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## Navigating Life with “GPS” – Gratitude, Purpose, Service

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Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed faculty members, honored guests, and the graduating class of 2023: It's a pleasure to be joining you for this incredibly special occasion.

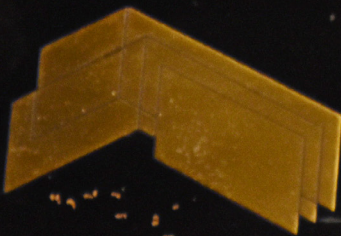
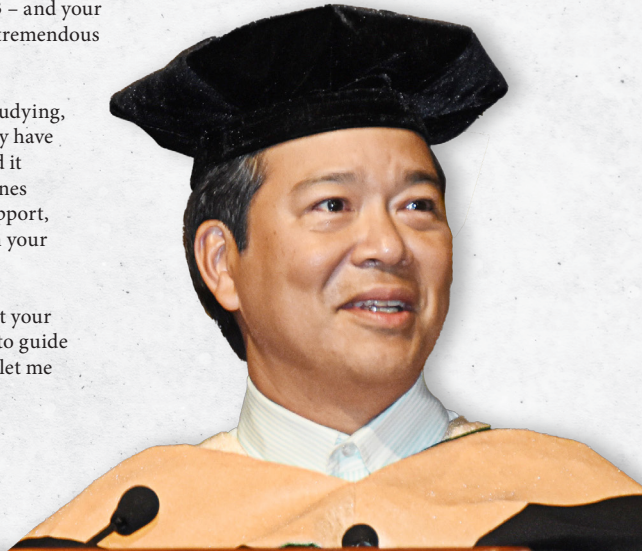
I am Manny Maceda and I have the great privilege of leading Bain & Company, a global management consulting firm that helps leaders solve some of our world's most pressing business challenges.

As I stand before you today, I am humbled and so grateful to accept this prestigious honorary degree from De La Salle University. I would like to personally thank Brother Bernie Oca, Board of Trustees Chairman Nestor Tan, Provost Dr. Robert Roleda, the many esteemed administrators, the De La Salle community, and my own friends and family who are here in the audience today. My Dad always wanted me to be a Doctor – so here I finally become one!

But today is really about you – the Class of 2023 – and your journey to get to this point after many years of tremendous demanding work, grit, and patience.

For many of you, it involved countless nights studying, sacrifices made, and obstacles conquered. It may have also involved funding your own education. And it certainly involved having many of your loved ones contribute to your journey – through loving support, practical guidance, and an unwavering belief in your success.

Your generation has learned that when you start your journey in a car, you turn on the GPS system – to guide you to your destination. In my remarks today - let me share how to navigate life with a “GPS”



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## Gratitude

And that brings me to the first point, as I reflect on the lessons that helped shape my own career, and that I hope will help you too: The importance of being grateful for what you have, rather than focusing on what you don't. The G in GPS is Gratitude.

Part of that involves leaning into your personal balance sheet. It's a waste of time wishing you came from a different background, had different experiences, or could access different types of resources. Those thoughts just create excess baggage that will weigh you down with self-doubt. Dump the baggage. In poker terms it means "play the hand you are dealt." Rather than feeling guilt that you have too much, or envy that you have so little, make the most of your circumstances and be grateful for how they've shaped you.

To be clear, I didn't always appreciate this lesson. As a child in the sixties, I was privileged to grow up with successful parents who had many resources to benefit me. This allowed me to attend La Salle Green Hills for grade school, an expensive private school, to study, to play sports and learn the arts.

But in the seventies, my life changed. My parents separated, my mother's company went bankrupt, and my father joined the opposition to the government of the time – and eventually, he escaped to the United States with literally just the clothes on his back.

I ended up emigrating, too. In order to fund a college education while I was in the USA, my family members had to contribute toward my tuition. One of them is here – thank you Tita Gina De Venecia. Many others did in Manila and the US. And I had to fund a big part of my education myself – winning scholarships, taking student loans, working two jobs as a computer programmer and a physics tutor while completing my engineering degree and getting a full time job.

Adjusting to those circumstances was a humbling experience. But it helped me to appreciate the essential role that my loved ones played in setting me up for academic and career success. It also started my journey toward embracing gratitude for what I had, rather than focusing on what my family lost or what I didn't have.

Scientific research shows that gratitude has a major impact on our overall wellbeing. In one study, researchers found that people who frequently expressed gratitude experienced higher levels of happiness and life satisfaction compared to those who did not. Those who were more grateful also showed lower levels of depression and stress.

Gratitude has, in fact, made a tremendous impact on my life. Regularly appreciating my family, friends, coworkers, and teammates and God makes me happier, and life easier.

## Purpose

Now, to be clear, it doesn't just end with gratitude. The second message I convey is the importance of finding purpose in how you spend your life. Purpose is the P in GPS.

Ultimately, you will need a vocation. Some of you will teach or continue to study. Others will be entrepreneurs, artists, or athletes. Many of you will go into business.

This is a hard lesson to share since it's so personal to each one of us. But I'll be direct: You may not find your purpose in life right when you graduate today. And that's okay.

It took about 12 years after I received my college degree to realize that my vocation would involve being a business consultant at a global company – and, eventually, becoming a corporate CEO!

It's okay to take time to figure it out. Experiment. My journey started with joining a large chemicals company called DuPont after graduating college. I spent one year working in Research & Development, another year in Marketing, and another year in Product Management. I learned I liked them all – different functions in a company, and especially the interaction across them – essentially business administration, the degree many of us are receiving today.

Then, I went on to graduate business school at MIT and found a job in an industry I'd never heard of (management consulting) with a firm I'd never heard of (Bain and Co).

About 7 years into my time at Bain, after I'd become a partner which is what we call our senior executives, we do a management training exercise to write our "personal life mission statement." I was 33 years old, and I wrote the following as my personal mission in 1996, and this is verbatim: "to build a life with meaning and purpose that creates a good family and firm for the world." (repeat for emphasis)

When I look back at whether I achieved my mission over the last 27 years, I'd like to think I did well in living out my purpose of "a good family" Being a supportive husband, father, son and brother was always my first priority. And I'm so fortunate to have found a wife Lyra who has been my partner in life (she is here in the audience today with her parents Ernest and Josie Rufino - who treat me as their own





Caption

son. And Dad Ernest is a proud La Sallian) Lyra and I raised four wonderful kids together. My brothers, friends and relatives are here too. In the end, if I can say that I've created a great life and a staunch support system for my family, I can feel good about having achieved the first part of my mission statement.

The other part of the mission explicitly says creating a great firm for the world, not specifically about the Philippines. Some of you will have a purpose to help your town, your province, your nation. Others will choose to have a global career – and that may include leaving the Philippines for a time, maybe even permanently.

For my part, I am so excited that 26 years after I wrote out my mission, Bain would open an office in Manila, and that my world mission would encompass this country which is such an important part of the global economy. It's all coming together. There is so much going on in the world now – deglobalization, decarbonization, generative AI, inflation – that now more than ever companies and individuals must have clarity of purpose to navigate the opportunities and risks our world faces.

Each of you will make your own tradeoffs as you go on to find your purpose. It won't necessarily be a clear, linear path. But it's important to remember that that is normal and expected. And if you get stuck, or if you ever struggle with confidence as you're taking a new step forward on your path or a step back, make a conscious effort to dump your self-doubt. Even if it isn't a perfect success, every experience you have along the way brings new perspective that will help shape your true purpose. Each of us will have a special role to play in the world. Find yours!

## Servant Leadership

I've talked about how living while embracing gratitude will make you happier. And how finding your purpose will give you direction and meaning. This now brings me to my third message. To really navigate life with a good GPS, you also need to be guided by the S - Service. Without it, frankly, you will feel a little selfish. Life will be kulang.

At Bain, we adopt a model of servant leadership. It's a mindset that everything we do as leaders is in service of our clients and our fellow Bain colleagues. This mindset goes all the way back to Jesus at the Last Supper. Serving others. Washing of the feet. As an example, my title is Worldwide Managing Partner rather than Chairman and CEO, and that represents how I collaborate with my fellow partners rather than lead and be the boss top-down. Ultimately, we view it as an honor and a privilege to be asked to serve in a leadership role – it is part of how we 'give back' to the company that nurtured us.

Part of our focus is inevitably to help our clients (who are often corporations and investors) make more profit. But we also embrace a broader sense of capitalism – to build a business around sustainability and decarbonization. A meaningful amount of our company's work is in service of non-profit organizations and NGOs. In our view, it's just as important for us to serve organizations like the non-profit The Nature Conservancy through pro-bono work, as it is to partner with for example the Coca Cola Company as a for profit client.

Some vocations – such as being a Christian Brother or a doctor or nurse- might have service directly embedded in the role. But for most professions, it's not that obvious. What if we're talking about being a good businesswoman, a good researcher, a good athlete or actor? Is that enough, to simply excel in





one's profession? I posit that if you have the right mindset, you can find service in any vocation, but I do understand that you can easily question yourself - is it enough?

I'll share a personal story of a pilgrimage Lyra and I made to our Lady of Fatima in Portugal. This was in 2016 after my father had passed away, and at that point I had already been with Bain for almost 30 years. I was frankly unsure I was leading a good enough life - specifically, whether there was enough service in being a global management consultant.

When I went to confession, I shared my guilt with the English speaking Spanish priest. And he asked, My son, it sounds like you are in business of some kind- are you good at what you do? "Yes father." Is the world better because you do what you do? "I hope so, father." Well, who gave you your skills to be a good businessman? Thank Him. He didn't give you a different set of skills, he gave you skills to be good in business. Honor that gift, and ensure it helps the world. And remember that it's not just about this world, but the next one.

It was a quite simple message. But about a year after that, Bain asked me to become the global CEO. And I've tried to live that message in how I do my job and how I live for this life and beyond. I'm also very cognizant that being the CEO of Bain isn't who I am and that it doesn't define me - it's a title I carry for some period of time, a piece of clothing I wear that others wore before me, and others will wear after me. But whatever I do in the future, I'll navigate life with my GPS: Gratitude, Purpose, Service.

So, my ask of all of you is to turn on your GPS! Gratitude, you can start today. Thank God, your teachers, your friends, and most especially your family, for everything they have done to help get you where you are - graduates of De La Salle University!

Then, go out and find your purpose. Some of you may have it already. For others, it might take the next 10 years as it did for me. But each of you will

find it. And you will know it when you do.

And lastly, lead with service in whatever you do.

In summary - here's the secret of GPS, "while graduation today is all about you, the graduate, the secret to a happy and successful life is that it is not all about YOU!, just like my life is not all about me. Gratitude means recognizing what you have been given and by whom. Purpose means finding the why you have been given these, and Service means using them properly. So be grateful, be productive, be service oriented and you will be happy.

## Congratulations & Conclusion

So, with that, let me say once more: Congratulations to the Class of 2023 on your tremendous achievement. DLSU has given you a tremendous foundation through the principles of the Lasallian identity: the spirit of faith, communion in mission, and zeal for service. Honor that foundation by letting your personal GPS guide you toward a meaningful life.

And in the spirit of following my own advice, I'd like to give sincere thanks to all of you for listening, and for the privilege of spending this afternoon with you. I'm so grateful to be with you all. To my friends and family both here and who have already passed who have helped me become who I am. Especially my late mother and father.

And a heartfelt thank you to DLSU for equipping me to live my life with purpose and service through 12 years of grade school and high school La Sallian education, formation, academics, athletics and the arts. And now an honorary DBA! Maraming, maraming salamat.

So, let me conclude:

St John Baptist de la Salle (Pray for us!)  
Live Jesus in our hearts (forever!)  
Animo!