

Go For It!
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Commencement Address
California State University Chico
May 19, 2017

Introduction

It was 1974. That's the year I rode into some small town off Interstate 5 known as Chico. Being from Vallejo, I had never seen so many white people in my life! Within hours of arriving I had two incongruent thoughts. First, I was enamored by Chico's charm and beauty. And second, I felt so out of place and wondered if I had made a mistake.

It was at this juncture that something in my mind compelled my mouth to say, *JUST FOR IT*. That was 43 years ago, and I have never look back. That notion of going for it was birthed from the tension produced by two opposite thoughts intersecting on this campus. That notion has become a guiding force in my life, and has placed me at tables where I was not invited and in rooms where I probably did not belong.

Chico in the Seventies was a bit different:

- No Coffee shops (Just Denny's)
- No Sushi bars
- Smart people . . . but no smart devices
- Streaming and Downloading meant something much different!

But . . . somehow we managed . . .

- Five Mile
- The Oasis
- The Graduate
- The Bear
- Ray's Liquor Store
- Pioneer Days
- Midnight Showings of Monty Python at the Senator Theater
- And Dances at the Newman Center

I was going for it! My life's philosophy was born right here!

Because my roommates were different from me, I was exposed to a new world—and decided to go for it—

- Tubing down a river
- Skiing at Tahoe
- Eating alfalfa sprouts and Tofu

My musical library expanded—No longer going to Tower Records for The Commodores and EWF—

- Steve Bishop
- Doobie Brothers
- Led Zeppelin
- Pink Floyd

And, I never wanted to swim again at the Vallejo Plunge after a visit to Five-Mile . . . where swim attire was optional!

I was even going for it in class!

- Learning about Corax and Tisias in 467 B.C.
- Marshall McLuhan, “The Medium is the Message”

But my biggest “Go for it” moment occurred when I met the most beautiful woman I had ever met in my life. We met at a dance at the Newman Center on Halloween night, 1974.

The Story of Trina . . . a nursing student from Lompoc, California

- We fell in love at Chico State
- I married my College Sweetheart
- Trina became a labor and delivery Nurse, Feather River Hospital
- I began as a cub reporter at KHSL TV
- I had found my soul mate . . . and we were going for it!
- In a few years we would have a few wonderful sons—

And then . . .

- Trina was diagnosed with Breast Cancer
- After a six-year battle, my boys and me said goodbye to Mommy.
- This would be a side of going for it that I never knew.
- But it would become the most valuable classroom of my life.

The Fringe Benefits of Rock Bottom

For 40 years, I had gone for it.
I could do no wrong. I had lived a charmed life.
Purpose? Really didn't have one . . . just enjoyed life.

All of a sudden I was living a nightmare, sustained only by my faith in God, my boys and our family. My Mom would say, "Honey, keep living." In other words, *go for it . . . even when you don't feel like you can.* My Dad would say, "Son, just stand," meaning, *don't give in . . . don't quit.*

My concern is not that you will succeed, for I know you will. Rather my concern is that you will not fail.

Life's greatest lessons are not learned on the mountaintop . . .but in the valley

The fringe benefits of failure—in my case a wife who died—taught me valuable lessons such as:

- Don't allow a season of sorrow to define your life!
- Whatever you do, regardless of how you feel, don't quit!
- You will learn more in the valley than on the mountaintop!

How could the worst days of my life become my best? While I would wish for no one to experience such days, the fact is . . . we all will. We all go through difficult times. The question is not "will we endure hardship," but rather "what will we learn that will help us to be better people?"

I learned that there is only one direction up. I leaned on the spirit of *going for it* I learned at Chico State. I held firmly to the wisdom of parents—who had suffered . . . and survived. And I learned.

I learned that life could no longer be all about me.
I learned that maybe I have a purpose bigger than just the accumulation of material things. Most of all, I learned that I had to keep living. *I had to go for it.*

The lessons I learned while at rock bottom have shaped who I am today. Sometimes, going for it is thrilling and exhilarating. Sometimes it's costly and devastating. But it never leaves you the same. And if you have the right attitude, not only will you learn . . . you may just discover your purpose.

Rock Bottom challenged me to live intentionally and with a clear purpose. Today, 21 years later, I have traveled the world speaking. My purpose is to encourage, to inspire, to help and to remind people that they can do it . . . that they can go for it . . . again.

What's my motivation? I find my inspiration from the tender and insightful words of a dying wife. Just two days before she passed away, Trina shared words that would change my life: (purposely omitted here).

So grads, go for it! You'll succeed . . . and that's awesome!
You'll also fail . . .pick yourself up and keep going.

When you do, you will discover a greater resolve and renewed commitment. You will discover things about yourself that just may surprise you. You may even discover your purpose.

So, go for it . . . what you have to lose?