Thomas Housley - Speech

Opening
[worried look backwards, crackled nervous voice]
   Um, Sally, I was told there was going to be Powerpoint.
[turn to Jaeger]
   No?
[disgusted]
   Ugh. Plan B.
[hurl mock presentation over shoulder]

Greetings Jeffery Immelt. Greetings and congratulations Dean Danos. Greetings faculty, staff and administration. Greetings family and friends. Greetings to my moms, Rhonda and Carol. Greetings to the dozen or so Republican presidential candidates, who are rapidly whizzing by us on Interstate 91, desperately searching for less academic-y towns. And greetings... graduates of the oldest and greatest graduate school of business. [applause] ...in New Hampshire.

We have a lot to be thankful for today. Thank you to fortune for providing us with wonderful weather. Oh shoot I should have changed that. Hold on, lemme make a note here for the next time I do this.

Thank you to Steven Hooper for a gracious introduction and for leading us all in with that... eccentric green wand of yours. Your rule here was a just, with minimal bloodshed. You outlasted four Japanese Finance Ministers, and the best two seasons of the Jersey Shore. You led us and carried us... I have no idea how you got a Low Pass grade in Management Communications.

Thank you to Dartmouth, for providing us a home for two years and thank you to our faculty for their enduring dedication to us. [applause] Also thank you to the faculty for providing Rohan Shetty with the Amos Tuck Scholarship award. We all know how much it means to him.

Thank you to the administration for recruiting us, hiring us, finding us jobs and shipping us off to better lives. [applause] And thank you to the staff for feeding us, helping us and supporting us every day, be it through snow, ice or snow. [applause] And staff, also, thank you for not rattling us out to the administration.

And one last very important thanks: Will the Tuck Partners please stand? All of you: the girlfriends, the children, the husband, the wives... even the pregnant ones. I want to hear deafening applause for you. [applause] I want to emphatically say this: without you... there is no way any of us could be here. You endured every bit of this journey with us. Your support of our late night study group sessions, incessant networking and horrible Byrne-stink is remarkable. You challenge us to be better people and you cherish us even when we fall short. We would be nothing without you, our better half. I know all of this because my lovely wife Angela tells
me so every day. But whether you silently support or shout it from the hilltops, your accomplishments are no less spectacular. Make no mistake: this is your day too.

[change tone]

It was not more than two years ago when we first gathered into Cook Auditorium. Not more than two years ago when we first sat down with our study group of brilliant bright eyed partners and carefully plotted how to get by with as little work as possible. Not more than two years ago when Dean Slaughter first told us about that time when he was almost in a photo with the heads of the auto industry. And not more than two years ago when I gained my first memory here at the Tuck School.

I remember it was a Wednesday night. I want to say it was cold with a strong wind. Odds are in my favor with that one. And like on any regular Wednesday night I was heading out to a local watering hole named Five Old (RIP). On my way down the stairs I came across a group of young, attractive women in their mid-twenties, dressed in pajamas, dancing furiously to the popular tune *Pocket Full of Sunshine* while a tall slender gentleman with embroidered red corduroys and no less than fourteen popped collars texted away furiously on a blackberry. And I remember walking outside, taking a deep breath and thinking to myself “What… the heck… have I done?”

And I remember… no lie… being kinda miffed. I looked around at my classmates and I didn’t see a lot of people like me. No one else was from Philly, so I couldn’t share my love for sports fan violence. I don’t know how to ski. I thought Vinyard Vines was some sort of boxed wine. I thought to myself, “harrumph… I’ll never find a place here.” And I complained and I moaned and I lashed out. I was unhappy.

But I’m here to say… I’ve never been proven so wrong in my life. I found that we are all here for a reason. I found that every single rumor spread about us is true. When I couldn’t go to Killington, you invited me out for ski lessons. I always forgot your names, but without fail you remembered mine. When we clashed in our study group sessions, you smiled at me. You are accepting and decent. You are everything that I was not when I arrived here and everything that I want to be when I leave.

You were patient and giving. Responsible and selfless, despite your sacrifices for career and for education. You each gave up your lives to come here. You put your careers on hold and you put your companies on hold. You were businesspeople, doctors, lawyers, fathers and mothers.

You were titans in arenas. They cheered for you. You were opera singers. You were artists and authors. You cared for the sick and you supported the poor. You built governments and you escaped governments.
You made rockets that challenged the heavens and yet your ego is as grounded as they come.
You were soldiers swept up in the passion of a fight against evil. And you had the character and courage to figure out what good and evil truly are.
You helped build businesses to greatness.
A few of you, who shall remain nameless, might have helped destroy the world economy.
All of you want to return it to greatness.

You traveled from around the world, from places that I've never heard of and can't even pronounce. But I'm sure it's warmer there. You enrolled in the dreams of a country that wasn't even your own and you uprooted your lives and your families to follow that dream. [pause] I hope you found it. And I hope you know that every student at this school is here because one of our fathers or mothers had the same courage to follow that dream. We are all here because of that courage and that dream.

Yet despite this crazy assortment of students, we are a minority among our peers. That's why you came here. To be part of an exclusive group that sticks together. We are the smallest MBA, but the oldest MBA. We have a tradition of excellence and deep roots in the foundation of our capitalist society. And when you leave our wilderness to take on the best and the brightest in New York, Boston, San Francisco, London, Shanghai, and Tokyo you'll know that in our select group, more than any other MBA, you and everything you do will represent us.

Some of you will turn around a struggling firm, and we will all cheer for you. Some of you will take your ideas to an IPO, and we will buy for you. All of you will have beautiful families and we will love for you.

But know that our paths will not always be filled with successes. Because of your stature and your abilities you will have mistakes and failures of a scale you never thought imaginable.
Some of you will lose your job. [pause]
Some of you will lose your company. [pause]
Some of you... will fire Conan O'Brien. [turn, look directly at Jeff Immelt, shake head in disapproval]

Anyway.

But as Jeff can probably attest, in every fall you'll find a friend to catch you. In every win you'll find a friend to hug you. When you walk away from our verdant paradise and enter your cold unforgiving metropolis... know that you are not alone. And we're in this together. Because we're Tuckies. And that's what we do. Thank you.