



ENGLISH SPEECHES

WITH BIG
SUBTITLES



KRISTEN BELL

BUILD YOUR TRIBE

<https://youtu.be/ssc3G5-uAoM>

Hello, good morning, class of 2019. Thank you so much for having me. It is an incredible honor to stand here before you today. Thank you to the faculty, to the guests, the families, and to all the gorgeous students among us who are beyond the shadow of a doubt, nursing, raging hangovers and praying that this Disney princess keeps the let it go. Metaphors to a minimum. So, I see you.

I got you.

I want to start today by sharing a secret about myself that you might not know. I did not graduate from college.

Dean is in a full flop sweat thinking. Oh my God, nobody double-checked. I had a feeling when I saw her outfit because no one with a respectable degree would wear hoops of that size. Who let her in here. But that leads me to another thing about me, which is, um, I'm nice. And as it turns out, when you are nice, people tend to overlook a lot.

In some cases, this could include experience, credentials, not having your driver's license at airport security. And yes, that's a true story twice. And you might say, Kristen, no, that's not a result to being nice. That's the result and the privilege of being a recognizable person, and okay, that may be true, but I will counter with my husband who is also highly recognizable and doesn't get away with anything. Literally 10 out of 10 times he is getting a pat-down at TSA, and that's because he's just not as nice as me. Don't get me wrong. I love him; I love him. He's brilliant; he's hilarious. He's, literally, my favorite person, but he's even nicest person.

I don't know guys. I just don't know, and I tell you this at the risk of divorce because I can't offer you the tricks of how to wield your shining diploma to ensure success. I can't tell you the answer to the age-old actor's dilemma. Should I move to New York? Should I stay in LA? And for goodness sakes, I cannot tell you what a Magna Carta is or what it even does. I literally don't know. I don't have to answer any of those questions. And let me tell you a secret. Nobody has the answer to those questions. My soul trick to share with you is when you listen, when you really listen to people, when you listen as fiercely as you want to be heard, when you respect the idea that you are sharing the earth with other humans, when you lead with your nice foot forward, you'll win every time. It might not be today, it might not be tomorrow, but it comes back to you when you need it. We live in an age of instant gratification, of immediate likes and it is uncomfortable to have to wait to see the dividends of your kindness, but I promise you it will appear exactly when you need it. It will appear at the precise moment when you pass gas in an elevator, and everyone blames your husband instead of you.



ENGLISH SPEECHES

WITH BIG SUBTITLES

That is when the boomerang of kindness hits you back. It's also a very true story. Numerous times over, though it wouldn't be fair if I just waxed on about kindness and I didn't also include its inevitable downside it's relevant to know that sometimes when you choose nice, it does come with a price tag. Being nice sometimes means avoiding the obvious joke. Like for instance, I'm me, and I've chosen this path, this speech to be nice at an institution like this. I am choosing not to reference aunt Becky in any way shape.

Thank you.

In fact, I'm so nice. I'm not even going to mention my actual aunt, Becky for fear. It is simply too close to the fire and let me be real. Removing those jokes is a bit of a sacrifice but, but dare I say prioritizing your emotional intelligence over your logical intelligence can at times feel like a compromise but it does pay off. You were right to pay off not. It was not the best choice of words for this particular.

I'm not; I'm not perfect. I'm not, I'm not perfect, but I am trying, and you know what I should have led with that. I am by no means perfect. I am also not telling you what to do. I mean, my second child is the result of unprotected makeup, sex in a hot tub in the Hawaiian islands. I am in no position to give advice. Hand to God. I can't do it. All I can do is share my experience with you. My husband always says, if you see someone who has what you want, ask them how they got it. Unfortunately, Beyonce has yet to reply to my emails, so I don't have all the answers yet, but she will like, don't worry. She's definitely going to, so I'm pretty sure I say this because if there is anything about my life that seems even slightly aspirational, hopefully, some of this will be helpful to you. And if not, feel free to slowly pull the flask hiding in your underwear out and just have it. I'm not your mom. You know what I mean? It's if it's not hurting anyone, great. Get yours, and you know what, maybe share some with your neighbors. Now the tricky thing about finding someone who has what you want is it; you also have to know what you want. Right? So that seems simple enough, but it's actually very hard because our brains are arrogant assholes. The brain thinks it's running the show, but the heart is secretly pulling strings. It's very true. Our brains are the King Joffrey of our bodies, and our hearts are the granny Tyrell, right? Very true. We think we know what we want, but we often have no idea what we need, and because of that, we often approach life with one goal, and we end up finding our real purpose along the way. When I left New York, and I came to LA, I had the singular goal of becoming the lead on a TV show. I had gained some experience in New York, playing a naive weed, obsessed sexpot, and reefer madness. I thought, perfect, I'm ready for Los Angeles. Surely I will be embraced immediately. So I hopped on a plane.

I arrived in the land where the streets are soaked in sunshine and self-tanner residue. I had the confidence of an overserved freshmen at a frat party. I was like, here I am, and I began the process of auditioning, which it's really just a condensed way to say driving back and forth to Santa Monica in rush hour traffic, but the feedback that I received was that I was always either too young, too old, too cute, too plain, too smart, too ditz. It was as if goldilocks were every casting director and I just couldn't nail it, and eventually, I started booking some costar and guest star roles, but my coveted lead alluded me, and I would go to bed negotiating with the universe. I would say, okay, if I could just book the lead on CIS and CIS: Miami, I promise I will decrease my carbon footprint by at least six in the next calendar year.



ENGLISH SPEECHES

WITH BIG
SUBTITLES

So clearly I know absolutely nothing about the measure of carbon. I find it almost as confusing as the concept of the Magna Carta, but then it happened. I was cast on Veronica Mars, which was my first show, and everything I ever wanted was in front of me. I was earning a real paycheck. I was the lead of a TV show. I owed the universe all my carbon. But once we started shooting, something very unexpected happened to me. Well, two unexpected things. The first was Ryan Hansen who played Dick Casablanca's, his hair. It was the exact, almost too accurate to one point shade of surfer bond blonde boy. It was like the kind that gives you PTSD from walking along. Then a speech that you're just like, whoa. It was terrifying, and I loved it. The second was that despite the recognition of my dream, I wasn't happy like at all. My arrogant little ass whole brain could not comprehend what was happening.

I was like, how was this possible? This is what I wanted and what I needed, right? And yet I had it all, and I was lonelier than I had ever been. And it wasn't until the boy with the surfer's hair invited me to his birthday party after hours offset away from work that everything changed. He wasn't just inviting me to his birthday party. He was inviting me to his life party, to his community, and I finally felt at home, and I made some of the best friends that I still have to this day. It in retrospect, I know it wasn't the role I was looking for. It wasn't a paycheck or a titular character. I, what I really needed was friendship. So I want to stress to you, build your tribe. They will keep you alive. I'm also pretty sure that's what Beyonce would say.

Speaking of pillars of an American entertainment, uh, it is now the portion of the morning where I remind everyone that life is 50 shades of gray. I have to assume I'm the first speaker in an academic institution that has referenced the book 50 shades of gray. But we have already established that I dropped out of college. I have no right to be here. So this is where we arrived. I don't know what you want me to do in my, in my life, there was only one concept that I have determined. It's that everything is gray. Every person, every question, every tragedy, even every victory, they all have nuance. Pay attention to the nuance. You all in this room, I feel like know that better than anyone. You know it in your bones because you've devoted your time to building stories, building people. It's what you do.

You are people architects. You read a script, and you construct a walking, breathing human from the ground up. When we create characters, we are encouraged to make them three-dimensional, right? And acting two-dimensional characters they are at the least boring and at the most extreme irresponsible. We're told to embrace complicated characters. We are taught that you can't accurately play a villain until you find one thing about him that you love. One of my favorite producers has a poster over his desk that reads what does the villain want? Because in art, we recognize all characters start with an empathetic motivation on stage. We prioritize listening because we know the livelihood of the show relies on it. We are good at remembering those things when we make art, but in our daily lives, we tend to forget when we shift from the stage to reality nuance seems to get lost in the shuffle in real life.

We don't look for the one thing we love about each person. Complicated characters get cast out, and we view things two dimensionally. It's also becoming increasingly apparent. We're not listening to each other. Even though like on stage, the livelihood of this entire grand show relies on it. The great news is we can all choose, right? When hard moments arise. You can lean on the experience you've gleaned in these past four years, and you can choose the nuance. You can choose complexity over simplicity. You can listen to others with open ears as if your next move depends on it. You can Sandy Meisner your life. So, class of 2019 as you



ENGLISH SPEECHES

WITH BIG SUBTITLES

move your tassel from the left to the right and officially take the steps forward toward your forever, I encourage you, take them with your nice foot. And if you take away one thing from this, remember what I said earlier. If it's not hurting anyone, great get yours and maybe share some with your neighbor. Thank you, and congratulations.