

## COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

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### Evolution of a Leader

Congratulations to our leaders of tomorrow! I say this for a specific reason, as you go out into your career I am sure some of you have aspirations to be the boss. After today, I hope you change your mind and aspire to be a leader and not the boss. It took me too long in my career to realize that a leader motivates people and a boss demotivates people. Early in my career, I was a buyer for May Company. We were taught to be aggressive, be blunt, never take no for answer. I realized years later this is no way to get ahead. There is a distinct difference in being a boss and a leader. A boss micromanages, a boss gives you direction. Completely different, a leader inspires, a leader listens and a leader coaches.

A great mentor of mine once told me Leaders make superstars, leaders are never superstars!

When I started Scrubs & Beyond, I realized I wanted to be different than just being someone's boss. By micro-managing people, you lose good people. I wanted to be an aspiring person, not a demanding boss. I started listening instead of telling, because a good leader always listens. I started asking questions instead of giving answers. That is when it dawned on me; it is much easier to coach rather than to tell someone how to do it.

I am a very visual person, so I started imagining how to accomplish running a company that was easy to remember. I realized it was easier to get up the mountain without being pulled back down. I envisioned walking up a mountain with a heavy rope on my shoulder. I could struggle getting up that mountain with a heavy rope, the rope symbolized the pressure leaders carry with running a company and I envisioned the employees of the company holding the other end of the rope. I envisioned either being pulled back down the mountain because people did not believe in me or the mission of the company. I realized I needed a different scenario and that entailed me carrying the rope on my shoulders with people walking along side of me carrying part of the burden because they believed in me. You get to the top either way, one way takes you longer because you are pulled back down constantly and once you reach the top you are by yourself; I chose to reach the top with other people that believed in me. The way you treat people can have a huge impact on the success of your business.

Again, as I said I am a visual person so just image this scenario. You have a video tape in your mind as you approach difficult situations within the company. Remember, you are videotaping your interactions with everyone you come in contact with. Would you be proud enough of that interaction to use it as a training video to show other employees how they should treat each

other or would you be embarrassed for your employees to see how you act or BOSS other people? I will take it one step further, would you be proud enough of your interactions to take that imaginary videotape home and show your parents or your children how Mom or Dad acts at work? If the answer is no, you probably need more training on how to be a motivating leader.

A leader has passion, a leader leads by example, a leader is someone that inspires people to WANT to follow/emulate them, a leader is someone who has followers that trust him or her. The most important trait of a leader would have to be the ability to influence others at all levels of an organization towards a common goal, and finally a leader has character.

Zig Ziglar was once quoted as saying, "You can have everything in life you want if you just help enough people get what they want."

A good leader always has a mentor. Leaders are always looking for ways to improve and a mentor can help you do just that very thing. People today should have a mentor to bounce ideas off or to keep learning how to be a better leader. Leaders say thank you for a job well done. Imagine if you wrote a handwritten thank you note to a coworker saying great job. Or even better take it one step further and how about if you just mailed a card to someone special in your life saying I was thinking about you today and I hope you have a great day. It will mean more to that person than you can imagine. Remember, leaders always try to think of ways to inspire others.

One final thought about being a leader, let other people help you. If you do it all by yourself, you will always sit by yourself. If you think you can do it all, you will be a lonely person.

People have asked how was able to start Scrubs & Beyond when my girls were in 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade? I was so afraid they would regret me not being there for everything. It actually turned out just the opposite; they are now very strong, brave women. I was able to do it because I had a very supportive husband.

*Recently, I was telling someone how I started Scrubs & Beyond and I could not have done it without my husband. I said my husband is an angel and she looked at me with a straight face and said good for you, my husband is still alive!*

Congratulations to you all, I hope you have decided to be a leader and not the four letter word BOSS.

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