What are You Going to Do to Make the World a Better Place?

Excerpts from Alan Salzman’s Commencement 2011 Speech

As you think about careers...

1. It’s ok if you don’t know what you’re planning on doing with the rest of your life. Few people do, and those who do often find that they’re wrong. You are at the beginning, not the end, and you need to be open and flexible. Allow the knowledge that you pick up and the experiences you have over the next decade to shape and form your points of view. The worst thing in the world would be to form too rigid a view too soon.

2. Get some experience in sales. Business always entails an element of understanding the psychology and capabilities of selling.

3. Develop your skills at putting together a network—a useful set of friends and likeminded thought leaders who you can reach out to—and gain from their perspective.

4. Follow your interests and most importantly, make sure that you are informed. That’s both understanding what is going on in the broader world around you and thinking about why it is happening. You need to read the major newspapers and stay abreast of what is going on in the world. It is your ticket to understanding where things are going and how you fit into it.

As you look to start work…simple admonitions

1. Be the first to arrive in the morning and the last to leave.

2. If you are asked to do something, your response should be, “Would 9am tomorrow morning be soon enough?”

3. Your goal is to make the person you work for happy and make their life easier.

4. Make the effort.