

# SPEECH OF DR. UPJIT SINGH SACHDEVA

Former Honorary Consul General of India in Liberia and the Founder  
and CEO of Jeety Trading Corporation,

On the Occasion of the 6th Graduation Exercise of The BlueCrest  
University College Held on October 22, 2022, At Dominion Church,  
Congo Town

Mr. Dev Varyani, Chairman of the BLUECREST UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE Governing Council;

Mr. Dr. Umesh Neelakantan, President BlueCrest University College;

The faculty members;

Staff members;

My dear students,

Distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen.

I am most pleased for the opportunity given to me to be a part of the 6<sup>TH</sup> Convocation exercise of BlueCrest University College. Today, we – families, friends, participants, guests, school administrators, and instructional staff, are gathered here for graduation – probably one of the most important occasions yet for some, and for others, the most important moment in their educational and career journey. By that I mean, some will leave here today and further their education while others will just slot into the workforce either as employees in the public or private sector or as tech entrepreneurs. Whatever the case is, graduation marks the end of one beautiful journey and the beginning of a beautiful, exciting, but challenging new journey.

We live in a world that changes rapidly occasioned by frequent technological advances that are disruptive yet beneficial. These tech graduates here today embarked on this journey years ago in order to position themselves to thrive in this exciting and ever-changing world that is driven by technology.

Quite frankly, Liberia is behind the technology revolution. That is why I am excited to be here to celebrate these graduates that have taken a bold step to venture into a career area we will all agree, is most needed in Liberia at this time. Let me advise you, while it is worthy to seek employment after here, I like to encourage you to organize yourself into businesses, each person bringing a different piece of the technological puzzle, to begin to research, analyze and create digital solutions or software to solve the myriad of problems besetting Liberia.

At this incredibly young age, it is not lost on me that you would have fears about venturing into entrepreneurship. I understand. Your fear is not misplaced, especially at a time when Liberia and the rest of the world are more volatile, and uncertain. However, let me caution you to not let your fear paralyze you into doing nothing. You have acquired the knowledge and have the ability, so explore -- be daring. You can make the difference.

You have the power to effect change. Therefore, do not say, "I'm afraid to fail." Those who face challenges, learn to innovate, and stay afloat. This is the secret of my success as a businessperson. Know this: Liberia needs people who will not seek the easy way out, but those who will dare to drive change amid uncertainty.

*The famous scientist, Thomas Edison once said, and I quote "Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up." Unquote.*

*Also, former US President John F. Kennedy said, and I quote, "Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly." Unquote.*

*Literary genius, George Bernard Shaw said, and I quote, “A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable but more useful than a life spent in doing nothing.” Unquote.*

In essence, these great men were saying to their generations, which is relevant today, as it was then, that giving up should not be an option and that we should never be afraid of making mistakes. It is only people who try that can give up and or make mistakes. So go ahead and try to find answers to the problems around us and never give up trying.

If you look at the history of developed societies today, you will notice that it is the people, their businesses, and their struggles that have allowed these societies and countries to rise and are now called the first world. Countries, like Liberia today, were all up against formidable odds. But they dared to think critically and creatively, took on the challenge, and turned them into opportunities.

They developed technologies to fight the odds. It is their hard work that has brought them where they are now.

*This brings me to John F. Kennedy's famous 1960s quotation, “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country.”*

So, like JFK, let me challenge you graduates to ask not what Liberia can do for you at this time, but how you, with your education, can help Liberia rise and meet its development goals and objectives. Liberia has just eight more years to accomplish its goal of becoming a middle-income country, according to the country’s vision 2030 plan. You will agree that we are a long way off and chances are that if we do not all work harder and smarter, we might not achieve this goal. But I am more optimistic, that with exciting new talents like you, the vision 2030 goal is within reach.

But the reality is, this dream might just be good for a paper if you, as graduates today, do not lead the way. You have to recognize that Liberia depends on your knowledge to achieve vision 2030. It is you and only you that has the power to take the necessary action to alter and change the nation's development course.

The future is yours to shape -- with the force of your will – and your intellect, I am certain of a better future for Liberia, a country that is my home. I have lived in Liberia for more than three decades, so I know what I am speaking of. I have lived my whole adult life in Liberia; therefore, I am a Liberian by heart and an Indian by nationality.

The Liberia you see today did not just happen. The outgoing generation of mine, work hard to bring it this far, now it is your turn. So, no matter what, you have to face these challenges but do so with unwavering dedication. This way, you can make a specific contribution to Liberia.

You are capable. And I cannot think of a better place to look for such people than right here at BlueCrest. And as tech graduates, you must consider what the country needs and then work to make it a reality. So, start thinking about how you might serve your nation.

It could be an idea that improves public transport, or health management software that enhances the healthcare delivery and the quality of life; or a platform that promotes the beauty of Liberia to the world through tourism, to expand the country's economy.

You could also build a web-based platform that connects farmers directly to consumers in order to enable farmers across the country to have access to the market directly while accessing reasonable prices for their products. You can also do similar for stores selling construction materials: You can create an e-commerce platform that connects them directly with consumers. Better still, an app that provides music therapy to sick and elderly Liberians.

Whatever the case, it is your responsibility to harness the power of technology to help Liberia achieve vision 2030. If you are frightened of failure, then you will not invent anything that would lead to change.

*Bill Gates once said and I quote, “It’s fine to celebrate success but it is more important to heed the lessons of failure.” Unquote. So go our graduates, when you try and fail, learn the lesson from your failures and be ready to approach your next opportunity more creatively.*

*Then Mark Zuckerberg said, and I quote, “The biggest risk is not taking any risk. In a world that changes really quickly, the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks.” Unquote. As Zuckerberg said, don’t be afraid to take risks, because it is by taking risks that you can accomplish great feats.*

*Also, Henry Ford, the founder of Ford Motor Corporation, said, “The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing.” Unquote. Ford, like Gates, is saying to you graduate, you must learn from your mistakes and failures because to do otherwise is to forfeit the lessons of the experience that you will need to move ahead.*

Going forward, and considering these quotations, it is clear that if we allow ourselves to be paralyzed by the fear of the unknown, when we refuse to learn the lessons from our failures and mistakes, and when we fail to take risks, we would have failed Liberia. But when we rise to the challenge, we can drive change. The opportunities and means at the disposal of your generation are far greater than were available to mine. You are connecting in ways that were not possible before ... the connections are what make you stronger. If you are awake, you are online ... do not take that power for granted. Leverage it.

Be curious. Ask a lot of big questions and try to find the answers. You have the knowledge at your fingertips, so explore it now and make Liberia a better place. The technological knowledge you have now can solve lots of trade and social problems. Do not sit on it, Liberia needs it.

If we look into your surroundings, there are enormous examples of Liberians who muster the odds and are now contributing positively to the socio-economy growth of Liberia. You can do the same. So, I implore you to do the same. Develop that resolve and start with just an idea, it could grow into something big. Considering this perspective, you will discover your position to contribute towards the betterment of Liberia -- recreating it in your own image. Make the Liberia you envision a reality

Bill Gates, once the world's richest man, made his fortune when he dropped out of college to found Microsoft. Today, we depend on Microsoft for communication, and we cannot do without it.

The lesson here is that risk-taking is necessary. But having a clear vision of what you want to achieve is more than necessary. Failures will come along the way but do not be frightened. To live, you must continually reinvent yourself, or else you will fall by the wayside and be forgotten.

So, graduates, I say, look forward and help Liberia achieve the vision 2030 by becoming a middle-income country – a country that will become fully integrated into the bold new technological world.

BlueCrest has prepared you with the skill set that is needed to make the change. Education exposes us to new ideas and concepts, and this is why Change is the result of all true learning.

*Malcolm X said: “Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.” Unquote.*

*Also, Mahatma Gandhi said: “Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.” Ladies and gentlemen, may we stand up for a minute together to applaud the Graduates for their success.” Unquote.*

Finally, may I thank BlueCrest University College for the Invitation, and wish all the Graduates all the best in their future endeavors. To the Teaching Staff, keep up your excellent work in helping shape the minds of future leaders.

Thank you and wish you all the best! Cheers to a new day in your life! He who loves his country best strives to make it best.

As I leave this podium, remember this saying of a famous Indian poet, Thiruvalluar, “Learn well whatever is worthy of learning, then act according to that learning.”