LIKE THEY ARE FOR ME.



THANK YOU.

WH

To read about Hornberger and this year's fall Convocation, go to page 6; to hear speeches from Hornberger and others from Convocation, go to lethbridgecollege.ca/convocation.