

IMAGINE 2013
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Hi. 😊

It's so great to meet you.

This moment is unique for me. Every September, I stand on this stage and speak to UBC's newest students, imagining as I do what we will create together over the next four or more years, how UBC will change, how you and I will change, and knowing as I speak that we will all come together again, one final time, for your graduation.

But this year is different. This year, your first at UBC, is my last. So this moment is particularly poignant for me. This is the *only* moment in time that all of us will share. And I'm going to ask for your help with something: Help me make this moment count.

It's become a cliché, hasn't it, "making the moment count," because we want to believe we're going to do it, but we're pretty sure we won't. Between TV, computer gaming, and Google searching alone, we'll waste countless moments throughout our lives. We're pretty good at making the most of the "big moments" when they come along—first day of university, the big game, the big exam, the big date, graduation—but we so easily lose sight of how precious the small ones are. I want to use this moment we have together to give you a way to remember.

So ... are you ready? ARE YOU READY?

My senior advisor warned me not to use the Latin, not on the first day. But I've got the outfit and I've got the microphone and I'm going to use the Latin. I told him I think you can handle the Latin.

Can you handle the Latin? CAN YOU HANDLE THE LATIN?

[silence]

Memento mori. [pause] “Remember that you will die.”

That’s it. [pause] That’s my secret. And believe me when I say that the older you get, the easier it is to remember! But this idea is making its way into the collective consciousness of every generation. I’ve seen a Lululemon bag, of all things, that says, “Visualize your eventual demise. It can have an amazing effect on how you live in this moment.”

And that’s the point, of course: not just to remember you’re going to die, but to remember to live! Fully. Completely. Authentically. In other words, yes, if you fulfill all your course requirements, you’ll graduate. But what do you want the years and months and moments between now and then to *feel* like? What new version of yourself do you want to be when you get there?

Who here knows what a bucket list is? [hands; pause] Okay, and who here *has* a bucket list? [reaction] A bucket list is a list of the all

things you want to do before you kick the bucket. For example: “I must remember to add skydiving to my bucket list.” Having a bucket list helps you *carpe diem*. That’s Latin for “seize the day.” The bucket list keeps you focused on what’s most important to *you*.

I have two bucket lists. I know, I know ... you’re thinking, “Of course *he* has bucket lists. He’s old.” It’s true. I’m one of the lucky ones. Not everybody gets to get old. Think about that. So I have two lists: one for my final year at UBC that includes making sure UBC is a leader in flexible learning, as well as finally taking that walk on Wreck Beach. [pause] Fully dressed. [pause] In winter. I have a second list for the life I envision for myself after I leave UBC, and that one includes making a new contribution in the field of international human rights law, where my heart lies.

One for UBC; one for after UBC. The items on your list don’t have to be huge. In fact, sometimes *minima maxima sunt*. Latin: the smallest things are the most important.

The only requirement is that the author be *you*—not your friends, not your family, not your professors. Your lists won't look like anyone else's. And that's the way it should be.

Don't put off writing them. ***Tempis fugit***. Latin again, for “time flies.” These years at UBC may be the most political, heightened, charged time of your life. There is a special energy belonging only to this time that will accelerate you through an almost vertical learning curve, dismantle most if not all of your old belief systems, and transform you radically, forging you into a more awake, more aware, more capable version of yourself. Your relationships will change and some will end. You will travel, perhaps across the globe, perhaps to deeper levels of your own consciousness. Your vocabulary will change. You will speak new languages. You will invent, create, perform, compete, collaborate, discover, and contribute of yourself in ways you cannot even imagine in this moment. But what you *can* do right now is say yes. Invite it all in. Though there will be days when it doesn't seem so, this time is

short, and it will never come again. The university is the universe made tangible for a brief and wondrous time in your lives.

And UBC will be changed during your time here. Today's theme is "I am UBC." *I* am UBC. *You* are UBC. The thing is, I'm *not* UBC.

And *you* are not UBC. [pause] It's the other way around: UBC is us.

We call UBC a place of mind but it is more mind than place, and this mind is the collective vision we bring to our time here together.

We don't just experience it; we create it. And in the process, we create the next version, the next evolution of UBC. UBC will be what *we become* while we are here.

And the very best thing about it? ***Tu um est.*** Yep, Latin. It's UBC's motto, and it means, "It's yours." It also means, "It's up to you."

This place, these people you're traveling with, these years, this time in which you live ... it's yours, and what you make of it, and of yourself, is up to you.

***Memento mori. Tempis fugit, carpe diem, minima maxima
sunt.***

Remember that your time here is short, and make every moment count. Time flies, so seize the day—not tomorrow but *this* day—and do what you came here to do. Don't judge the inspirations as they come; sometimes the smallest-seeming things lead to the greatest learnings, the biggest discoveries, the highest contributions. These years at UBC are yours; this life is yours. *Tuum est.*

Welcome to UBC.