

Steve Georgopolous

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What a beautiful sight it is to from up here. I see smiling accomplished faces and the pride and joy of family and friends. When I turn around and look at the stage party, I see a mirror image, of pride for you the graduating classes of 2005 in the School of Business, School of Transportation And Building Trades, School of Part-time Studies.

Please accept my sincere and heartfelt congratulations on your accomplishments. You have arrived at yet another milestone in your journey of life. I am truly honored to have been asked to share my thoughts with you on this your very special day.

I will start with WIFM - No this is not a new radio station in Ottawa, it stands for What's in it for me! As

I prepared for my speech today, my goal was to leave each and every one of you with at least one thought to take home with you as you create your own road map to a life long success. My wish to you is truly a life long success and one that is complete, which in my books includes such elements as Health, Family Friends, Career, Leisure in other words a “well rounded life”, as my wife would say. My talk today revolves around two areas the R words and HOPE.

Let's start with the R words. A good friend of mine, Catherine, told me a while ago it's all about R words and she was right.

R is for remember. I will always remember those who helped me get to where I am today. First and foremost my parents who gave me solid foundations and taught right from wrong and the basic skills of life that I try to use every day. Our family business, a corner grocery store in Montreal that gave me my work ethic,

a passion for customer service and my MBA of life. One of the first opportunities I was given in the Hotel industry was by one of my mentors Stanley W. Ferguson, I still remember the first time I laid eyes on Mr. Ferguson I was a room clerk at the Sheraton Mount Royal a 1,015 room hotel in Montreal. Before he even stated, roomers were that he was known as a tough GM. Well tough he was, but that is the best type of task master one would want just starting out in the industry. Almost 30 years latter Mr. Ferguson has become a life long friend. I take a drive to the Laurentians every year in March and celebrate his birthday with him. At 86 years young his leadership and friendship inspire me every time I speak with him. Remember those who helped you climb up the ladder including those on the stage today. Also, help others get ahead, you can't beat the feeling of gratification.

R for relationships. Relationships and networking are so important today. Be genuine and sincere. Give

more than what you get, invest in relationships and you will create strong and lasting friendships that pass the test of time.

R for respect. A phenomena that has lost some importance over the years. Respect yourself, those close to you and those you work with. Respect is like a boomerang -- it will come back to you.

R for Rest. In this fast paced world, rest is a rare commodity and we have to make time for it. Be mindful of resting your mind. Enjoy moments of peace, with no pre-occupations, and have fun.

R for Responsible. Always do the responsible thing. Be a leader. Actions speak much louder than words. As you enter leadership positions be known for doing the right things. Set your bench marks high.

Hope is the next theme. Not to worry about your future. There is hope today and there will always be hope. I would like to drill down each letter, but will leave the H to the end.

O is for opportunity. I am truly excited about this word because the opportunities are limitless, truly limitless. Aim for the stars.....Michelangelo said that the greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss but that our aim is too low and we reach it.

You can accomplish anything you set your mind to. The added dividend and I quote one of my favorite authors Zig Ziglar. Do more than what you get paid for and someday you will get paid more for what you do.

P is for Passion. Step back for a moment think of all those successful people you know. The common element is that they are passionate about what they

do. It shows, employers seek out these type of people to join their teams. Let me relate it to the college for a moment. As a Member of the board of governors for the past six years I have witnessed the passion of the President, the vice presidents, Deans and faculty as they made presentations and decisions to maintain this college as a world class college and a center of excellence. I witness passion in the Algonquin graduates that I have hired at Les Suites Hotel, one of them told me yesterday “tell them they still will have to work hard when they get out in the work force”. I hear about the passion of the faculty members as I interview Algonquin students for employment. Be passionate in all that you do, it will be noticed and it is contagious. If you are passionate about your job you may have stress but it will be good stress.

E for excellence. Be synonymous with excellence. You have graduated for an institution that truly depicts Excellence in what they stand for. I am so

very proud when I hear unsolicited positive comments about the college particularly from those who don't know I am a Governor of the College.

The fact that you are an Algonquin graduate already gives you a running start and will open many doors

Now for the most important letter in my opinion H for health. Health is our most precious asset. I have lost a mother and several close friends to cancer, diabetes and Alzheimer's have touched other people close to me, while depression and stress have touched others. I am certain that most people here today know of someone that one of these illness have affected. Appreciate good health, foster it. Make health and safety a way of life. A habit.

At the end of the day, health is so very important!

I don't guarantee too many things in life today but I will give you the Steve Georgopoulos Personal Guarantee. I am not speaking as a Governor but as a father and business person. I guarantee that if you patiently and passionately put into practice what you have learned during your time at Algonquin College, coupled with the discipline required you will reap major dividends and your hopes and dreams will come true.

Today you are being recognized for your achievement. Enjoy the moment, be proud of your accomplishment. No one can ever take this away from you.

This graduating class gives ME great hope and I thank you for this!

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