

# Commencement Speech, Dec 09

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Congratulations to all of you here today – to the graduates for all your dedication and years of hard work, And to your families for their support and encouragement and the sacrifices they too have made.

Socrates

Buddha

Shakespeare

Henry Ford

Albert Ellis

Aaron Beck

Wayne Dyer

Dumbo

What am I THINKING???

Perhaps we can figure it out if I share a story by one of my favorite authors: Anonymous.

There once was a bunch of tiny frogs who arranged a running competition. The goal was to reach the top of a very high tower. A big crowd had gathered around the tower to see the race and cheer on the contestants.

The race began. No one in the crowd really believed that the tiny frogs would reach the top of the tower. You heard such statements as: “Oh, WAY too difficult!! “. “They will NEVER make it to the top.” The tiny frogs began collapsing. The crowd continued to yell “It is too difficult!!” “No one will make it.” More tiny frogs got tired and gave up. But ONE continued higher and higher and higher. This one wouldn’t give up! He was the only one who reached the top! All of the other tiny frogs naturally wanted to know how this one frog managed to do it? A contestant asked the tiny frog how he had found the strength to succeed and reach the goal.

The winning frog did not answer because: he was DEAF.....

He couldn't hear people tell him it was too difficult or that he couldn't make it to the top. SO, he just kept going while everyone else dropped out of the race.

What AM I thinking???

Never listen to other people's tendencies to be negative or pessimistic.

Think about the power words have. The power thoughts have.

Be deaf when people tell you that you can't fulfill your dreams.

Now let's look at what all those other people said:

Henry Ford said: If you think you can do a thing, or think you can't do a thing, you're right.

Buddha: What we think, we become.

Shakespeare (speaking as Hamlet) said: There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so.

Anonymous: It's all in the state of mind. Out in the world you'll find success begins with a person's will. Life's battle doesn't always go to the stronger or faster man, but sooner or later the one who wins is the one who thinks he can.

Socrates: To find yourself, think for yourself.

Wayne Dyer: You are responsible for the thoughts you have in your head at any given time. You have the capacity to think whatever you choose, and virtually all your self-defeating attitudes and behaviors originate in the way you choose to think.

Aaron Beck – If you change your thinking, it will lead to changes in your feeling and acting. Your thoughts are the primary determinant of both emotions and behaviors, as well as mental disorders and psychological health.

Albert Ellis – Your emotional problems stem primarily from your irrational thinking.

Dumbo – That wonderful little elephant believed in the power of the Magic Feather and so he could fly.

And you've all heard about the Self-Fulfilling prophecy.

SO, what AM I thinking??

An acronym, WAIT...What Am I Thinking? WAIT

W= what

A = Am

I = I

T = Thinking

For the last few years you have been seriously engaged in thinking. Tonight I want to reinforce what you've been doing by this statement: You are what you think.

As you move out into the world, watch what you are thinking – About yourself, About your students, About your clients. WAIT

When you have a challenging job to do and you are concerned about doing it successfully; when you are faced with a challenging student or client and you worry that this time it's an IMPOSSIBLE challenge. WAIT

When you are thinking discouraging thoughts, WAIT

Replace them with more healthy thoughts like: I have the ability to make thoughtful, data-based decisions, to use the information I have learned in school, to apply what I have learned to new situations, to function as an educated professional.

Program yourself for success. The only thing in life you have the power to control is your own behavior. And the way to do that is to control the way you think.

SO --- do you ever feel like you're one of those tiny frogs trying to climb to the top of a very high tower and in competition with lots of other tiny frogs also going for the same goal?

If you do, you're not alone. Give yourself the best possible advantage by staying positive and not HEARING negatives that would slow you down.

In your time with us, we've tried to give you the best possible education. Now you take over and program YOURSELF for success by watching what you are thinking.

Remember, as you face the future, to pause and ask,

What Am I Thinking.

Congratulations again, 2009 graduates.