

JAMES C. STANLEY, M.D.

Biography

Dr. Stanley is the Handleman

in your future will outnumber by far those of preceding generations, including those of mine and your teachers at the University of Toledo.

After today your paths are likely to be quite diverse...That's a given. But tomorrow two questions will begin surfacing for all of you: First, what's the real value of your education? And second, will you use your new found knowledge meaningfully?

The answer depends on your inner self...That's where your core values reside...It's your relevant side. And your outer self...That's what you do...That's what others see...It's your responsible side.

Two simple concepts...What your inner self is...And what your outer self does.

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Let's talk about you...For years many of you've had family, friends and teachers lead and push you to succeed...They set boundaries from your childhood to today. Most were protective. They kept you on time, kept you healthy, and many kept you safe. Almost all were focused inward, centered on you and your behavior.

In contrast, the most important boundaries you will face after today will beg you to look outward. They are not about you. They are where tomorrow's frontiers exist...And they are likely to be a long way from the security of those that have supported you in the past.

Many of these boundaries will be beyond your comfort zone...But you will be the better for finding

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None of this is too much to expect of University graduates, and it's not too much for me to ask of you. So here are my expectations. There are eight of them.

First...Be adventurous. Don't hesitate to venture beyond boundaries that are likely to disclose new wonders...Especially those that awaken your intellect and humanity. Somewhere along the way consider your role in serving and helping others. That's an important element of a learned society. And that is the society to which you have entered today with your graduation.

Second...Be Tolerant. Embrace the colors and sounds of human diversity for they are the essence of life. Your journey will be brighter for the experience and the world will make more sense along the way. And keep your moral compass in plain sight. I admonish you to abhor anyone carrying an ill-founded bias against another human being. Understanding the value that lies in differences among people across cultures and societies is requisite to building a better world. You need to be part of that and you will, but only if you allow yourself to see the true value of diversity.

Third...Don't be silent. I've seen the damning effects of silence. I have witnessed the unwillingness of some to see the loss of dignity and purpose in individuals they are at ease in ignoring. It's painful to observe them, and I often find myself struggling to call them out. But I don't believe in remaining silent. A certain degree of personal integrity exists in speaking up at a moment which is more important than you are. There are always excuses to being silent...The point of your education is to give you the ability to speak clearly and be heard.

Fourth...Reject mediocrity. The unimportance of being average is staggering. Just getting by in your life's work doesn't make sense and is not what your education has prepared you for. I view the wasting of one's potential as a perennial scourge. Unfortunately, not giving your all is commonplace and seems to be a ubiquitous contributor to mediocrity. Don't allow your inner or outer self to be part of this. You don't have to be the best at anything, but don't settle for being average.

Fifth...Be patient with those about you. The fact is that the slow and less well informed will always outnumber you. Many will be loud and callous and you can't avoid them...Try as you may. My advice...Be patient, for at day's end the loud will be silent, and perhaps the next morning's light will find them in a different place. And when you can, offer the slow and uninformed help to attain what you now have. Be humble, but be helpful.

Sixth...Be creative. Leave something behind you that will outlive you. A story, a painting, a song, an idea...Something of your own doing, not bought or borrowed from another...Something for future generations. Lasting creativity with your hands, voice and mind is a blessing we don't share with lesser life on this planet...It's a human gift. And don't stifle creativity... It's too valuable to defer to one's waning days...For waiting may come too late.

Seventh...Find contentment. Seek peace within your daily existence. It may come from faith or a simple appreciation of life's complexities, from our DNA beginnings to our cultural breath. You needn't feign away from your beliefs...In fact your beliefs will shape your life as much as your life's circumstances will mold your beliefs. Whichever it is, I hope it will bring contentment within the chaos of life.

human contact, even when you are vulnerable. Indeed, happiness born of friendship will enrich your life far more than all your other accomplishments.

Again, congratulations on your achievement today. I share in your pride.

And remember...Keep your inner self relevant and your outer self responsible. It is my deepest hope that with those underpinnings you will continue to grow and better humankind.

Godspeed.