

Text of Speech

DANIEL SPITEZKI

It is impossible to start without mentioning the fantastic work done by all administrative and technical teams. They have been an example during these two years of professionalism and commitment. It starts from IT technicians until people preparing the rooms, preparing our books package, checking everything before each module. And we all want to thank you for your commitment that is an example even for the most efficient companies. And we would like to thank of course your managing team which is doing a unique and fantastic job: Erin and Shona. These two professional women have a fantastic quality: they will never let a question or a problem pending more than a couple of hours. They are the soul of this program and we appreciated so much your commitment.

And now a few words about the academic side of the program:

1/ This program is not only special because of high level education and teachers... Trium is also a place where you can see people sitting together, from Russia / Ukraine / China / Taiwan / America / Iran, Israel / Syria, etc. They can work together, they learn together, they drink beers together. This is one more time the illustration that education and excellence are connecting people together, and helping this world to be a little bit better. And by the work that all the teachers and academic staff are doing here, they contribute to make this possible and you can really be proud of you at the end of the day, because you made humanity a little bit better.

By the way, Trium is even giving a spectacular example of international cohabitation, by having an executive team with scottish, irish, english, american and french people. I don't know any other organization with such a skill!

2/ One of the first political book that I read was about a man who said "I have a dream". And today I still believe that having a dream is probably the most important thing in the life. And when we were almost finishing Trium, in NY 2009, another guy came, same country, and he said "Yes we can". And I think that we all have something in common with these to great leaders. We had a dream. An incredible dream to go back learning in the age of 40. And Yes, we did it. And if you remember the first thing that Matt told us, close to here, in London, two years ago, in the Honk Kong theatre: "I really have respect for you because you have the courage to go back school, working and learning and admitting being ranked and evaluated, even if you already have senior or executive positions in your companies...". Maybe at that time we didn't understand the hidden message behind this sentence. Now we know what it meant. But anyway, it is true that we spend two years of efforts and tears, and succeeded in our dream, and this was a great and fabulous challenge. And I wish you all to have a lot of dreams in your life and to continue accomplishing them like we are doing today, being able to say: yes we can.

3/ But after congratulating schools, teachers, administrative staff and amazing students... I think that we forgot the real super heroes in this room. I mean our wives, husbands, children and families who supported us. They gave the most fabulous gift that anyone can give to another. They supported our dreams, they accepted our absences, our long nights talking to each other about the paragraph 3, page 6 in the term project where we didn't agree on the point, and as a team, we have to find a solution all together! They went to sleep alone when we were posting our assignment at the last minute. They managed the kids alone when we were visiting China or India. And probably they left some of their dreams on the side in order to let us accomplished ours. I want to tell you dear wives, husbands, children and families, in the name of all the graduates in this room that for the next 2 years, it will be your turn to accomplish your dreams! That's it. No more MBA. And thank you so much from the bottom of our hearts, you really deserved it!

SCOTT COOPER

Like Daniel, it is an honor for me also to have the chance to speak with you today at graduation.

Two years ago I remember the social reception that we shared with the class of 2007 the night before their graduation. It was strange to witness each new arrival to the reception – it was a scene of old friends sharing greetings as if they hadn't seen each other in years. The Class of 2009 hardly knew each other at that point, and I had my doubts about whether the group that sits before you now would become that close. Since that time this TRIUM class has made a journey around the world together. We followed closely and with much anticipation, debate and hope the historic but overly lengthy presidential election process in the United States; we watched and studied intently as the financial world crumbled around us; and we also followed, with only occasionally less enthusiasm, the teachings of the faculty collected from some of the great learning institutions of the world. Along the way we've developed the bonds I witnessed in the class of 2007, thanks in part to Daniel and his magic with a camera, but also through the shared experiences of the last two years. Some of those experiences are as fresh in our minds as if they had just happened –

- the rousing display of patriotism on the 4th of July last year in the middle of the French countryside
- The evenings in the hotel lobby of the Holiday Inn – also in the French countryside though a slightly less enchanting venue
- The varied celebrations of marriages, birthdays, and new babies brought into the world
- The infamous fight between a squirrel and one of our classmates in New York City
- Nicky Beach in New York
- Lying on the beach or some slightly revised pronunciation of that phrase by one of our French colleagues in India
- Ted and the fancy things he could do with a duck's tongue in Shanghai
- And the Chinese real estate developer offering some wonderful investment opportunities to us during class time

There are many other memories I could mention, and someone from the class probably has a picture of every one of them, but it wasn't all just fun and games. We also have shared the passing of loved ones and paid tribute to their memories. We have supported each other through other personal challenges along the way. After two years I think we've gotten a lot more than just the academic education.

M. Bertoneche was kind enough to share his wisdom about the value of being able to do calculations on the back of a napkin and emphasizing the importance of applying one's own judgment to the evaluation of business opportunities. We've learned that you can make the numbers tell whatever story you need them to, but they can't replace your logic and critical reasoning. At the end of the day so many of the crucial business decisions are judgment calls that ultimately rely on leadership and good decision-making. I am grateful for the chance to have learned from so many of my classmates by listening to their personal stories of leadership – whether making steel pipes, selling used Levi's jeans, or building a global cosmetics franchise – and have taken away from all of you that, in the end, success doesn't have to be about the next big idea. It's finding your niche, the chance for leadership that fits you and what you believe in, and being astute enough to recognize the opportunities when they appear, that really matters. Here's to each of us finding our niche that we came to TRIUM to help us find.

Before I finish, let me say thank you again to our families, the faculty and staff, Erin, Matt and Shona in particular, and to my classmates for each of your contributions, stories, and sacrifices over the last two years. The Dalia Lama, whom TRIUM conveniently arranged to stay with us during our time in India, once said that, *"Both learning and practice are extremely important, and they must go hand in hand. Without knowledge, just to rely on faith, faith, and more faith is good but not sufficient. So the intellectual part must definitely be present. At the same time, strictly intellectual development without practice, is also of no use. It is necessary to combine knowledge born from study with sincere practice in our daily lives. These two must go together."*

Let's go put all of this learning into practice. Thank you and God bless.