

## **IBEI Graduation Talk (Barcelona September 6, 2021)**

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Thank you Mr. Jordana, Mr. Morillas, Mrs. Daniels and Ksenia for your words

Thank you to all the teachers

for your patience and support during this difficult year

Thank you to the administrative office

and the direction of the University

for your adaptability and willingness to make this graduation happen

Thank you to our families, friends and loved ones

for your patience, and unconditional love

And, of course, thank you to my fellow students for pushing through and arriving here

WE ARE graduating -- class 2021!

A couple of weeks ago

I was lying on my bed writing some thoughts for this speech

I was a bit nervous

I didn't know what you expected

or how to make these few minutes an open letter to your fears and ambitions

But then I realised that no matter how awful, or inspiring I am today

In 20 years you probably won't remember a word

The couple of hours we spend here are completely insignificant

in comparison to the memories we are about to build

So I told myself - why instead of speaking to the new graduates

I speak to the future scholars, ministers, humanitarian workers,  
policymakers, peacebuilders and entrepreneurs, you will become

I was really excited about the idea

So I called a friend and told her:

“hey, I have the speech

I am sure they will love it”

She laughed and said:

“Viviane, are you sure the young adults you’ll be speaking to  
are aware of their potential?

Will they connect with your words?”

She was right.

I know that many of you are already aware of your potential

I’ve been hearing about your aspirations and the incredible careers you are building

At your young age, you are truly making an impact

And this master's degree has served you for learning more  
and advancing towards your goals

But I also know that many are still “figuring things out”

You have big dreams but are not sure where to start

This degree was about getting the knowledge

And environment to meet like-minded people, access a job,

and OF COURSE, Enjoy Barcelona.

But Instead you've found a pandemic and virtuality

So, I think my task today is to encourage

the first group to keep working with passion, ethics and humility

And convince the latter of your potential

and how important is for the world that you find your purpose and power

So, I want today to share with you a story

It is the story of moving from a disempowered girl to an empowered woman

And I think many of you will relate, today or in the future.

When I was 16 years old

I was very afraid of life

I suffered from bullying for 4 years

I got depressed

I was diagnosed with an eating disorder

And I had to leave school for a year

The only thing that encouraged me to wake up in the morning

was a vision of improving the global dynamics,

helping to end world hunger

building peace

And ending people's suffering...

but I didn't believe in myself

I didn't believe I could  
I thought I wasn't intelligent enough  
or skillful

But,  
three years ago I decided that my potential would be bigger than my fear  
And I started to take some action everyday:  
Whether working on my habits  
Planning my career  
Learning new skills,  
And starting to love myself

I jumped from association to association,  
I started to speak up for the things I cared about  
I repeated to myself "I am capable"  
And one day I woke up with a conference proposal  
And invitations started to come one after another

If someone had told the challenged teenager that  
One day She would be at the Parliament  
demanding the Spanish politicians to promote youth rights  
I would have laughed

But today I know that when I started to believe in me,  
I created the person I wanted to be  
So I think the best commitment you can make when we walk out of here is

to believe in you,

Unleash your potential

Own your voice

Visualise where you want to go.

and wake up every day taking small actions

It is not going to be easy, you already know:

You may get many job rejections

You may be underestimated

Discriminated against

But your potential is bigger than your fear

And let me tell you that when I look through this room

I can feel inspired by knowing

That each one of you is going to do amazing things.

That someday you'll be sitting on your coach,

reflecting on your life, and feeling VERY proud of the path you've taken.

The world we live in needs these small actions from ALL of us

It needs we explore our potential

Many threats are challenging our societies

We are in the middle of an industrial revolution

Wars are getting closer

Poverty and inequality are increasing

However, more and more people are aware of how colonial, patriarchal and racist systems are some of the power dynamics causing many of these challenges.

It's the consciousness awaked by education.

And now that we are going to the real world

we must be ready to develop a new type of leadership

A leadership that values the "We" instead of the "I"

And That values collaboration instead of competition

A professor once told me "we shouldn't use the term international "community"  
as we are not one yet"

I am sure our generation will make sure we ARE an international community

And for doing so, I think the leaders we are about to become need to remember some valuable principles our professors taught us. So...

When sitting in your office writing a proposal for a development project

remember we are working for people with agency, not beneficiaries

When you are on the plane, moving to start the position of our dreams,

Remember we are also working for the migrants dying at the sea

When you are writing for a prestigious journal about what happens very far away

Remember to amplify the voices of the communities and avoid repeating the only history

When you are implementing a peacebuilding process

Remember the responsibility to empower the people to progress peacefully, and not to perpetuate violence

AND When you win your first elections

Remember democracy is about bridging the voices and interests of diverse people

Definitely, What I am trying to say is -- remember to unleash your full potential in the service to humanity and to a better peaceful world

Now my words are coming to an end

So Let me ask you one last thing:

When I finish talking and you applaud, please, don't applaud me, applaud yourself:

applaud the resilient student you have been

Applaud the powerful person you've become

And applaud the outstanding leader

that in some years will be improving a parcel of the world

Be proud of yourself,

this is your moment,

be proud of all the efforts you and your families have put to celebrate graduating today

And as you head to the future, take action, small action everyday

Thank you for listening