

# Biomedical Engineering Graduation Speech

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May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009

On the night of my 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday as I sat wrapped in an afghan, with a pink jeweled tiara on my head, a shiny silver Happy Birthday sash draped around me, with a glass of wine in one hand talking with all 10 of my roommates. I realized that all the stress I had caused myself over the past four years was worthless. It never helped me perform better on tests or reports. If anything it probably just aged me. So today, I have decided to not prepare a speech and just speak from the heart.

## *Pause*

Just kidding... I could never do that!

In typical BME fashion, before I began writing this speech I had to conduct some through research on how to write a graduation speech. Everything I can across either made me fall asleep or was depressing. I mean really who wants to hear that the best part of your life is over the day you graduate from college. I certainly don't.

So I decided to do a more interactive speech today. (*Turn on PowerPoint*) I promise not to preach to you about the future but would rather like to share the "Top 3 Life Lessons BME has taught me"

1. It's time for a paradigm shift!  
As a BME student we just had a lot to do, there were countless lap reports, homework's, projects, jobs, research, and the list goes on and on. Thus, in my junior year I decided that sleep was the enemy. I mean really, that is 4 to 8 hours every day that you are wasting doing nothing. And that may have been the most ridiculous conclusion I have ever made. Not only is not sleeping, only eating slim fast bars, and drinking energy drinks unhealthy, but doesn't help ones productivity. Additionally, overdosing on caffeine results in reverse effects, particularly when caffeine pills or 5-hour energy drinks are involved. And little side note: 5 hour energy drinks only last about 3 hours and the there is **NOT** a linear correlation that translates to the 6 hours energy drinks. Trust me!

So after all of this, I realized that if I were to survive the next year and a half I was going to have to undergo a major paradigm shift. In the words of Dr. Wayne Dyer: "When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." And that is exactly what happened for me. I made my homework into games and set date nights with my textbooks. Now I know you may think that I am slightly crazy and I probably am. But the thing is that when I changed how I looked at schoolwork, the schoolwork became a positive force in my life. Being in BME has taught me that, only you have the power to make the worse of situations into a positive learning experience.

## 2. Aim for perfection

I know that some people don't believe in perfection, but I do. Why would I work so hard on everything if the ultimate goal was only to be good enough, I wouldn't. One of my favorite things about BME is that they won't let you be perfect. Someone will always find something that can be done just a little bit better. To me this is the greatest attribute anybody can give you. And to quote George Fisher "When you aim for perfection, you discover it's a moving target." We have been taught to think outside the box and realize there is always another question that can be asked and another item that needs to be addressed. Because of this we have grown into extraordinary engineers, who do not rely on anything to find a solution, rather we are gatherers of information who create our own solutions. In the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." We have begun carving our own paths, and I encourage each one of you to continue on and remember what we have learned over these past 4 years. Question everything. And through innovation and perseverance we will achieve amazing feats.

## 3. Family, Friends, and Faith

The great thing about BME is that we are so small; we have practically become a family. I probably spend more time with you guys than I do my own family. And we know way too much about each other. I know that Chelsea doesn't like peanut butter, that Justin dreams of building a cyborg army, that Dan has a strange love of statistics, that Matt drums on just about everything, that Maria has a certain distaste for *for* loops and thinks in *while* loops, and that one time Brittany Bye's little brother chased a hedgehog up an air vent, and I could go on and on. I think Father Jerome Cummings puts it best, "A friend is one who knows us, but loves us anyways." We all of our own little quirks but at the end of the day we are still there for one another, waiting to help where we can.

I will always remember sitting in the EE building working on transport homework when I got a phone call from my mom saying that a close family friend had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and was given 6 months to live. When I started crying everyone put down their schoolwork and comforted me. And they were there 6 months later when I received word she had passed, they comforted me once again even though senior design presentations were only 15 minutes away. I will always be grateful for the kindness and compassion my fellow classmates showed me during this difficult time in my life.

And we also shared some good times. We celebrated birthdays, sang karaoke, we were there for the make-ups, break-ups, engagements, and weddings. We are a family, sometimes we fight but we always make up and move on. We have gone through a lot. The long nights working in the computer lab, doing homework, and the biggest challenge of all senior design. Through it all we have been there ,

supporting each other every step of the way. All the while having faith in one another. But more importantly having faith in ourselves. Through these past four years, I have learned the hard way; that there will always be people who criticize you and don't want to see you do well. Sometimes they are the people closest to you and sometimes they are complete strangers. You must always remember to have faith in yourself. Know that you can achieve anything you put your mind too. And do not let anyone degrade what you have accomplished. Because I know that everyone one of you will go onto to make a difference in someone's life and better our world.

Before we part this afternoon, I would like to thank all of the professors who introduced us to what Biomedical Engineering truly is:

- Thank you to Professor Sachs for teaching us how to use the word 'Trivial'. The word 'Trivial' is the key to everything! If you don't want to show how to do something, just say it is trivial. Because someone, somewhere has already figured it out for you.
- Thank you to Professor Barocas for stretching our imaginations. I remember one time we made our physiology lab partner pose in a push up position for 20 minutes, while we figured out what muscles were activated, where they were pulling, and what the correct geometric angles where. After a long night of free-body diagrams and matrix operations, we got the biomechanics problem right and had some fun too.
- Thank you to professor Akkin for painstakingly going over and over Thevin and Norton circuits with me until I finally understood them. Sorry, to say after the final I immediately erased them from my memory. Only to regret it 6 months later when I got my senior design project.
- Thank you to Professor Shen for point out how ridiculous practice tests are. I will always remember sitting in class and when we asked for a practice exam; her reply was "why would you want to take a test before a test, that is like taking two tests instead of one". I guess, I never really thought about it that way.
- Thank you to Professor Tranquillo for giving us homework problems that couldn't be solved. After working on Transport homework for approximately 10 hours and still thinking it was impossible to solve. We went into his office and worked on it for another 30 minutes or so. After which he said, "well I guess you can't solve it!" Brilliant! I think we would have been angrier, but we were all so tired that it didn't even matter.

Lastly, I would like to leave you with a quote from Albert Einstein-

" Try to become not a man of success, but try rather to become a man of value."

I truly wish to thank all of our professors for instilling this in us. They have broken us down only to see us overcome challenges and turn into talented engineers and even finer people.

Thank you and congratulations!