**LEADERSHIP SPEECH**

**FOR**

**JON TONGCO**

President John Quincy Adams said, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." There are many layers and characteristics required that exist within a person that must eventually surface in order to be identified as a leader: vision, discipline, curiosity, the ability to think globally....and many others, but what fuels the fire and passion? What nourishes the soul of a person committed to becoming a leader, and how many degrees of noble characteristics are required before one can plant the "leader" flag on one's path? To me, we are all leaders to greater or lesser extents. The main elements are self-declaration and the willingness to take responsibility. But what inspires people to get to that point? I know what inspires me.

Sometimes.... well most of the time, we look to obvious heroes for external motivation... great generals, inventive business executives, and passionate politicians are usually at the front lines of motivation.... Me? I look to art and music and most specifically I find the life and work and lyrics of Andrew McMahon inspire me to find my **own** voice. This is a man who leads with his art.... he provokes thought with his lyrics.... he encourages action with his spirit, tenacity and his will to prevail.

According to an article in Forbes, McMahon is considered a musical prodigy having begun his career as a singer/songwriter as a teenager. He first made his name and reputation with a band named Something Corporate, formed when he was in high school. He was young, talented, and had his entire life ahead of him... that was the good news. The bad news was that In 2005, when he was only twenty-two, just as he was about to really explode on the scene with a solo album, he was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia. (**Do you want to make a little joke and say)** Talk about unexpected circumstances! Andrew rose to the challenge, concentrated his energy on being positive and rejecting defeat, received a stem cell transplant, and within six months of receiving the transplant he played a private concert at the Roxy In LA. He now dedicates his energy and positivity into the Dear Jack Foundation, an organization he started in order to support and encourage young people to conquer their own battles with cancer.

"You've gotta swim

Swim for your life

Swim for the music

That saves you

When you're not so sure you'll survive

You gotta swim."

It's lyrics like those that have encouraged me in my own life. Listening to McMahon's music and knowing his story.... seeing how he has turned crisis into creative action is, to me, inspiring. Andrew McMahon is a person who leads with art and conscience. He turns experience into opportunity. He connected with his inner strength and determination and in the process, he has become a hero to thousands.... including me. He teaches me to self-express...to address and overcome my inner introvert. I am inspired to write and explore music, to find new ways to express my ideas, and I am learning to play guitar (**?... if not mention the instruments you play**).... but I want you to know... as the legendary punchline goes.... I won't be "quitting my day job." (**Wait for the laugh**)

Ken Blanchard said, "The key to successful leadership today is **influence**, not authority." The world is definitely changing and a new language for leadership and management is emerging. We are witnessing a revolution of sorts and it will be those that can connect and **build foundations** on more contemporary and relevant levels that will lead by example, with a visual, artful, relatable hand.

(**If you want to add a little joke at the end you can say**)

And if that doesn't work, we can always go to plan B as stated by Casey Stengel, the legendary baseball player and manager who said...."The key to being a good manager is keeping the people who hate me from those who are still undecided." On second thought.... I'd rather be inspired by Andrew McMahon! (**Wait for the laugh**). Thank you!