

I would like to welcome all family, friends, faculty, distinguished guests, Sponge Bob enthusiasts and of course the QC Class of 2019!!!!

It is truly an honor to be standing up here representing such a bright and talented group of people.

Throughout our time in college, we've all had our own successes...but have also each taken our own L's.

For the parents out there who don't know what taking the L means, it's the dreadful feeling of knowing that failure is imminently upon you

While taking a loss can often seem like we've just given up, there's no doubt that each of our losses in some way leads to our success—like when that kid in science class drops a \$10 bill and you find it—his loss=my success.

One of my most memorable L's came my first summer as a college student, when I gave in to my parents making me work for Local 3, the electrician's union of NYC.

As a young college student just looking to have fun, waking up at 4:30am every weekday to work on a hot construction site wasn't exactly how I wanted to spend my summer.

But being that I really had no other option, I pushed through.

Before starting this job, I needed to get OSHA certified, which basically means that I had to complete a training in worksite health and safety. At the time, I didn't think much of this, it just seemed like part of the process to start this job that I didn't really want in the first place. But BOIII was I wrong.

It wasn't until one day when I began talking to one of my Urban Studies professors, Dr. Sherry Baron, about working at the Barry Commoner Center located right over there in Remsen hall (POINT RIGHT), that I realized where that card that seemed so useless at the time could take me.

When I first told her I had this certification, her eyes lit up as she thought I'd fit in perfectly with her team. Since then I've worked on countless projects at the center, learned numerous research techniques, and built relationships that will last a lifetime.

Basically, this local 3 experience which I dreaded so much at the time, was a huge reason I have the job that I do today which I love so much and which has taken me so far.

So moral of the story is: While there are plenty of bad experiences out there, there is no such thing as a useless one.

It is up to *you* to make the most out of every **EXPERIENCE**: whether it be something small that happened on the way to school, like the QC shuttle being late again, or a larger woe that you may be going through always look for the blessing within every curse.

This may sometimes be hard to do. I'm sure we can all relate to that feeling you get when walk into a final and you just KNOW you're gonna take that L, like you can just *feel* it.

That feeling's honestly probably going to come up again, whether it's in grad school, or walking into a business meeting, or just like burning your mac and cheese or something.

The key to overcoming this is to always remember what the OG Dr. Ross Wheeler, one of my advisors, once said, "don't reject yourself, let other people reject you."

In other words, never doubt your abilities or be afraid to take a chance.

This piece of advice was the main reason I applied to Cambridge. I was very doubtful I would get the scholarship I was looking at and thought there was no way I was gonna go to the school if I didn't get it.

But I was like you know what let me just apply anyway, I think there's a chance I'll get in, even if it's small, and if I don't, if they reject me, then it's all good.

And low and behold, I *did not* the scholarship.

Buttt I did still get into the school and it *did* turn out to be the best option for me. Had it not been for me *not* rejecting myself, there's no way I would be heading where I am...which is to La Boom nightclub every Friday and Saturday to enjoy the weekend like a hot-blooded youth.

We're all a lot more capable than we think we are.

If you want to apply for that job but don't think there's any way you'll get it, apply anyway; if you want to ask that girl (or guy) out that you sat next to in accounting or something but think you have no shot, ask anyway.

The worst that's going to happen is you get rejected and live a life of solitude

I'm just kiddingggggg,

the worst that's going to happen is that you get rejected and have to move on to something (or someone) new, but living with that rejection is way better than living with the thought of what could have been...there's endless opportunities out there waiting for us to take

Lastly, I would like to encourage everyone to never treat a task you're given as empty work or useless.

Whatever you do in life, whether it be in your career or a daily task, make sure you are doing it to improve your little corner of the world. A change is a change no matter how small, and not one person alone can free the world of its ills.

You can achieve this by putting God first, other people second, and yourself after, but always remember that self love.

I would just like to quickly give out a few thank you's:

1. First of all to God, because without Him I would have nothing
2. Second, to my parents, there's absolutely no way I would be up here without you guys supporting me every day
3. To my sisters for always being models for me and my brother in law for protecting me as a real brother would
4. Thank you to Dr. Wheeler, Dr. Baron and Dr. Cuervo and the Barry Commoner Center staff
5. To my Macaulay fam, and *all* of you guys for inspiring me every day
6. And lastly, I just want to give 2 quick shout outs to the fam back in Brentwood, Long Island. And of course to my beautiful island of Puerto Rico, yo soy Boricua pa' que tu lo sepa!!

I also just wanna take a quick flic, so if you don't mind just looking at the camera

**\*\*TAKE SELFIE WITH PHONE**

Thank you and congratulations to us all once again!