

**Drexel University College of Medicine  
Commencement Remarks  
May 16, 2014**

**Stanley W. Silverman  
Chairman of the Board, Drexel University College of Medicine  
Vice Chairman of the Board, Drexel University**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen.

Graduates, alumni, family and friends, and members of the College and University community, on behalf of the board of trustees, welcome to today's commencement ceremony.

I also would like to extend a warm welcome to our two distinguished honorees, Dr. Arthur H. Rubenstein and Catherine ("Deeda") Blair. Congratulations, and thank you for honoring us by being here today.

Graduates, you have just completed an enormous undertaking. Whether through further training or work, you will assume new roles and responsibilities.

As you seek solutions to work or life's challenges, I urge you to remember what you learned here about the power of teamwork, and the importance of interpersonal skills in accomplishing your goals.

The best advice I can share with you as you pursue your careers is to be open to new opportunities that come your way and *embrace* change. In fact, I encourage you to be proactive and *create* your own opportunities. You never know where these might take you.

In addition to making life more interesting, you will build a resumé full of diverse experiences and a progression of responsibility within your profession, which in turn will help you move to the next new opportunity. You will be in for an amazing journey.

Standing before you is a 1969 chemical engineering graduate from this University, who just happens to be the chairman of the board of YOUR College of Medicine. Now, how does that happen? How does an engineer become the chairman of the board of a medical school?

At my age, I can look back to the first day after MY graduation, and look at all the dots I created along my career pathway. I took advantage of opportunities to accept assignments outside of my comfort zone.

I stepped out and did something new and different. I took risks. Sometimes I failed, but I never let that stop me from moving forward.

You can't connect your dots looking forward, only looking back. You need to create your own dots, to create the path to your own future. Tomorrow is the first day after YOUR graduation. Always take advantage of opportunities to do something new and different. Take risks, and step out of YOUR comfort zone. And some day you may get a chance to address a graduating class as I am doing, and inspire those graduates to create their own journey.

I would like to quote Seth Godin, the author of "The Icarus Deception," who references the character in Greek mythology who flies too high, too close to the sun. His wings melt off and he crashes into the sea.

Godin writes: "It is far more dangerous to fly too low than too high, even though it might feel SAFER to fly low. You settle for low expectations and small dreams, and guarantee yourself less than what you are capable of. By flying too low, you shortchange not only yourself, but also those who depend on you, or might benefit from your work."

During your career, be sure you don't fly too low. Take risks and fly high, and if you crash, you will pick yourself up and fly again.

I would like to share with you the following advice, which I think applies in any field:

There are 9 things that will help you advance in your career:

1. your education, your experience, and the expertise you develop in your chosen field,
2. the track record of success and the results you achieve as you gain that experience,
3. your commitment to yourself and others to always strive for excellence,
4. how you differentiate yourself by doing new things, and proactively embrace change and continuous improvement in everything you do,
5. your interpersonal skills, and how you lead others,
6. your good critical judgment and common sense,
7. your contacts and personal network,
8. your integrity, and
9. your professional and personal reputation among your colleagues, your patients and the public.

During your career, be sure to develop the first 7 and protect the last two. Once you compromise your integrity or lose your reputation, you never earn them back.

On behalf of the board of trustees, congratulations and our very best wishes! I also want to extend my congratulations to our graduates' families. Your love, support and sacrifice were very important in helping our graduates succeed and achieve, and bringing them to this very special day.

Thank you.