

**STANLEY M. BERGMAN SPEECH  
2018 WESTERN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES  
COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS  
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**“ADOPT!”**

Thank you for that kind introduction, Dean Nelson. Thank you as well to the distinguished Western University of Health Sciences College of Veterinary Medicine faculty and administration for the privilege of joining you at this very important event. And my sincere congratulations go out to today's 2018 graduates and your families. It is a privilege to share a few thoughts with you as you begin what I am sure will be long and successful professional careers.

This is one of the first graduating classes of millennials here at the Veterinary College, which reminds me of a millennial associate of mine. She accompanied me to an event where I spoke last after a long evening of speakers. I saw that the crowd was restless and condensed my five-minute speech into about 35 seconds. After the event, my associate told me it was the best speech I had ever given. I asked what she liked best about it, and she said, “It was only 35 seconds long.” So, keeping my associate's advice in mind, I am going to be very brief today.

What we often see in vets' clinics is a sign that reads, “Adopt!” According to the ASPCA, approximately 6.5 million dogs and cats enter U.S. animal shelters each year. And thanks to the efforts of vets and animal advocacy groups, about half of these dogs and cats are adopted each year. In fact, at Henry Schein's headquarters on Long Island, we have hosted pet adoption events for our team members, who have added sheltered dogs and cats to their families.

I think that it is wonderful that the veterinary community encourages us to “adopt.” And today, as you celebrate this milestone achievement in your lives, I would like to encourage you to “adopt” in five ways plus one, regardless of the veterinary path you choose to take.

First, “adopt” a commitment to “show up.” When I was six years old in South Africa, I contracted jaundice and whooping cough, and was kept out of school for a year. One of my father's friends who imported portable transistor radios felt sorry for me, and he let me carry one of his radios around at my father's bowling games. At the game, another bowler asked me where he could buy a radio like that. My father's friend told me that if I could sell the portable radio to the bowler, I would be paid a commission. As a six-year-old, I did not know what it meant to be paid a commission, but I connected the buyer to the seller and received a check. I did not understand what a check was, but I learned quickly. This set me down a life-long entrepreneurial road and taught me a simple but critical lesson: showing up is important. I could easily sell the radio, but I had to show up – I had to be there with the radio.

Second, “adopt” the perspective of a camp counselor. It may surprise you to learn that veterinarians, and almost everyone, can learn something important from camp counselors. At 16, I helped organize summer camps for a youth movement in Port Elizabeth. The key lesson is that a summer camp counselor should engage everyone. This experience taught me to treat people how you want to be treated, to always look for the good in people and to be optimistic. Even today as a CEO, I still strive to apply the lessons I learned as a camp counselor: there is a role for each individual, every person

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can make a difference, and engage everyone in the mission. So, I encourage everyone to adopt the perspective of a camp counselor.

Third, “adopt” new technology. This means you also will need to “adopt” an open mindset. When I joined the health care industry 39 years ago, the veterinary, dental and medical professions were very different from what they are today. Over those 39 years I have had a front-row seat to technology-fueled innovation that has unfolded to transform modern health care practices. 39 years ago, can you imagine the reaction of a veterinarian being presented with the incredible digital and diagnostic tools that are commonplace in today’s veterinary clinic? Digital imaging; lasers; integrated practice management systems; electronic medical records; Internet connectivity; pet insurance; a website; electronic billing, claims and recall cards; Linked In; Facebook; and Instagram. And 39 years ago, tweeting was done by birds and now it’s creating fake news. Back then, all of this would have sounded like science fiction, but that is exactly what has happened since I joined the health care industry.

As Professor Klaus Schwab, founder and chairman of the World Economic Forum, wrote in his book, “The Fourth Industrial Revolution,” new ideas have changed our world through a series of industrial revolutions. The 1<sup>st</sup> Industrial Revolution was mechanized power in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Industrial Revolution was mass production and communication in the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Industrial Revolution was computerization and digitalization over the last 50 years, increasing access to technology each year.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution was ignited by Steve Jobs when he unveiled the iPhone in 2007. Apple connected the cell phone to the computer, and this connection gave birth to interoperability, transforming our world. We now live in an age of interoperability, marked by the fusion of technologies. The 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution is a fundamental change in the way we live, work, and relate to one another. It is unlike anything mankind has experienced before, and it is affecting the veterinary community.

The veterinary technology advancements we have seen over the past 39 years will pale in comparison to what we will see in the years to come when each of you will be in the prime of your professional careers. You will be the wave of veterinary professionals who will “adopt” and master new technology that we cannot even imagine now, and assimilate that technology to continually improve the care that you provide to patients. And the key to mastering new technology is to “adopt” an open mindset.

My next piece of advice is particularly heartfelt: Please “adopt” ways to give back to society and advance access to care. This is the mission of Henry Schein Cares, our Company’s global corporate social responsibility program. After graduation, there will be many opportunities for a veterinarian to give back, from donating your time at a local animal shelter, to contributing a portion of your fees for a week to an animal charity. Without exception, veterinarians who have done these and other activities have told me that the experience has enriched them as veterinary professionals. This is closely linked with “adopting” the right balance between your life as a veterinarian and your life outside of the profession. This is balance between professional life, family and “the other things in life,” which should always include social responsibility. You will find that “doing well by doing good” is a great formula for a fulfilling career.

Fifth, “adopt” the courage to succeed. Eleanor Roosevelt was a remarkable world leader who, although never elected to public office, influenced generations through her words and the example of

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her actions. Mrs. Roosevelt said, “Do one thing every day that scares you.” Now, I don’t think she was necessarily talking about skydiving or swimming with sharks. She was talking about the same thing that the late South African President Nelson Mandela – a personal hero of mine – offered as a life lesson several years later when he said, “Courage is not the absence of fear, it is learning to overcome it.”

It’s okay to be a little afraid – living a little on the edge. We need to continually push beyond the boundaries of our comfort zone. That can be scary to do, but beyond our boundaries is where true growth lies. The truth is that all of us are afraid at times in our career. This is only natural as we strive to expand our skills and our experiences. So, overcome your fear. Be willing to make mistakes – everyone does. The truth is that we all learn from our mistakes. I have always found that courage inspires those around us to reach beyond themselves as well, and bring out the best in those around you. Your courage will reassure your patients and their “pet parents,” staff and colleagues. And so, your courage will drive your career to heights that you may not have thought possible.

My final plus one addition is to adopt a “Why not?” attitude. “Think big” and never accept no as an answer. One quote has motivated me for decades. Senator Robert Kennedy asked the most important question we can ask in life when he reflected: “Some people see things as they are and ask, ‘Why?’ I dream things that never were and ask, ‘Why not?’” Now, Senator Kennedy met the poet Robert Frost at the inauguration of President John Kennedy in 1961 where Robert Frost spoke, and the Senator and poet shared a similar view of life. Robert Frost’s similar thought has always inspired me: “Two roads diverged in a wood and I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.”

These two quotes have helped drive Henry Schein’s success for decades as we have continually recreated our company to better serve our customers around the world. They hold equal importance for any veterinary graduate as you begin your career. When faced with opportunities during your career, do your homework and develop a plan. But if you believe in your vision, take the risk. You will discover, as I have, that “Why not?” is the most important question that you can ask yourself throughout your career, and I have found that the less traveled road is often the best path.

As new veterinarians, Western University of Health Sciences College of Veterinary Medicine is a great place to start, but this is just the beginning. Please “adopt” a willingness to tackle the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Adopt a commitment to show up. Adopt the perspective of a camp counselor. Adopt new technology and an open mindset. Adopt ways to give back to society and the right balance in your life. Adopt the courage to succeed. And adopt a “Why not?” attitude. If you “adopt” these ideas, you are taking important steps forward in building a long and successful veterinary career. And without a doubt, your best years are yet to come! Thank you, and once again congratulations on this tremendous achievement.