

Brian Dougherty Commencement Speech

It is with more than a little trepidation that I approach this podium with such a weighty responsibility before me. Most, if not all, of the world's spiritual traditions warn about the inherent dangers of the spoken word. The Buddha gives 5 criteria to relish our speech, Jesus warns about having our hearts in the right place for “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”, and Jewish law literally has volumes of guidelines on proper speech.

I think the “danger” found in speech is because of the inherent potency found in the spoken word. It is because of this potency-- depending on the application and dosage, words can harm or bless, hinder or heal. It is my fervent prayer that my words today should only bless and only heal. That they will be a worthy representation of the heart of this graduating class.

Diane Connelly and Bob Duggan, two of the founders of this wonderful institution, instilled in my class and so many others the importance of “knowing our place”. By that I mean recognizing the value in the generations that came before, the value in yourself and your peers, and living a life that will positively impact those later generations that follow. To these three categories I address the

following:

To the first category; "Those that came before": Franz Schubert, the famous composer once remarked, "*...wer vermag nach Beethoven noch etwas zu machen?*" (Who can do anything else after Beethoven?) As a young man, Schubert had the formal, technical training as a musician to both recognize and appreciate the genius of Beethoven. He also could recognize with a quaking inadequacy in regards to his own skill just how much of a beginner he truly was. I can relate. Seeing those that have come before and learning in their shadow—it is so evident to me after three years of graduate school how much of a beginner I truly am. Maybe some of you can also relate regardless of your program of study. To our mentors, teachers, clinical supervisors, directors, faculty and staff—on behalf of the student body here tonight, thank you so much for the gifts of your time, expertise and knowledge. To our parents and grandparents—to whom none of this would literally be possible; thank you for the gift of life, for your wisdom and tireless support. Mom, I promise I'm almost done with school now. Just a bit more to go for the doctorate then I'm done-done. For real this time!

To the second category; "my peers": Just a moment ago I mentioned Franz Schubert—who in the shadow of his hero felt despair at his own

inadequacies. This is the same Schubert that despite his original trepidation pulled himself up, recognized his own value and gifts and wrote stirring, brilliant works such as his own Symphony No. 5 and more famously "Ave Maria". To build up to my point even further, Beethoven was also reputedly shown one of Schubert's works on his deathbed and remarked that it was "quite good".

Hopefully by now you realize the point I'm attempting to make. We, even as recent graduates, even as "beginners" still have our own instilled brilliance that has already begun to shine—and will continue to do so at greater degrees as we contribute our gifts. Schubert had gifts to share with the world that not even Beethoven had! So too we have a unique genius, specially assigned to us to bring to the world—and the world I say is ready to receive them. To my peers of every degree program—my blessing is that we will learn Schubert's lesson, and although times of doubt will arise—we will ultimately triumph on the realization that we have our own genius to share, and gifts to nurture. Thank you for choosing to seek out this school to help distill that which is best in you—in a way that both benefits others and allows you to pay the bills. I'm honored to be counted among you today. I would also like to offer a thank you to all of our spouses, partners, family and friends who helped us get here today. Thank you.

To the third category; “the following generations”: Take hope in the fact that many, many talented composers came after Schubert. Stepping away from this theme now—I want to quickly point out the nature of this school as it currently manifests. In my class alone, we were men and women from literally all around the world, Christian, Muslim, Jewish and everything in between, gay and straight, Conservative and Liberal, all colors of the rainbow. We had loved ones born, and loved ones pass. We had military veterans, someone who was a non-combatant during a war, and someone else who volunteered to treat the wounded in a war they didn't understand. Artists and scientists, athletes and geeks, preachers, a preacher's kid and a class clown. You could say we were the acupuncture version of “Breakfast Club”.

My class is a microcosm of the school as a whole—and when looking at the school's demographics I think about how beautiful it is that the school is a microcosm of the world. The Oneness that is sought for in so many spiritual traditions has its roots already planted deep here. My ardent hope is that each generation continues to water and nurture what has been entrusted to us, for our future generations' benefit.

It is on this note of hope and exhortation that I thank you for listening. Blessings, I love you all. Thank you.