

An open letter to Leadership of Palm Beach County and the Best Selection Committee Ever...
June 6, 2019

It is "Grad Night", and it has arrived in the blink of an eye. I don't know what to expect at graduation, only that I am sure I will feel a wide range of emotions, from proud and accomplished, to sorrow and regret I didn't engage even more, now that our group outings have ended. I do know one thing for sure, I will laugh.

We only get so many heartbeats in this crazy place, and over the last 10 months, I have asked myself many times...How do I want to spend those precious beats? More importantly, how will I CHOOSE to spend them?

REWIND: August of 2018, I was on my way home from my LPBC Engage retreat, and as the screenshots of the weekend...of the different events, and smiling faces of my "classmates" kept invading my head, I knew I just experienced something special. I couldn't possibly foresee HOW special this experience would be, but cosmic forces were at work here.

I hadn't truly recognized at the time, but cynicism had crept into my psyche throughout the years, allowing the relentless bombardment of the evils of the world to cloud the 'eternal' optimism I had back in college. How I viewed my capacity to affect the world I wished to see had been under assault for decades. The Engage Class has diminished my cynicism, and given my optimism rebirth. If I could describe LPBC in one word, it is IMPACT. It has opened my eyes, in all facets of my life. It has enlightened me and exponentially grown my network, while testing and expanding my lens. With that said, the most important gift it has given me, is hope.

I have met so many phenomenal, successful, good intentioned, like-minded individuals in (and through) this experience. I now call them friends. These friends, come from every label we seem to be continually tagged, bludgeoned with and divided by; Different races, genders, creeds, socio-economic backgrounds, political beliefs, orientation, etc., but we all have common denominators, we WANT to make the world a better place, we KNOW we can be better leaders, and we are DOING something about it.

What more could I ask for at this moment? All LPBC Engage Alumni have been given a gift...I call it God, but one could call it karma, call it "the force", or even universal coincidence...but the truth is that we have been selected to be here in this exact time and place. What will we do with this gift? I am convinced the only way to sustain one's OWN happiness, is to love, be loved, and improve the lives of others...All of the other noise becomes a faded memory or ultimately ends up in the junkyard. The Engage program delivers the opportunity to manufacture individual sustainable happiness. This contentment is attractive, begins to be coveted by others, and exponentially expands throughout eternity.

The connection this particular class has made, and how we motivate and accept each other is undeniable. We almost compete to drive each other to be the best at what they do and to use their unique skills and talents to improve lives around them, and have fun doing it! The Engage 2019 Class, from individual accomplishments alone, has already intensely impacted Palm Beach County, and now as LPBC Engage alumni? Dream big, because we will figure out a way to get it done. 2019, as all classes before us, has literally...changed...the...world.

I can confidently speak for our class when I say that we are so thankful, so appreciative, of all of the "Best Classes Ever" that paved the way to bring us to this time and place. People equivalent to Engage 2019, that understand if we lift up others, and do what is right, we ALL live better lives. How else could anyone...anywhere in the world...Learn, love, connect, and have the ability and access to a network that can facilitate and affect positive change like members of this organization?? There is no better way to "be the change you wish to see" and lead by example, inspiring others to want to emulate your success and happiness, than to become a part of the LPBC Engage Class. I feel so intensely blessed that someone took a chance on me and allowed me to be a part of something so special.

I promise you from what I have seen through the individual accomplishments I have come to know in this class, these graduates have raised the bar, and what we can and will do, now with consolidated forces and alumni access, is immeasurable. Thank you to a SUPERSTAR talent, Noel Martinez, as well as all of the graduates who have gone before us, and particularly the Best Selection Committee Ever! You connected us. You armed us with education. Our drive is without borders. We are the "class that raised the bar" and we are ENGAGED.

With gratitude,



Jeff L. Johnson, Engage Class of 2019