

GOOD MORNING!

THE UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA HAS ALWAYS HELD A SPECIAL PLACE IN MY HEART; IT'S SO GOOD TO BE BACK.

I'D LIKE TO THANK JAY HARDWICK AND HIS TEAM FOR INVITING ME HERE TODAY. AND PRESIDENT AND RENEE VAUGHN, AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES, FOR BEING SUCH GRACIOUS HOSTS.

FORTY-ONE YEARS AGO, I WAS SITTING WHERE YOU ARE TODAY. I HAD NO IDEA HOW I WAS GOING TO ACHIEVE MY GOALS. MAYBE YOU'RE STRUGGLING WITH WHERE YOU'RE HEADED, TOO.

IT'S NOT UNUSUAL FOR A COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER TO URGE GRADUATES TO MAKE THEIR DREAMS COME TRUE. BUT THE STORY OF HOW MY DREAM CAME TRUE IS PARTICULARLY RELEVANT TO YOU – BECAUSE **THAT**

DREAM WAS BORN ON THE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA.

I'M HOPING MY STORY WILL INSPIRE YOU TO BELIEVE YOU CAN ACHIEVE WHATEVER YOU SET YOUR MIND TO! HOW MANY OF YOU BELIEVE THAT'S POSSIBLE?

MY STORY STARTS IN CHILDHOOD, ACTUALLY. MY FATHER, WILLIAM H. SHAMES, WAS AN ENTREPRENEUR. IF YOU GOOGLE HIM, YOU'LL SEE HE WAS LABELED AN INVENTOR, AUTHOR AND EXECUTIVE IN HIS *NEW YORK TIMES* OBITUARY. ALONG WITH A CHILDHOOD FRIEND, MY FATHER STARTED AN INNOVATIVE COMPANY IN THE 1960S CALLED SIBANY MANUFACTURING CORPORATION.

HE AND HIS TEAM INVENTED NEW PRODUCTS, LIKE THE POCKETPHONE, A PRECURSOR TO THE CELL PHONE THAT ALLOWED USERS TO ANSWER A DESK PHONE FROM UP TO 25 MILES AWAY. HE WROTE ABOUT SIBANY IN HIS

BOOK, *VENTURE MANAGEMENT*, PUBLISHED IN 1972 BY
MACMILLAN FREE PRESS.

IT'S NOT SURPRISING, THEN, THAT I GREW UP ROOTED IN
THE BELIEF, THERE'S NO BETTER PATH THAN WORKING
FOR YOURSELF. AND IT'S IMPORTANT TO FEEL
PASSIONATE ABOUT THE WORK YOU DO.

I WAS INSPIRED BY MY FATHER'S THINK-OUTSIDE-THE-BOX
APPROACH TO HIS CAREER. BUT I THOUGHT MY PATH LAY
IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION. I WANTED TO BE A WRITER,
NOT A BUSINESS OWNER.

I WAS SO EAGER, I GRADUATED FROM A MANHATTAN HIGH
SCHOOL IN THREE YEARS. I HAD JUST TURNED 17 WHEN I
GOT ON A PLANE AND HEADED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF
TAMPA. IT'S HERE THAT I HAD MY FIRST TASTE OF
JOURNALISM AND MAGAZINE WRITING, AND I TOOK
CREATIVE WRITING COURSES FROM DR. ANDY SOLOMON,

WHOSE TEACHING STYLE AND WRITING PROFICIENCY I ADMIRE.

LIKE MANY OF YOU, I LOOKED FOR A PART-TIME JOB. I CAME ACROSS A NEWSPAPER AD SEEKING FREELANCE WRITERS FOR A REGIONAL LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE BASED IN CLEARWATER. I ANSWERED THE AD WITH CLIPS FROM MY WORK REPORTING FOR *THE MINARET*.

I WAS GIVEN WRITING ASSIGNMENTS LIKE HOW TO BUY A SWIMMING POOL AND TAMPA BAY NIGHTLIFE OPTIONS. I FOUND THAT I ENJOYED INTERVIEWING PEOPLE, AND WRITING UP WHAT I LEARNED IN FEATURE ARTICLES. THIS EXPERIENCE LED ME TO THINK, MAYBE SOMEDAY I COULD START MY OWN LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE. AND MY DREAM WAS BORN.

I GRADUATED FROM UT IN THREE YEARS, AND MOVED BACK TO MANHATTAN. MY FIRST JOB WAS EDITORIAL ASSISTANT AT *NATIONAL LAMPOON* MAGAZINE. A NUMBER

OF OPPORTUNITIES FOLLOWED INCLUDING THREE DIFFICULT YEARS AT A SMALL PUBLIC RELATIONS AGENCY.

THE AGENCY OWNERS THREW THEIR YOUNG STAFF INTO SITUATIONS WE WEREN'T TRAINED TO HANDLE, LIKE WRITING PR PROPOSALS FOR POTENTIAL CLIENTS AND RUNNING MEETINGS WITH VICE PRESIDENTS AND PRODUCT MANAGERS.

BUT I LEFT THERE WITH AN IMPORTANT SKILL: I COULD FIGURE OUT HOW TO DO JUST ABOUT ANYTHING.

MY HUSBAND TONY AND I LEFT MANHATTAN SO HE COULD TAKE A TEACHING JOB AT BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY, IN LEWISBURG, PA. I LOOKED AROUND THE STORYBOOK-LIKE CAMPUS AND TOWN AND THOUGHT, WHAT A NICE PLACE TO LIVE, WHAT AM I GOING TO DO HERE?

CENTRAL PA IS FULL OF NATURAL BEAUTY, OUTDOOR RECREATION, CULTURE, QUAIN AMISH COMMUNITIES

AND SOME INTERESTING HISTORY: THOMAS EDISON
CONDUCTED HIS FIRST COMMERCIAL LIGHTING
EXPERIMENTS AT A SUNBURY HOTEL; AND MOZART'S
LIBRETTIST LIVED FOR A TIME IN NORTHUMBERLAND.

IN 1992, WITH ONE YOUNG CHILD AND ANOTHER ON THE
WAY – WHO'S ACTUALLY IN THE AUDIENCE TODAY-- I
DECIDED TO START A LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE. I'LL ADMIT IT:
I HAD NO IDEA WHAT I WAS DOING.

PRE-INTERNET, I DID MY RESEARCH THE OLD FASHIONED
WAY. IN THE BUCKNELL LIBRARY I FOUND THE BOOK, *THE
MAGAZINE, EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW TO MAKE IT
IN THE MAGAZINE INDUSTRY*. IT WAS WRITTEN BY
LEONARD MOGEL, A FOUNDING PARTNER OF *NATIONAL
LAMPOON* MAGAZINE AND MY FIRST BOSS. IN A WAY, MY
LIFE HAD COME FULL CIRCLE!

THE FIRST ISSUE OF SUSQUEHANNA LIFE MAGAZINE CAME
OUT IN WINTER 1993; LAST YEAR, WE CELEBRATED THE

MAGAZINE'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY. ALONG THE WAY, MY HUSBAND AND I RAISED THREE SONS, JUSTIN, BEN AND JORDAN, AND THE MAGAZINE HAS EARNED MANY STATE AND NATIONAL AWARDS.

SO HOW DID I ACHIEVE MY GOAL OF STARTING A MAGAZINE? WHAT ARE SOME OF THE THINGS I LEARNED IN THE PROCESS, AND HOW MIGHT THESE INSIGHTS HELP YOU START A BUSINESS OR LAND YOUR DREAM JOB?

ACCORDING TO THE MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER AND AUTHOR ZIG ZIGLAR, IF YOU CAN DREAM IT, YOU CAN ACHIEVE IT. I BELIEVE THAT. I HOPE YOU DO, TOO.

MY FIRST ADVICE: PERSEVERE: I CAN'T OVERSTATE THE VALUE OF NOT GIVING UP, EVEN IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY. LEADERSHIP COACH DAN ROCKWELL NOTES HOW FREQUENTLY NEW IDEAS ARE MET WITH, "IT WON'T WORK." UNFORTUNATELY, HE SAYS, WE'RE EXPERTS AT NOTICING PROBLEMS BEFORE OPPORTUNITIES. NOTING

“WHAT WON’T WORK” IS USEFUL, AS LONG AS YOU DON’T STOP THERE.

I’LL ADMIT, THERE WERE MANY POINTS ALONG THE WAY WHEN I WANTED TO GIVE UP. BUT FAILURE WASN’T AN OPTION FOR ME, AT LEAST UNTIL I HAD EXHAUSTED EVERY POSSIBLE WAY TO MAKE THE MAGAZINE SUCCESSFUL.

ON THE OTHER HAND, **DON’T BE AFRAID OF FAILURE:** FAILURE’S NOT AN END. IT’S A SIGNAL FOR A NEW BEGINNING. ANYONE WHO HAS ACHIEVED ANYTHING GREAT HAS MADE A CHOICE TO EMBRACE FAILURE INSTEAD OF FIGHTING IT.

WINSTON CHURCHILL SAID, “SUCCESS IS THE ABILITY TO GO FROM FAILURE TO FAILURE WITHOUT LOSING YOUR ENTHUSIASM!”

AND DON'T LET FEAR DERAIL YOU: MARKETING GURU

JACK CANFIELD SAYS, EVERYTHING YOU WANT IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF FEAR. I COULDN'T AGREE MORE.

I'VE BEEN AFRAID OF MANY THINGS ON THIS JOURNEY – BUT I NEVER LET FEAR DETER ME FROM MAKING THE MOST OF OPPORTUNITIES I WAS GIVEN OR CREATING OPPORTUNITIES WHERE NONE EXISTED.

THERE WERE MANY FIRSTS I HAD TO CONTEND WITH; I FIGURED OUT EACH NEW CHALLENGE AS I WENT ALONG. LEARNING TO FLY BY THE SEAT OF YOUR PANTS IS A VALUABLE SKILL.

WITH NO TEACHING EXPERIENCE, I WAS HIRED TO TEACH A CLASS ON ARTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT BUCKNELL UNIVERSITY AND I WAS NAMED THE FIRST PROFESSIONAL-IN-RESIDENCE AT SUSQUEHANNA UNIVERSITY, WHERE I TAUGHT A COURSE ON MAGAZINE PUBLISHING.

IF AN OPPORTUNITY EXISTS OR YOU CAN CREATE ONE, DON'T WALK AWAY FROM IT – EVEN IF IT TAKES YOU OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE. THAT'S WHERE REAL GROWTH OCCURS.

ALWAYS LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES: IT PAYS TO LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITY WITH A TELESCOPE, SAYS ENTREPRENEUR SETH GODIN. OPPORTUNITIES ARE REAL, BUT THEY'RE ALSO DISTANT. THROUGH INTENSE FOCUS, OPPORTUNITIES COME INTO VIEW; THEN YOU CAN FIGURE OUT A WAY TO GET THERE.

IN HIS BOOK, *VENTURE MANAGEMENT*, MY FATHER ADVISED ENTREPRENEURS, “DON'T KNOW TOO MUCH ABOUT WHY IT – **WHATEVER IT IS** -- CAN'T BE DONE. MUCH INNOVATION COMES FROM OUTSIDE THE CONVENTIONAL BOUNDARIES OF AN INDUSTRY.” AND I CAN VOUCH FOR THAT POINT OF VIEW. I AM NOT THE TYPICAL MAGAZINE PUBLISHER.

SEEK OUT MENTORS: MY FATHER WAS MY ENTREPRENEURIAL MUSE, BUT I HAVE MY MOTHER TO THANK FOR TEACHING ME HOW TO EMBRACE LIFE. SHE IMPARTED TO ME THE CURIOSITY TO SEEK OUT NEW AND DIVERSE ADVENTURES, AND TO COMPLETELY IMMERSE MYSELF IN A LIFE THAT'S AS RICH AND FULL AS I CAN MAKE IT.

MY MOTHER CHALLENGED ME TO HAVE THE COURAGE TO TRY NEW THINGS, EVEN WHEN IT'S SCARY. SHE HELPED ME SEE THE WORLD AS AN EXCITING, BEAUTIFUL PLACE FULL OF OPPORTUNITY.

AND MY HUSBAND TONY IS ALSO MY MENTOR. I OBSERVE THE CALM, DIPLOMATIC WAY HE APPROACHES LIFE AND I REALIZE I HAVE A CHOICE IN HOW I BEHAVE.

MAKE A COMMITMENT TO WORK HARD. MANY PEOPLE COAST THROUGH LIFE DOING THE MINIMUM REQUIRED TO GET BY AND EXPECT GOOD THINGS TO COME THEIR WAY.

IN MY EXPERIENCE, LIFE DOESN'T WORK LIKE THAT.
EVERYTHING WORTHWHILE **REQUIRES** HARD WORK. AND
EVEN WHEN YOU THINK YOU'VE WORKED HARD ENOUGH,
THERE'S ALWAYS MORE TO DO.

DON'T *EXPECT* SUCCESS BUT *DO* TRY TO ACHIEVE IT.

SUCCESS IS BUILT ON INNOVATIVE IDEAS,
PERSEVERANCE AND DEDICATION TO YOUR MISSION.
DAN ROCKWELL, THE LEADERSHIP COACH, SAYS THERE'S
BOUND TO BE A GAP BETWEEN YOUR ASPIRATIONAL-SELF
AND YOUR ACTUAL-SELF. PRETENDING IS PART OF THE
JOURNEY, AND IT HELPS YOU BRING YOUR BEST SELF TO
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES.

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY: FOR YOURSELF, FOR YOUR
ACTIONS AND FOR YOUR MISTAKES.

HAVE COMPASSION: MAKE KINDNESS A WAY OF LIFE—
NOT JUST FOR YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY, BUT FOR

STRANGERS, TOO. AND, RESIST THE URGE TO JUDGE OTHERS UNTIL YOU'VE WALKED A MILE IN THEIR SHOES.

ADOPT THE GOLDEN RULE AS A WAY OF LIFE: TREAT OTHERS AS YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE TREATED.

ALWAYS BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE NEXT STEP IN YOUR JOURNEY. AS PRINT ADVERTISING REVENUE STARTED TO DECLINE AT SLM, WE REVAMPED OUR WEBSITE AND STARTED SELLING SPONSORED CONTENT AND BANNER ADS, AND POSITIONED THE SUSQUEHANNA LIFE BRAND AS A MULTI-MEDIA PLATFORM. OUR ONLINE PRESENCE GREW OUR AUDIENCE AND OPENED UP A NEW REVENUE STREAM.

AND LAST YEAR WE USED THE MAGAZINE'S MILESTONE ANNIVERSARY TO LAUNCH THE SUSQUEHANNA LIFE CUSTOM PUBLISHING DIVISION. WE LEVERAGED THE MAGAZINE'S REPUTATION FOR HIGH QUALITY CONTENT AND COMPELLING GRAPHICS TO UNDERSCORE OUR

ABILITY TO PROVIDE COMMUNICATIONS PIECES TO HELP BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS TELL **THEIR** STORIES.

ALREADY, WE'VE LANDED A PROJECT TO PRODUCE A HEALTH AND WELLNESS MAGAZINE FOR A LARGE HEALTHCARE COMPANY BASED IN PA AND NJ.

CULTIVATE A SENSE OF HUMOR! MY HUSBAND TONY TAUGHT ME TO LIGHTEN UP, TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIME AND LAUGH AT MYSELF. FOSTER RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP YOU APPRECIATE LIFE'S QUIRKINESS.

VIEW YOUR LIFE AS AN EDUCATION. LEARNING SHOULDN'T STOP WHEN YOU GRADUATE. OUR PURPOSE IN LIFE, IN MY OPINION, IS LEARNING ABOUT THINGS THAT CAPTURE OUR INTEREST, OPENING UP OUR MINDS TO CONSIDER NEW IDEAS AND LEARNING HOW TO GET ALONG WITH PEOPLE. AND IT'S A LIFELONG PURSUIT.

AND, FINALLY, DON'T FORGET TO BE GRATEFUL. MAKE A POINT TO FOCUS ON ALL THE THINGS IN YOUR LIFE YOU APPRECIATE – FRIENDS AND FAMILY, A ROOF OVER YOUR HEAD, FOOD, LIFE ITSELF, EVEN YOUR HEALTH. DON'T TAKE ANYTHING FOR GRANTED. CREATE A GRATITUDE JOURNAL AND EACH DAY WRITE DOWN SOMETHING YOU'RE GRATEFUL FOR. IT'S A GREAT WAY TO KEEP A PERSPECTIVE ABOUT WHAT'S TRULY IMPORTANT.

HERE'S THE BOTTOM LINE: TWENTY SIX YEARS IN TO THIS ODYSSEY OF MAGAZINE PUBLISHING, I STILL LOVE WHAT I DO. AND I HAVE THE SATISFYING OUTLOOK THAT EVERYTHING I'VE DONE – FROM THE COLLEGE I CHOSE TO THE MAN I MARRIED AND THE JOB OPPORTUNITIES I SELECTED – HAPPENED FOR A REASON, AND LED ME TO WHERE I AM TODAY. TIME HAS A WAY OF PUTTING THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE.

I URGE YOU TO ADOPT THE ATTITUDE, THERE'S AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN SOMETHING NEW FROM EVERY EXPERIENCE. THAT DOESN'T MEAN YOU'LL LOVE EVERY JOB YOU HAVE. REMEMBER MY THREE DIFFICULT YEARS AT THE PR AGENCY?

BUT HERE'S THE THING: THAT EXPERIENCE ENCOURAGED CREATIVITY, STIMULATED ME TO BE RESOURCEFUL AND IMPARTED TO ME THE CONFIDENCE TO BELIEVE I COULD START A MAGAZINE—AND ACHIEVE SO MUCH MORE!

THE FACT IS, THERE'S A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF DUES-PAYING WE ALL HAVE TO ENDURE BEFORE WE KNOW ENOUGH TO TAKE FLIGHT AND SOAR.

SO, WHAT ADVICE DO I HAVE FOR YOU, AS YOU STAND AT THE DOORWAY TO YOUR FUTURE? I'LL TELL YOU THE SAME THING I TOLD MY THREE SONS: RELAX. YOU'LL GET THERE. AND YOU HAVE YOUR WHOLE LIFE TO FIGURE IT OUT.

TODAY'S GRADUATION IS JUST THE FIRST STEP ON YOUR JOURNEY.

AND I'LL LEAVE YOU WITH THIS THOUGHT: HENRY DAVID THOREAU, THE POET AND PHILOSOPHER, SAID: "GO CONFIDENTLY IN THE DIRECTION OF YOUR DREAMS."
CONGRATULATIONS, AND THANKS FOR LISTENING!