

Class of 2003
South Carolina State Graduation Speech

Today is about celebrating a milestone (Looking back and looking forward)

Back – Smell the flowers because you accomplished something special
Parents, grandparents, and friends

(*grateful/thankful*)

Forward – Leaving safe harbor – South Carolina State – For uncharted waters

On this momentous occasion – Dr. Ernest A. Finney (Interim Pres.) what to talk about:
“something you know”

It struck me I know something about boys:

1. 4 boys – a few weeks ago, Bolton’s birthday- freeze tag, capture flag, red rover
2. End of the day- girls playing, thinking – boys plastic bucket
3. At home, hit or kick

Developed a theory – If thinking about a deck of cards - all humans when concerned begin as females – first eight months, then w/ boys – what was grey matter – male reproductive system.

Not just boys, I know from personal experience – suffer from the same ailments

Dr. Finney, How about something else...

Graduation message: Don’t walk through life with a plastic bucket over your head.

- Sounds easy, but 80%
- What can you see – can’t lead

Crisis – (Not terrorism, energy, education, China), but leadership

Reason I'm here – Challenge – Beg – All of you to become leaders

In every great crisis, in every non profit meeting, board meeting, school board meeting, military endeavor, people look to, and ask for, leadership. In the wake of the World Trade Centers, people ask, what does it mean? Where go from here?

If you are willing to accept my challenge –

Couple of Keys:

1. Live your dream: Rudy Ruettinger (who?)

True story about Rudy (five foot tall, mediocre student) football player at Notre Dame. He worked harder than anyone else on the team, and even though he had really little or no talent, he's a big inspiration to the bigger, better players because of his work ethic... he inspires the other players so much that they almost turn on their coach for his refusal to put Rudy in... Ultimately, he plays and the other players carry him off on their shoulders.

Rudy, almost more than any other story exemplifies perseverance, but the other reason I love that movie is because I've always been a fan of the little guy, and on the side of the little guy.

Look to your left, look to your right (God's plan)

- People who have achieved greatness and led in a human endeavor have been willing to march to their own drum.

- Ted Turner/CNN. (Wasn't conventional wisdom)

- Wright Brothers/Air

- McArthur? Inchon (September 15, 1940)

Don't live someone else's dream (King's "I have" speech) – "Five scores years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice."

(Dr. Martin Luther King)

- I wanted to be a cowboy, but Mom dentist

Here to commend you on graduation
Ask you to take what you learned & lead
(last game Nov 67)

There was a man who stood on steps & Lincoln memorial and said

Joe Denzel Washington in

2. Focus on that dream: Remember the Titans

~~Movie~~ more than any other exemplifies coming together...took place in Virginia in 1971...racially polarized community...Denzel Washington plays Coach Herman Boone, a tough African-American coach who's given the task of coaching this football team.

Story of a coach, put in middle of controversy - yet builds - 1970 -
He runs into conflict with Coach Yoast, who had coached the team successfully for years before integration...once the team is integrated, white players quit after Yoast is denied the head coaching job... Boone and Yoast tentatively overcome their differences, and the white players come back to the team...

The men start trying to build the team...after a lot of fighting, strife, conflict, the blacks and whites on the team develop friendships and a lot of respect for each other... ultimately, they become a championship team that serves as an example to the rest of the community...

On the theme of focus of
Concentration: John Maxwell, a New York Times bestselling author, recently wrote, "Thinking for a Change", 11 Ways highly successful people approach life and work."

1/2 Chapter 2: Unleash the potential of focused thinking. Emerson, "Concentration is the secret of strength in politics, in war, in trade, in short, in all management of human affairs."

One step further, David Belasco, "If you can't write your idea on the back of my business card, you don't have a clear idea."

- Boys Scouts

- Marines

- Fed Ex

McDonald's

3. Commit the course to paper

- Founding fathers - Constitution

- Business - Plan

- Military - 5 Paragraphs

- Stephen Ambrose: D-Day

> amount of planning for operation Overlord

↑

(Family constitution/Values)

4. Live the Army – “Be All You Can Be”

Matthew 25:14-25

For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, "Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master." And he also who had the two talents more came forward saying, "Master you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more." His master said to him, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter in the joy of your master." He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying "Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours."

(Whatever you have - use it) → Some of you don't have talents of others - (who are)

5. Just be persistent

- Calvin Coolidge, "Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not, nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not, unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not, the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

6. Finally, Have a course *that includes things -*

15,000 hours went into Jim Collins book, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...And Others Don't*. It examines those that excelled v. those that had not and makes a point of 5 hierarchal management qualities, which are:

Level 1: Highly Capable Individual

highlights:

~~Level 2: Contributing Team Member~~
~~Level 3: Competent Manager~~
~~Level 4: Effective Leader~~
Level 5: Executive →

Level 5, Executive: "An individual who blends extreme personal humility with intense professional will."

"Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It's not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self-interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious – but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves."

- Go one step further: Be a servant to them and you will become their leader

- Combines: Persistence and others

- Sir Ernest Shackleton – (August 8, 1914 / he 27) Three masted sail (Polaris) *areu*

"Shackleton's popularity among those he led was due to the fact that he was not the sort of man who could do only big and spectacular things," Worsley wrote. "When occasion demanded, he would attend personally to the smallest details, and he had unending patience and persistence, which he would apply to all matters concerning the well-fare of his men." Shackleton believed that quite ordinary men were capable of heroic feats if the circumstances required; for him, the weak and the strong *must* survive together.

So, if you do these things:

1. Live your dream
2. Focus on that dream
3. Commit it to paper
4. Live the Army "Be All You Can Be"
5. Persistent
6. Serve others

You will be a leader, you will make a difference.

We look forward to watching your successes.