Joshua Ryan Reuben

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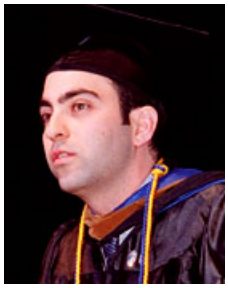
Commencement Speech
Graduate Exercises, New York City



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Congratulations class of 2003! In the words of Dr. Seuss: "Today is your day. You're off to Great Places. You're off and away!" I would like to commence by thanking the University for giving us the opportunity to be here today. President Caputo, board of trustees, deans from the respective Computer Science and Information, Nursing, Education, Arts and Sciences, and Lubin Business Schools, professors, officers of administration, honored guests, fellow students, family and friends: We have joined here this afternoon to recognize Pace University's New York graduating class of 2003, and to acknowledge each individual's achievement in successfully completing an advanced degree. This indeed has been a long, arduous journey for many of us, some working in a full-time position and raising a family, others breaking a language barrier while adapting to a new culture. We should each be proud of our individual accomplishments. I also want to acknowledge all the families, relatives, and friends that have come out to support their loved ones on this very special day, and I especially want to thank both my parents and sister who have traveled from Canada. I love you guys very much.

The Pace student body has a diversity that spans six continents representing different nationalities, ethnicities, religions and ages. One could say that Pace University is a microcosm of the world. I invite you to look around the room and you will see a face from every part of the globe. And this is a tribute to the school as it has provided all of us with the opportunities to succeed irrespective of our different backgrounds.

As we simultaneously end one chapter and begin another in our lives, we must each ask ourselves how we plan to live the rest of it. We must utilize the unique skills, talents, and gifts that God has endowed in each and every one of us to become leaders-be it in our families, communities or work environments. We must each wake up to the possibility that it's not failing that scares us, it is that we may be brilliant beyond words. Just think of the possibilities-what one person can truly accomplish. One person can choose to either destroy the world or save the world. All it takes is one, one person to step up and take on the responsibility to be a true leader. And this one leader can then start to enroll others to be leaders themselves. This is the power of one. In the words of Margaret Mead, "Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world… Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Before I conclude, there is one brief story I would like to share with all of you and hope that it leaves a lasting impression, an imprint on your soul, like it did mine. It was a Sunday afternoon; I was sitting, reading a book in Central Park. As an older gentleman sat down next to me to rest, we exchanged names and began to speak. After a few minutes of conversation, he turned to me and asked, Josh when you leave this world one day, have you ever thought about what you would like written on your tombstone? I was taken aback, unable to form an opinion, a thought or even an expression. He then broke the awkward silence and offered me the following suggestion: "Here lies so and so, who owned a penthouse on 5th Avenue, a chalet in the Swiss Alps, a jet, a Lamborghini."

The older gentleman slowly began to get up to continue his walk and then turned around with these last words, "What do you REALLY want to be remembered for?" Someone who loved his spouse and children dearly, who respected and tolerated people's differences, who contributed knowledge to society, who tried to make the world a little bit better than he found it. As these ideas began to echo in the forefront of my mind, I experienced an explosion of thoughts and emotions: integrity, trust, passion, creativity, humility, wisdom, and LEADERSHIP. A leader does not accept the status quo; he or she

challenges it.

As I glance around the room, I feel comforted to know that we, as future leaders from different disciplines, ages, nationalities, cultures and religions, are leaving an institution of higher learning equipped to face the challenges of this new uncertain world. As leaders, we must not look to the future. As leaders, we must shape the future.

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