GRADUATION SPEECH

FOR

ALAN FORBES

Hello everyone! I want to welcome all of you to this term’s commencement ceremony here at F.I.R.S.T. To all of the graduates, families, friends and distinguished guests, I’m thrilled to share this occasion of accomplishment and celebration. As Director of Operations here at F.I.R.S.T., I watch over all aspects having to do with this school’s life and pulse, and I have to say, the adrenalin and joy and optimism that accompanies these graduation celebrations continually inspire me to work with our faculty and administration to maintain an educational context that will hopefully inspire all of you and those who follow in your footsteps, to expand your scope of concentration, creativity, thoughtfulness, and experience. Graduates, you’ve been with us for eight months of hard work as you learned the basics of what it takes for you to find your way in this exciting industry, and although today is a rite of passage offering closure, remember this isn’t the end…. it’s just the beginning!! It’s no accident that graduations are also called “commencements.” We’re celebrating the beginning of the next chapters in your lives. Now it’s time to take what you’ve learned, go forth into the unknown…AKA the Professional World, and make your mark. You chose to be here to study and learn your craft. It’s time to use the tools you’ve earned. A man named William Eardley IV said, “Ambition is the path to success, persistence is the vehicle you arrive in.” It’s time to use those tools to craft the vehicle that will persist in supporting you along that path to success. It’s time to learn how to “**keep on keeping on**.”

You’re all learning to refine your skills and hone your respective crafts, so remember, now is not the time to drop the ball. We live in really exciting times and the film and recording industries are at the center of the technology and media boom that is happening all around us. At the same time, every aspect of life is getting more and more challenging and I’m sure you’re all keenly aware that competition is fiercer than ever before. Be bold!! Dare to learn more!! Challenge yourselves every day just a little bit more than the day before and remember that in order to move forward, you always have to **do something**. Leonardo Da Vinci was an incredible artist and inventor. We’re all familiar with his work, but we rarely hear his insights. As one of the greatest creative minds of all time, his drawings, inventions, and prolific output hint of his thought process. We can learn so much more if we listen to his words. You may be wondering how to find your way in the world….Da Vinci gave us a clue when he said, “I have been impressed with the **urgency of doing**. Knowing is **not enough**; **we must apply**. Being willing is not enough; **we must do**.” (**If you want to make a little joke you can say, “Hey-that seems to have really worked for Leonardo!!!” …and wait for the laugh**) Can you imagine what the world would be like of Marconi decided he didn’t want to tinker around in his lab? Or if Benjamin Franklin wasn’t interested in flying kites, or if Steve Jobs decided to like, just, hang around instead of explore his passion? Each one of you has been given the tools to make the keys that unlock your future in this industry. But let’s face it. Tools are great- they’re sharp and shiny and they hold great potential-**IF** they’re used. But they don’t work on their own, in fact they rust and are rendered useless when idle, and furthermore, as if **THAT’s** not bad enough, when not in use they become obsolete. They no longer fit. Every day that passes requires us to find new keys to the future, but those new keys cannot be crafted without experience and knowledge and persistence to guide us. We joke that someone may not be “the sharpest tool in the shed,” but guess what? To make matters worse, there’s always a newer, shinier, more efficient instrument to take its place. The bad news is that’s the nature of life and evolution. The good news is simple. Now is **YOUR** time to make **you**r mark in the world. Make the most of it!!

You will find as you get older and wiser and more experienced, that the choices you make in life and the way you choose to create the screenplay, or soundtrack of your life, will be your great masterpiece. It will be the legacy you leave for the world-for your friends, your family, your colleagues, your community. Think of the people who have inspired you up to now. Some of them may be sitting here with you today. Think of what they’ve taught you and think of why those lessons meant so much to you. Then remember the adage that a great work of art is never finished. That great work of art is **YOU**.

Some of you have heard the quote, “I am part of all that I have met.” For me that statement rings very true. Whether it was situations or people that came into my life, and whether it was positive, joyful events or more challenging lessons, who and what I am today has been influenced by the people and experiences that have touched me. So far my career has spanned fifteen years. I have been lucky enough to have had several mentors along the way who guided and inspired me and I’ve been even luckier to have made some really big mistakes!! Let me tell you, every moment in life provides an opportunity to learn and with time and experience, I have come to realize that mistakes are our biggest teachers. Embrace your mistakes in life-they teach you to be accountable. They guide you in the ways of how to do something different. They whisper in your ear when you have doubts. Mistakes make you **think**. And those thoughts, in some way, have the ability to make you stronger and more determined. Someone once said that success is getting up one more time than you’ve fallen. Remember that, because there will be days when you’ll wonder how you got into certain predicaments-and you’ll have to find the way to get up “one more time.” Also remember that the only way to avoid making mistakes is by doing nothing, but as we’ve learned from Leonardo, we all have to **do something**. That’s why we’re here on earth. We’re here to make our mark, learn our lessons, and pave the way for future engineers and producers.

Buddha also teaches us, “There are only two mistakes one can make along the road to truth; not going all the way, and not starting.” I think you can see that not starting is **not** an option. The most challenging part of any journey is taking that first step. **Really**. Think back on what it was like when you first thought of what you wanted to do with your professional life. Now remember what it was like when you heard about this school and considered applying here. The unknown can cause an adrenalin rush as well as doubts, but look around you!!! You’re here! You made it!! You set out on a path and reached your goal!! Congratulations!!! Now go and set bigger and more ambitious goals. Life and success can each be defined in cycles, and careers consist of many cycles. Create your goals, work hard to achieve what you set out to do, experience the satisfaction of achievement, and immediately-**on to the next goal**!! Don’t let the cycle stop. **Do something**. And while you’re on your journeys, remember to respect yourselves and your colleagues, keep an open mind, don’t scoff at something you might think is “less than” your time or consideration, because I promise you, the one thing you try to ignore or sweep under the rug or sidestep will be at the root of the very lesson you need to learn.

Leonardo has been credited with saying, “Life is simple; you do something. Most fails. Some works. You do more of what works, if it works big, others will copy it. Then you do something else. The trick is the doing something else.” The doing something else is what inspires us to go on and to seek those greater, more challenging adventures in work and life. Each one of you graduates has the foundation to go and do something. Keep an open mind. Remember what you’ve learned and make it a habit to consciously learn something new every day-even if it’s something small. Always challenge yourself to remain aware, open-minded, interested, and curious. And remember; don’t limit your teachers to the great and wise and rich who might cross your path. Learn from every thing and every one you meet. The lessons are right there in front of you. Keep an open mind and an open heart and success and satisfaction will be yours.

Congratulations again to all of you and I look forward to hearing about your journeys through life!

Thank you all!