



The Power of Making Decisions
PCWD Keynote Speaker -
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Congratulations on your accomplishments. As I've become more familiar with the Training and Employment Program, I've given a great deal of thought to what your participation in the program indicates about your character, your future and your demonstrated ability to make good decisions.

One phrase, in particular, on the program web site, caught my eye. “This is an unpaid training program”. After I read those words, that sentence made me think: “Wow, Who are these women who looked beyond the notion of money and were able to see opportunity instead. You made a decision of self worth that is evidence you’re willing to stake a claim on a preferred future. You made a life altering decision when you chose to apply to the Training and Employment program. It will prove to be a good decision. Sigmund Freud once said, “When making a decision of minor importance, I have always found it advantageous to consider all the pros and cons. In **vital** matters, however, such as the choice of a mate or a profession, the decision should come from the unconscious, from somewhere within ourselves. In the important decisions of personal life, we should be governed, he says, by the deep inner needs of our nature. “ Which brings me to the point of my remarks.

If there is one thing I want you to remember, it is that you should never underestimate yourself or take lightly the decisions you make at various forks in the road. I often think that as individuals we forget who we really are. With eloquence Nelson Mandela expressed this: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light that most frightens us. He goes on to say, We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? And then the final question: Actually, who are we not to be?” any of those things?

Along those same lines.....

There’s a song I like very much where a woman talks about how she’s viewed by someone else. She says “I guess I’m too close to the mirror to see what you see”. I bet, today, you’re surrounded by people who have said as much to you. Those people who believe in you.... have supported you....and are here to celebrate you. The woman in this song I love... She goes on to mention that in looking back on her life there were decisions she made that didn’t move her life forward at the speed and in the way she had hoped. And we **all**, at one time or another, have had that thought. Including me. There are many times when I’ve said Oh, I wish I had done that 5 years ago or right after high school or right after college or right after ... well, you name it. These types of wishes are all a part of maturity.... A spark of insight into our own possibilities.

You know, In ancient times, people believed that who we are is reflected in our names. So, I thought I would use this occasion to tell you a little about yourselves according to what your name says about you.

Let's begin with April. April, your name originally derived from a Latin word that means "to open"..... much like flowers do in the Spring. Your name says to me that doors of opportunity are yours for the taking now that your mind is open to all you possess in your "possibilities". Knock on those doors long and hard. You've earned the right through your success in this program. Somebody is going to answer that knock. Walk through boldly and proudly. Will you join me in giving a **knock** of opportunity for April?

Mabel your name also derives from the Latin. It means "lovable". That says to me that you're going to have people on your side from the moment they meet you. People who will want to help you take these next steps into the future that you had in mind when you began this journey. Will you join me in reminding MAH-BELL about the meaning of her name. Let's all say "LOVABLE".

Andrea, your name originates from the Greek and it means "a man's woman". Now that gave me pause until I remembered a quote from Margaret Thatcher, that great British politician. Ms. Thatcher said, "If you want anything **said**, ask a man. If you want something **done**, ask a woman". So Andrea, live up to your name. It's the name of a go-getter. It's the name of a woman who knows how to compete...and who will win. So repeat after me, will you, so together we remind Andrea to get her engine going so she can enter the race that will get her ahead in life. Say, "If you want something done"...."ask Andrea.....

Birdie, it won't surprise you to know that the contemporary definition of your name is "little bird". I decided to go one step further with your name and I looked up Etienne. You know, Etienne is a boy's name of Greek origin and it means "crown". Well, what

could be a more fitting description of a graduation ceremony. You've made a very good finish to a choice you made and here you sit...an achiever. So I'm going to ask those attending to repeat after me these words... so that we can **crown** Birdie with well deserved encouragement. Say "reward" "dignify" "honor" "fulfill".

Tarah, the origins of your name rests in Gaelic. it means "elevated place". I'm inspired by what Thoreau once said, "If a man constantly aspires, is he not elevated?" your name says to keep reaching for that next chance to advance. Say "yes" to new experiences, Tarah. dream big. step high. "raise the roof". The urban dictionary says that to raise the roof is to remove all limitations. Shall we "raise the roof" on Tarah's future?

Kathleen, your name means "pure". I read a passage that says

Purity, patience, and preserverance are the three essentials to success. Your name indicates the gifts of clarity and directness. It's about integrity and highmindedness. What better characteristics to lead a person to success in personal and professional life. So Kathleen, we send you forward with these words from Ralph Marston. Will everyone

repeat after me: Kathleen,

"Your goals, minus your doubts, equal your reality"

Anel closest I could get to your name was Anela which is Hawaiian for “angel”.

Typically, our loved ones tell us we look like an angel or we behave like an angel. But since we’re talking here, about possibilities and the future, I think of the great sculptor, Michelangelo who once tried to explain why he could create such beautiful things like figures of angels out of stone and marble. He said “ I saw the angel in the marble and I carved until I set him free” It’s about releasing all our potential. Others may see great things in us. They become excited by what they see. My guess, Anel, is that you possess those things that will excite people about your future. So, if you will say after me to remind Anel of who she is, repeat... Anel, we see the angel in the marble, keep carving until you set her free”.

Kameela your name has origins in Arabic and it means “perfection”. Well, what does one do with perfection? Perfection is one of those hoped for qualities that all human beings prize. It is important, of course, to desire perfection in worthy things. Perfect character. Perfect happiness. Perfect life. How to achieve those things becomes the journey of each day. In popular culture its called keeping your eyes on the prize. The big goals in life are made up of what might seem ordinary and bits and pieces of the “every day” But, Kameela, we have a thought for you as well on this, your important day. repeat after me:

“Kameela, "It's not what you look at that matters, it's what you see." ~ Henry David

Thoreau

Debra we share a first name. It Means "bee" in Hebrew.

Aerodynamically, the bumble **bee** shouldn't be able to fly, but the bumble **bee** doesn't know it so it goes on flying anyway.”

~ Mary Kay Ash quotes (American businesswoman, She founded Mary Kay Cosmetics (1963). b.1915)

Christina means anointed, dedicated to a special purpose

“Life is a promise; fulfill it.”

Mother Theresa

Jeanine means gracious, characterized by charm, good taste, and generosity of spirit. excellence of manners or social conduct.

Nerissa was created by [Shakespeare](#) for a character in his play 'The Merchant of Venice' (1596). In Shakespeare's play she plays the role of the good friend. described as clever and self-confident. “I have learned, that if one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams, and endeavors to live the life he has imagined, he will meet with a success unexpected in common hours”. Henry David Thoreau

Jocelyn means light hearted, cheerful

“there is no personal charm so great as the charm of a cheerful temperament”...Henry Van Dyke

That favorite song I mentioned ends in a very meaningful way. I think you'll agree with me when I share with you that ending. It goes like this: "**When I thought about giving up.....if you hold on....don't faint....**

So you see, it speaks to the kind of strength you all possess as demonstrated by your accomplishment against hard odds. But it doesn't end there. It continues with words that speak to how others see us differently than the way we may see ourselves. To me it says, keep going. You never know what's on the horizon. The song says it better than I do. It says:

"you don't see me like I am, you see me like I'm gonna be,
so I believe I'll run on and see what the ends gonna be".

