

Intro

I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak to you for a couple of moments about a couple of convictions of mine, and they are growth and opportunity. By virtue of our Wharton pedigree, it seems that we are practically pre-ordained to succeed (or so the marketing folks here would have us believe). But what about those who don't make it into the Whartons of the world? More importantly, what about those unfortunate souls who don't even know that they exist? These are people who go through life blithely unaware of its opportunities and certainly their own untapped abilities.

We know they exist. We see them behind the counter, coming out of the factory when the shifts change, sweeping the floors when the lights go out. Yet, they are not so different from you or I, but for the choices they have made and the unknown opportunities that they have missed.

Now don't misunderstand me. I am not against people choosing whatever profession, career path, or lifestyle that they want. I merely want to ensure that this choice is an informed one. People should be able to grow through conscious decision rather than the state of their fortunes.

Broadly, I want to ensure that people gain the information they need to make informed choices about their future early enough in their lives to make a difference yet late enough that they have the ability to make their own decisions. More specifically, I am asking you to join me in empowering high school students to explore their possibilities by facilitating connection with graduates of their own high schools in mentoring relationships. Together, we can ensure that students have access to the expertise of those people who have invariably taken the exact same steps they are about to make.

Message

As we move through our lives, there is no shortage of opportunities to take on mentoring roles. What is missing, however, is a mechanism to connect people in mentoring relationships that allows them to pass on expert information that they know will be relevant to the person receiving it. By facilitating this connection, high school graduates will know that the experiences they have gained and

information they pass on will allow those who follow in their footsteps to benefit from lessons learned and avoid mistakes made. They will know that they have made a difference.

Most of us have probably moved away from where we grew up and we have little time as it is. I envision a web interface that allows graduates, in the span of a couple of minutes, to enter information about themselves, their lives, experiences, accomplishments – how little or how much - with that information automatically compiled into a database searchable by students from each graduate's own high school. With the resources at their fingertips (and perhaps some delicate prodding from a school counselor), we can empower students to help themselves.

Who was it that put you on the track you where find yourself now? Perhaps, it was a number of people at different times. Strip away all of the advice and encouragement you received to seek new opportunities, to further your growth. Ask yourself, where would you be today without those people? That is exactly where a lot of current high school students will find themselves tomorrow without a mentor to guide them in making practical decisions that will effect them for the rest of their lives.

Conclusion

To my mind, Emerson was wrong. It is not sufficient that we go to our grave knowing that even one life has breathed easier because we have lived. I want to know that a lot of lives have breathed easier because we all have lived.

Join me in developing this concept into a working product and together we can make a difference by allowing others to make a difference. I am asking each of you to join me in forming a venture team during the remainder of the academic year to develop this concept into a working product. No specific expertise is required. I certainly have none. What you can provide, however, is your keen intellect and the innate ability to find opportunities to further your personal growth, as demonstrated by your having made it this far. We will meet at least weekly to discuss and implement this idea with a goal of having a workable product in place for at least one high school by the time we graduate.

I am merely looking for individuals wanting to make a difference by helping others make a difference as well.

And not only that, I want to know that we have created a movement that will outlast us, ensuring that future generations will continue to reach back and lend a hand to those who come after them.

If you are willing to make a difference, please visit Alums4students.com and provide whatever information about yourself you would like to make a difference in a growing high school student's life. Also, given my passion for this subject, I would like to follow-up individually with each of you who is interested in helping, so please provide your name and e-mail address on the sheet that I am passing around.

Are there any questions?