

Thank you Ladies & gentlemen, distinguished faculty, friends, family, graduating class of 2010, I am honored to be here with you on this extraordinary day.

Since graduation from CU Boulder class of 2000, I have worked with a lot of CEOs and celebrities. Most importantly, I've spent 10 years learning all kinds of things from all kinds of people. I owe a lot of this adventure to dear old CU—including some of the professors on this stage right now—what I learned on this campus and how those lessons prepared me for my career. From trading desks and hedge funds to film pr and now the touring music business, this past decade I have scaled more than one industry from the ground up, working across North America and Europe, so I guess the folks who invited me here today thought maybe I'd have learned a thing or two along the way worth sharing with you.

One thing is this. Don't dream big. Dream gigantic. Dream enormous, colossal, exalted, soaring dreams, because what you envision, you will manifest. *Utter* possibility lies ahead of you.

As you move forward into your future, crossing this threshold from students to alumni, my advice is pretty simple. Be a rock star.

And now, let me explain what I mean by that.

Break some rules. Make your own rules. Set ambitious goals and don't back down. Push yourself to go the extra mile, then go *beyond* that, til you reach your limit, and *then...go even further*. Work harder, work faster, work more...you'll be rewarded.

Be passionate. Whatever you do, do it with conviction. Resist conformity. Be brave enough to measure yourself against your own standards, and not the standards of others.

Put everything you have into everything you do, b/c nothing less than your best should ever be acceptable.

Imagine the commitment it takes for a rock star to go onstage and kill it in front of 50,000 screaming fans every night. Think about that when you wake up tomorrow. Be that aggressive when it comes to things you want. Go for broke. Take no prisoners. Be decisive about what you want and relentless in achieving it.

As a rock star, life is one big never-ending tour. The destination is never as important as the journey. Be *present*, live in the moment as much as possible.

We each have a limited amount of time on this planet. Every day is a gift. Use yours wisely.

Ten years ago, sitting where you are today, alongside classmates, friends and family, celebrating this momentous occasion, graduating from CU Boulder. My grandpa, who is no longer with us, well he was here, as proud as I've ever seen him. There's a picture I have of he and I that day. I was in my cap and gown, smiling eyes focused on listening intently to him as he tried, just like I am now, to pass on as many nuggets of wisdom as possible, like...

...Don't be afraid, of anything, ever. Be bold. Take the risks you know are worthwhile. Some of them will pay off handsomely. The others will be lessons. Life has a way of teaching you what you need to learn, whether or not you like it. Pay attention so you never have to learn the same lesson twice. Making mistakes is okay, don't sweat it, cuz if you're not making mistakes, you're not trying hard enough—just never make the same mistake twice.

Be open to new ideas...*unexpected* turns of events tend to be the most significant. There is a sort of serendipity in your career and in life you learn to recognize. Everything truly happens for a reason, so look out for the writing on the wall.

Know that experience is all you will ever really *possess*. Material possessions are separate from you—they will never be part of you. Your experience, on the other hand, defines you, and it is something from which you can never be apart. At the end of a day, at the end of a lifetime, all you really *have* is a pile of experience, so make it worthwhile.

Love fearlessly, no matter how many times your heart is broken. Live every day so thoroughly to the last drop, that you will know exactly what my grandpa meant when, on his deathbed, his last words about life were so full of joy for having lived. He said, "it's some ride, Christina, isn't it!"

It is. It is some ride, so follow you heart. Trust your instincts. Maintain a sense of adventure.

Respect truth above all else. Truth should be a guiding principle and constant companion. Always look for the truth in any situation, in any person, in any set of ideas. Be courageously truthful, especially with yourself. Do not avoid difficult things, but rather charge at them headfirst. There are no shortcuts to anywhere worth going.

Do not listen to those who might say a thing is "difficult." Whether or not a thing can be called *difficult* is a matter of choice—will you choose to make an excuse or rise to occasion. Avoid the excuse business. Don't make them and don't except them. The sooner you can appreciate this, the faster you will move in the professional world.

In business, whether it be rock n roll or economics, hard work is the most inexorable weapon to getting where you want to be. Treat every day as if it were your first day on the job; never become complacent. As challenging as it may have been to make it to graduation, in many ways it is just going to get tougher, so you need to keep getting better. Improve yourself, invest in yourself every day.

Key to success in business is focus. Become an expert at something. Do one thing and do it well, they say. When I first started my consulting firm, it was too many things to too many different kinds of clients. It did alright, but things didn't get interesting until I reinvented the company with laser-like focus on one specific niche, the Backstage Artist Lounge. The Backstage Artist Lounge is so focused on brand integrations with touring rock stars. My company's reputation is solidified by this expertise. The best at what we do, we have been successful because of this *focus*. Even within your field of Economics, think about how will you differentiate yourself by establishing a focus such as currencies, statistics, emerging economies, information technology or some other special area of expertise.

You'll encounter a lot of new people in your career. Be aware that everyone you ever make eye contact with wants something from you. When you listen, don't listen to what a person is saying so much as *why* they are saying it. Be *deliberate* about who you allow into your circle. Surround yourself with people who have what you want. Make your friends before you need them.

Never allow any one person to hold more influence over you than any other. When you regard every person in the room as equal, you'll always be the most the powerful person in the room.

You have soo much ahead of you, an exciting path to your own unique wisdom.

I'm here today because I want you to be successful in the absolute sense, in the sense that your existence nets a positive effect on this world. You are here for a reason. You have something to contribute that this world needs. Your decisions are significant. You have the power to change the world, for the better, and you should recognize that. It is important to give back, to give generously, to be part of a cause or causes in which you believe, to make a difference in the lives of others, to be driven by a sense of purpose larger than yourself, to be inspired to greatness, to never finish striving.

Working in rock 'n roll these days, I asked a few rock stars what advice they would give you. Unfortunately, a lot of them are drunk most of the time, sooo some of the advice they gave me to give you, I can't repeat. Well maybe this one, for those of you who appreciate Rage Against the Machine. Tom Morello said to tell you "Death to false metal."

Finally, the rock community does have a reputation to live *down* to, so, in closing, I have to say...congratulations Class of 2010 on this milestone. You've made it! YOU officially ROCK!