

NYIT WHITE COAT CEREMONY
AUGUST 10, 2021

Thank you for that kind introduction, Dean Wadsworth. Thank you to Dr. Henry Foley, President of NYIT, and the distinguished faculty and administration of the NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine for the privilege of participating in this important occasion.

We have been navigating through an extraordinary time in our lives. The pandemic reminds us that viruses do not carry passports or visas, so despite borders or beliefs that may separate countries, there are some challenges so great that they must be confronted and overcome by everyone in the world.

Despite these extraordinary challenges, the members of the NYIT class of 2025 have remained focused on working towards today's White Coat Ceremony. So, to those who will receive your White Coat today and to your families, please accept my sincere and enthusiastic congratulations on reaching this important milestone in your career.

While I have never worn a white coat myself, I do understand the lifelong commitment that it represents a commitment to making our world a better place through the compassionate and empathetic treatment of patients that always strives towards excellence; and a commitment to continually educating yourselves on the latest advances in medicine so that you can stay at the forefront of your profession.

One result of the pandemic has been an acceleration of the acceptance of technology throughout society. Some say there has been 5 years of progress in just 6 months. But as we celebrate the wonders of technology, we should appreciate that there will always be a need for the in-person, one-on-one relationship between medical professionals and patients. Personalized medicine may be driven by technology but the human relationship between clinician and patient will always be the foundation of care, and that is what the White Coat represents.

This deep belief in the foundational importance of humanistic medical care is why Henry Schein is a founding member of the Arnold P Gold Foundation's Corporate Council, the organization which first established the concept of the White Coat Ceremony. The Gold Foundation actively partners with the medical profession to promote the joy and meaning of humanistic health care, so clinicians have the strength and knowledge to ensure that patients and families are partners in collaborative, compassionate, and scientifically excellent care.

This is an exciting and noble journey that you are on, and at NYIT you will be learning from expert clinicians and educators. So rather than discuss what one might encounter in a clinical setting, today I would like to briefly share a few life lessons that I have learned along the way on my life's journey from my childhood growing up at the southern tip of Africa in Port Elizabeth, South Africa through my time to date as the Chairman and CEO of Henry

Schein. I believe that that these lessons are universal and may be valuable for medical professionals who are just beginning their careers.

LESSON #1 - THINK BIG

My first lesson from my cumulative life experiences is that one must “think big” and never accept no as an answer. “Thinking small” will keep you safe, but likely stationary. However, if you “think big,” you stand a good chance of reaching your goal. It means remembering what Robert Kennedy said: “Some men (and women) see things as they are and say, ‘why?’ I dream things that never were and say, ‘why not?’” I have come to realize that “why not?” is one of the most important questions to continually ask oneself throughout our lives. Asking “why not?” only requires one person who can inspire others to share his or her vision.

LESSON #2 – FAILURE IS AN OPTION

My second lesson to share is that failure is an option and the laboratory for success. Life owes us nothing, and we should expect to encounter many roadblocks. From my country of birth, we should recognize the truth of a leadership lesson from one of the 20th century’s greatest leaders, the late South African President Nelson Mandela, who said, “Courage is not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it.” I’ve also been inspired by one of history’s leading women, Eleanor Roosevelt, whose words have resonated with me throughout my life. Mrs. Roosevelt said, “Do one thing every day that scares you.”

LESSON #3 – THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM

My third lesson is closely linked to the second. In retrospect, I recognize that the lessons I learned outside of school early in my life often were more valuable than those I learned in the classroom. I was not a good student in high school. I did not do well in chemistry or physics. I liked history but did not easily memorize dates or Churchillian quotes. In fact, my high school counselor recommended that I not go to university. I rejected the advice of my high school counselor and went to university. What I realized years later is that while formal education is a critical ingredient for success, it is on the playing field of life where we learn how to apply the lessons that we learned in school and “get things done.” Every encounter in life is a lesson.

LESSON #4 – IT’S ALL ABOUT PEOPLE

In my parents’ small department store, Eric Stores, in the multicultural South End neighborhood of the South African seaport of Port Elizabeth, I learned lesson number four, which my late mother taught me virtually every day. She was a physically petite woman with a towering personality, who was key to the fabric of the store, and her lesson was, “It’s all about people.” Of the many lessons I learned at Eric Stores in my childhood years, one

stands out to this day – the richness of diversity. One’s life is made richer by spending time with people of different backgrounds.

LESSON #5 - SHOWING UP IS IMPORTANT

“Showing up” is the fifth lesson that I would like to share today. I learned this lesson at age six. One of my father’s friends who imported the first portable transistor radios to South Africa let me carry one of his radios around my father’s bowling games. At the game, another bowler asked me where he could buy a radio like that. My father’s friend told me I could sell the portable radio and would be paid a commission. As a six-year-old, I did not know what it meant to be paid a commission, but I connected the buyer to the seller and received a commission check. This set me down a life-long entrepreneurial road and taught me a simple but critical lesson: showing up is important. You never know who will be there and what opportunities may present themselves.

LESSON #6 - THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS

My sixth lesson came three years later. As a young boy I had chronic asthma in the years before inhalers were available. I was sent to the town of Cradock in the Karoo, a semi-desert region of South Africa. Over the next few years, I spent a great deal of time there with the farm workers, who lived in abject poverty in a repressive apartheid South Africa. But they were bound tightly together by family values and trusted friendship among co-workers. Spending so much time with these remarkably warm and caring people who lived a life of virtual serfdom reinforced the importance of family and trusted friends to succeed, even in difficult circumstances.

LESSON #7 – BE PERSUASIVE

On the farm in Cradock, I also learned my seventh lesson – how to be persuasive. My mission was to convince the farm workers that a nine-year-old boy should be allowed to gallop on horses and drive a tractor. These childhood desires forced me to learn a lot about persuasion. Ultimately, I “made the sale” to the farm workers and got to ride the horses fast and drive the tractor, but of course, my parents never found out. If you have an idea, you have to sell it. Don’t be shy!

LESSON #8 – LESSONS LEARNED AS A CAMP COUNSELOR

My eighth lesson came when I was 16 and 17 years of age and helped organize summer camps for a youth movement in Port Elizabeth, which focused on taking small steps to improve our world. This experience taught me to be optimistic and always look for the good in people. Even today as a CEO, I still strive to apply the lessons I learned as a camp counselor: Treat people how you want to be treated, engage everyone in the mission, there is a role for each individual, and every person can make a difference.

LESSON #9 - SEEK OUT CARING MENTORS AND BE A MENTOR TO OTHERS

My ninth life lesson is that we all need mentors, and we all should be a mentor to others. I encourage you to seek out caring people as mentors. There are so many good people in the world. The wonderful mentors in my life have made all the difference. These include my colleagues at Henry Schein, who inspire me every day with their fresh perspectives and prove that “teamwork makes a dream work.” There is our conservative Chief Financial Officer, who has never seen a deal that he likes, and our exuberant Chief Strategic Officer, who has never seen a deal that he does not like. Together they provide a clear view of the left and the right. There is the Vice Chairman of Henry Schein and my business partner of 45 years, who helps focus on our priorities by reminding us that “We can do anything, but we can’t do everything.”

My mentors include Millennials and Generation Z, who are bringing an entirely new set of expectations and enthusiasm to the workforce, and who certainly will be a great generation as they grapple with the huge challenges of our time. These young people remind me that organizations do not need “bosses.” Organizations need leaders who will be coaches, facilitators, and mentors – leaders who will inspire us to support people and ideas. I urge everyone to give back by being a mentor to others. You will receive much more than you give.

LESSON #10 – DOING WELL BY DOING GOOD

Muhammad Ali once said, “Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on Earth.” My tenth lesson is related to what Muhammad Ali said. We have a moral obligation to act in the service of society.

This brings me to a story about young man named Taylor Haas, who interned at Henry Schein one summer before he started his D.O. training at NYIT. Taylor was very enthusiastic and creative – a born leader and an instinctive entrepreneur. In 2017, when he was at NYIT, Taylor proposed opening a student-run clinic staffed by NYIT students under the supervision of NYIT faculty in an underserved area of Central Islip here on Long Island. He presented the idea to the NYIT Dean, and a faculty member volunteered to lead this pilot program one weekend a month. Then Taylor contacted Henry Schein to see if we would provide the supplies for the program, which we did. Within two years, the monthly student-run clinic program expanded to weekly and was earning praise and recognition from everyone, including the community. Taylor, who has graduated and is now in practice, understood the importance of serving society. And from that initial work with Taylor, the seeds that he planted continue to grow as the relationship between NYIT and Henry Schein strengthens.

Building on Taylor’s initial vision, we have been privileged to help support the Dean’s Special Project to help drive career-oriented education and development, and the Big Give Match to support residency matching activity for students. We have helped build Business of Medicine coursework with the help of the Dean Wadsworth and the faculty, which will

start in 2022. And we will continue to work with Dean Wadsworth on the Dean's Advisory Board.

At Henry Schein, we've learned that serving society also makes good business sense, as Benjamin Franklin's idea of enlightened self-interest illustrates. I am a firm believer that doing well by doing good really works. Businesses, universities and communities cannot succeed in failed societies. As you move forward with your professional careers, I encourage everyone to find innovative ways to partner with others, in the public and private sectors, in the service of society.

Finally, as someone born and raised in South Africa, like so many others I have been inspired by one of history's greatest leaders, President Nelson Mandela. There are many wonderful lessons to be learned from President Mandela's life and legacy. President Mandela's most important lesson is that in the face of daunting challenges, "It always seems impossible until it's done."

As you receive your White Coat today and move forward with your medical career, remember that nothing is impossible, especially for a member of the NYIT College of Osteopathic Medicine class of 2025. As NYIT students, everyone here has already achieved so much, and this White Coat ceremony is just the beginning. On behalf of everyone at Henry Schein, congratulations again and thank you for inviting me to share these thoughts with you on this very special day.

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