

**COMMENCEMENT SPEECH FOR STANLEY BERGMAN
CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE
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Thank you for that kind introduction, Dean Chance. Thank you as well to the distinguished faculty and administration of the Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine for the privilege of joining you at this very important event. And to today's graduates and your families, please accept my sincere and enthusiastic congratulations. This is a wonderful accomplishment and the start of what is certain to be a long and successful career in a very exciting profession. Or to put it in dental terms, this certainly is a crowning achievement.

Being back at a university graduation reminds me of the story of the philosophy professor who gave a final exam to his class. The only question on the test was, "Why?" Everyone in the class began to write feverishly, except for one student who wrote something quickly, handed in his paper in under two minutes, and left. The professor angrily opened the test booklet, ready to fail the student, and read two words – "Why not?" And the professor immediately gave the student an A.

So today, I want to share with the graduating class two important words that will change your life – "Why not?"

"Why not?" is more than a question that we ask ourselves once – it is a view on life. No one exemplified this better than the late Senator Robert Kennedy, who paraphrased George Bernard Shaw and said, "Some men see things as they are and ask why...I dream of things that never were and ask why not?" Building on that thought was the American poet Robert Frost, who wrote, "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference." Don't be afraid of answering the question "why not?" with an unconventional answer.

Henry Schein asked, "Why Not?" at a few critical points in our company's history. In 1932, our founders, Henry and Esther Schein asked, "Why not start a business in the midst of the Great Depression?" Then over the years we asked: "Why not create the first dental products catalog with published prices?" "Why not create the first guide to asepsis control in dental offices in response to the AIDS crisis?" "Why not use dental practice management systems to increase efficiency and quality of care?" "Why not advance open architecture in the digitalization of dental solutions?" And today we continue to ask, "Why not?" in our business.

Determination and asking, "Why not?" is a path to success, but it is not a guarantee of success. So many leaders have risen after falls to achieve success. In 1919, Walt Disney was fired from a newspaper because he "lacked imagination." In 1946, Sony founder Akio Morita first introduced a faulty rice cooker that sold fewer than 100 units. From 1843 to 1858, R.H. Macy's businesses failed seven times before he founded

Macy's. Winston Churchill, who inspired Britain through World War II, did so only after serious failures in World War I, which led to his dismissal from the cabinet and the War Council, and his subsequent years spent in the wilderness.

We will all experience failure at some time in our career. We should never be discouraged; we should continue to ask, "Why not?" Because every time we ask, "why not?" we are one step closer to a breakthrough.

Asking "Why not?" changed my life 35 years ago. In 1980 as a young accountant from South Africa, Jay Schein, my client at that time and the man who would become my mentor, invited me to change my career path and join his family's company, Henry Schein. During the next nine years, Jay was my mentor, coach and facilitator. He presented me and many others with opportunity after opportunity to grow professionally – to ask, "Why not?" again and again. When Jay tragically and unexpectedly passed away in 1989, I was ready to fulfill Jay's wish and take on the biggest challenge of my life at a very young age, leading Henry Schein. And by following Jay's example, by continuing to ask, "Why not?" we have built Henry Schein into a multinational Fortune 300 company, and a Fortune World's Most Admired company.

Everyone in the graduating class has already asked yourself "Why not?" on at least two important points in your life. First you asked, "Why not become a dentist?" Then you asked, "Why not attend the Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine?" Those are two excellent questions, and you certainly answered them correctly. Earlier this year, U.S. News and World Report rated being a dentist as the number one occupation of 2015 (dental hygienist was not far behind at number five.) So, congratulations on making the right choices so far in your profession. That's two questions down and hundreds more to come.

As a graduating dentist, "Why not?" is about taking full advantage of all that this wonderful profession has to offer. From here on, your dental career will be series of intriguing "Why not?" opportunities. Why not choose a relatively traditional path and become a general dentist in a contemporary technology-driven practice? Why not consider specialty training, which will be in great demand with the aging baby boomer population? Why no join a Dental Support Organization, a large group practice, or a corporately-owned multi-site practice that is based on delivering quality care? Why not pursue a career in research or academia? Or why not earn a degree in public health or an MBA, which would help you master the emerging health care structures in the wake of the Affordable Care Act?

Your choice of a career path will be based on your individual interests and goals. There is no wrong path if you take the advice of my late father, who arrived as a refugee on the shores of South Africa without a penny in his pocket to become a prominent community leader and successful retail business owner. He told my brother and me, "It does not matter what you do in life as long as you do the best you can." Also, always be on the lookout for good mentors, who will in the end influence your life more than anyone else.

The link between oral health and overall health is clear. There is an increasing number of scientific studies being published indicating an association between periodontal disease and oral bacteria with low birth weight, pre-term birth, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, heart attacks, strokes, colorectal cancer and Alzheimer's disease. So here is another question: "Why not become a leader in advancing oral health, wellness and prevention?" We are quickly moving from an orientation of "sick care" to "health care," with a focus of keeping people well and addressing health issues before they become acute. As a graduating dentist, why not communicate this important information to your patients and enhance public health?

That leads to another question: "Why not become part of an inter-professional health care team?" Case Western Reserve is at the epicenter of this seismic shift in health care. The beautiful new Case Western Reserve University facility that is planned will integrate the Dental, Medical and Nursing schools in a state-of-the-art education campus that is adjacent to the Cleveland Clinic. This underscores the fact that oral health to a greater extent is becoming part of primary care, and there is an important seat at table for the dentist who understands and can work within this new framework. So why not become a part of that new dynamic, part of a collaborative treatment network that focuses on enhancing patient outcomes?

Another key question is, "Why not embrace exciting new oral health technology throughout your career?" Having watched the astounding evolution of the dental profession over the past 35 years, nothing has impressed me more than the continuing acceleration of oral health technology.

Dr. Gordon Christensen, one of the global thought leaders in the dental profession, says: "The paradigm shift going on in dentistry today is the most major and significant in my long career. The change to digital is profound. It is in almost everything we do in a dental practice ranging from the records we take to the crowns we seat to the medications we prescribe."

Digitized impressions, digital prosthetics & laboratories, chairside CAD-CAM, digital radiography, intraoral cameras, practice management solutions, electronic medical records – none of these existed when I joined the dental community in 1980, yet now they define the modern dental practice.

If you choose to establish your own practice, here is another important question: "Why not become a great business person as well as a great clinician?" A dentist in private practice is the CEO of your business, and your staff and patients will rely on you to make smart business decisions. Dean Chance and the faculty here at Case Western Reserve University have provided you with the clinical training that you need to excel. Balance that by securing the business training you need to ensure that the health of your practice is as robust as the health of your patients. Find partners and trusted advisors in the dental community who

understand your vision for your practice, who share your commitment, and who have the resources to help you achieve that vision.

Another question that I would like to pose is one that is near to my heart: “Why not give back to society?” At Henry Schein, we have seen the great results of “doing well by doing good” – generating wider benefits for society as we create long-term economic value. We support the idea of enlightened self-interest that Benjamin Franklin advocated over two centuries ago. Countless dentists have told us how personally and professionally enriching it is to give back to their local communities or to be part of dental outreach missions to underserved populations around the world, as some of you possibly have done here at Case Western Reserve with your dental faculty.

Finally, it is so important to strive to find balance between our professional life and our personal life, with our families as our top priority. The late South African President Nelson Mandela began keeping a small vegetable garden in prison on Robben Island in the 1970s. His garden established a place of calm amid harsh realities. He called this “finding your own garden.” While you “find your own garden” (either actual or metaphoric) during your career, please look for a way to give back to those in need. I guarantee that you will receive much more in return.

As you sit here today and think about all of the “Why not?” opportunities and challenges, about all of the choices that you will need to make during your career, it may seem overwhelming, even impossible. But remember something else that the late President Nelson Mandela said, “It always seems impossible until it’s done.” It is not impossible if you take your life and career decisions one question at a time. “Why not?” is the essential question that you can ask yourself as a graduating dentist. By asking “Why not?” throughout your career, you will make the most of the tremendous promise of the great profession you have chosen. And by continuing to ask, “Why not?” you can ensure that you will not ask yourself a much more difficult question at the end of your career – “Why didn’t I do that when I had the chance?” Thank you for inviting me to share these thoughts with you today, and congratulations again on this wonderful achievement.