GRADUATION SPEECH

FOR

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Hello everyone! Ladies and gentlemen, family and friends, colleagues and confreres, it is both a privilege and a pleasure to be here today and to have the honor of speaking to all of you. (**If you want to make a joke you can say**) … first of all, it’s a privilege and a pleasure to be **ANYWHERE** for more than half an hour these days!! Boy have we learned to cram a handful of business into **twenty-six** hour days!! (…**and** **wait for the laugh**). Actually, we have some really accomplished people in this class… scientists, tech geniuses, medical wizards, a pastor, a Navy Seal… you would think that between all of us we really should be able to come up with a technology that allows us to lengthen each day… besides not sleeping… But I digress. Today we are here to celebrate accomplishment and to recognize the incredible support and encouragement that inspires each one of us in everything we do. (**If there are any general acknowledgements to be made-instructors, staff, coordinators, etc, do that here)** I would like to take a moment to thank some of the people that worked so diligently to ensure our core learning experience was as focused and productive as possible. Each one of my fellow graduates entered this program with already unfathomably demanding schedules and it is a triumph of will, determination, cooperation, alacrity and intention that saw us through to this moment… (**If you want to make a joke you can say**)… And that was just in figuring out what to order for lunch! (**Wait for the laugh**). Getting back to those great support systems we had during our tenure here at Wharton, let’s remember for a moment… The Karate Kid had Mr. Miyagi……. Rocky had Mickey… come to think of it, so did Rocky II, Rocky III, Rocky IV…. Mickey must have been exhausted!! Frodo had Gandalf, and we had \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who made sure we \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who was so present and able to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, who always managed to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I know I speak for my fellow graduates when I say that we all want to extend limitless and sincere appreciation for your patience, guidance, and wisdom.

There are some other people to whom we owe more than a mere debt of gratitude. Someone once said, “Life is not a solo act. It’s a huge collaboration, and we all need to assemble around us the people who care about us and support us…” As I look around the room today, I see wives and mothers; partners and children; friends, neighbors, fathers, siblings. None of us were raised in or live in a vacuum. All of us have been motivated, encouraged, supported, fed-both literally and figuratively, by the most important people in our lives. They may not always understand what we do or why we do it, but they know how to give us space when we need it, nourishment when we’re empty, motivation when we get complacent, and food for thought on those occasions when we might hit a wall… or two… or three… Our families, friends and neighbors are our fuel. They’re the objects of our algorithms, the case studies for our hypotheses. They are our muses who give meaning to everything we do. To all of you muses, mentors, mediators, and munchkins (**if there are any children present**) here today, thank you. We know you’ve sacrificed a lot so we can pursue our goals. For the record, we **DO** wish we could have seen that ball game, danced that dance, did that grocery run right before the storm, shoveled the driveway right after the storm…. Okay…. maybe not **THAT** one… (**Wait for the laugh**), but we are grateful for every moment and memory we have been able to capture while on this eternal quest for even more knowledge.

My fellow graduates, each one of you is here because you have demonstrated your commitment to making a difference in the world. You’ve already proven your mettle. What makes you extraordinary is your insatiable thirst for learning and experience. Your quest for excellence inspires. Your ability to adapt and absorb concepts and theories is bar raising. The passion with which you participate in life at every level is remarkable. Each one of you is a proven professional yet none of you is satisfied with the status quo and neither am I. Those who are uninitiated in the ways of the game changer may find our determination puzzling. Let them. The one thing I’ve discovered throughout the time spent in this course is that it is refreshing to find partners and comrades united in unique yet concentric goals. Of course each one of us has direct experience of that adage, “With great power comes great responsibility.” As we continue to make our way in this world at every level, and as our minds and collective conscious are awakened with all that we’ve had the privilege to witness, let’s remember the words of Lao Tzu. “The sage does not hoard. The more he helps others, the more he benefits himself. The more he gives to others, the more he gets himself. The Way of Heaven does one good but never does one harm. The Way of the sage is to act but not to compete.”…. Okay … well maybe a little…. especially in business (**Wait for the laugh**). I think the point we all have to realize as we accept responsibility for creating and implementing new paradigms in business, technology, education and the arts is that it is up to us to go forward and responsibly establish a new order of “considerate competition.” It is our mandate to find the way to humanely and effectively initiate a spirit of concern that is refreshed and inclusive.

One of the great points of attending and completing this program is that we entered at a time in our lives and our careers when we had the capacity and life experience to really appreciate the opportunity to participate. When we’re younger, no matter how precocious we are, we’re just that-younger. We learn those lessons and somehow “get them on another level,” but to have the chance to **really** take part in a curriculum when we have the personal depth and desire to make the most of it is priceless. When we’re kids we dream and pretend we want to “change the world.” You know what? Congratulations!! We’ve made it to a point in our lives and careers where that goal is **POSSIBLE!**! We are graduating from one of the most prestigious programs in the world and we’re here because we are committed to doing the hard work and getting the job done. The road that lies ahead for each one of us is limited only by the person in the mirror. Each one of you has already achieved extraordinary accomplishments. No pressure…. but the game has been upped.

I was tempted to look for some pithy business quotes, but the truth is that although we are all malleable enough to be inspired by the past, we have to get used to the simple fact that we are the leaders of the future. There is no mold to break, it’s **OUR** turn to create and form the structures of business, medicine, technology, government of the future. To that end, I would like to quote Oscar Wilde who said, “Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught.” The bottom line is that you, graduates, are your most precious resource. Trust your gut. Look around. There’s not that many of us here. We possess a rare combination of curiosity, comprehension and commitment. It is our mandate to continue to remain in touch with the drive that brought us to this place. We’ve been given a precious toolbox filled with opportunity. It’s time to build a future in which we can function inclusively, successfully, and effectively. Tom Brokaw has said, “It’s easy to make a buck. It’s a lot tougher to make a difference.” It’s time for us to take what we have learned and see the world and its challenges from a different point of view. The brilliant architect, Zaha Hadid, known as “The Queen of the curve,” reminds us, “Of course I believe imaginative architecture can make a difference in people’s lives, but I wish it was possible to divert some of the effort we put into ambitious museums and galleries into the basic architectural building blocks of society.” It’s time to build our museums, our towers of tech, and our temples to innovation. It’s also time to work on discovering new ways of strengthening our bonds and commitment to the world in which we live. We’ve self-selected to be titans of business, and with that comes great responsibility. With commitment and camaraderie, I know we will do what’s needed to make this world a better place. The future is bright!! Congratulations graduates and thank you all!