

Embracing Your Inner Mentor
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Introduction: All right, good afternoon. Welcome to the Passing on the Legacy of Higher Education Speaker Series, as put on by the Cross Cultural Leadership Center. So glad that you decided to spend your lunch period with us. Before we get started, if we can go ahead and kind of scoot up into the rows a little bit? We want to be cozy here, so I know some people like to hang out in the back, but we want to bring you forward because, basically, what we get today is we get to have an intimate conversation, so that requires standing up, that requires moving forward. If you all can help me out, follow directions, if possible? I see you all are very stubborn. It can be difficult to be in the front of the room and talking to people way in the back, so you might as well get close, up close and personal because that's really what the series is designed for. Thank you. I've got them as close as I could get you. All right, so like I said, thank you again for taking the time to come out for this series. It's been such a phenomenal opportunity to hear from different senior professionals on campus and hear about their experience in higher education and the journey and the path that they've gone through. I know, for me, as somebody who has been in the field for about five years, I have definitely gleaned a lot of wisdom and information and already.

Pat has already said he's ready to bring it and he's about to transform it for us. I know last semester, if there's any indication of what we can get excited about, Chela [Patterson] was one of our speakers in the spring semester and she totally blew us all away, so I can only not doubt that we will not be let down today. And so today we have Dr. Aldrich M. Patterson, Jr. He was born in Los Angeles, California, and he married Dr. Chela Mendoza Patterson, and is the father of two children. He holds a BA in Psychology from UC Irvine and a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from the University of Maryland in College Park. Dr. Patterson has the distinction of being the only licensed black Psychologist north of Davis and has been employed at California State University's Counseling and Wellness Center as a staff member since 1983. In fact, that was the year I was born. He also maintains a part-time private practice, specializing in psychotherapy, training and consultation, and is sought after as a motivation and success speaker. Dr. Pat has mentored hundreds of Chico State students and has authored several articles dealing with multicultural, cross-cultural issues and the college student experience. Join me in welcoming Dr. Pat Patterson.

[Applause]

Dr. Pat Patterson: Thank you very much. In preparation for today's presentation I had an opportunity to reflect on my journey. I was born in East LA. I was raised in an intact family by a hardworking father and a mother who took care of the house and raised two children. My family was very strong on education and they were very strong on service. I was born in 1954. In 1953 my father took a homeless man into our house. In 1977, when I went to graduate school, he still lived with our family. A lot of the stories I'm going to tell you and a lot of the people I'm going to talk about are no longer with us, but their spirits are strong. I stand on their shoulders. I grew up in a very stable family. I went to three schools, one

elementary, one junior, one high. My mother still lives in the same house she lived in in 1951. I grew up down the block from USC. Go Trojans - I'm a Trojans fan. I know, Clarence, you feel the same way, too, huh? I know.

At any rate, for those of you that are in education I'm what they call a "false negative." Basically, I am someone that they predicted not to be successful, based on all the test scores and all the other things, all the other indices they use to predict student success. And the third grade teacher told my mother I couldn't read. In the seventh grade my mother stood in line to get me into a junior high school outside of the district so that I could go to school with a better class of kid. I was an exceptional athlete in junior high school.

I got a scholarship to a private boys' school in West LA. While there I got to interact with, for the first time, people from the dominant culture. I was a good citizen, never got in trouble, and I continued to excel at sports. It became time to go to college, and I asked the priest to write me a letter of recommendation. And Father Keefer [assumed spelling] wrote, "To whom it may concern, Aldrich Patterson will never make it at your university." So we tore his letter up. My Godfather, who is the Principal of Locke [assumed spelling] High School, wrote another letter for me.

When the recruiter came from UC Irvine to my high school I begged him to let me in. His name was John Clayton; he went to school on EOP [Equal Opportunity Program]. I said, "Oh, please, Mr. Clayton, please accept me, I won't let you down." So I got to UC Irvine, and he knew my name. He said, "Hey, Aldrich, how you doing?" Because I was begging good -- I was begging better than Barry White -- I'm going to tell you, I was begging. I got in, but when I got there I felt maybe like many of our students did, like I had done a con job, that maybe I shouldn't have been there, that for some reason sooner or later they're going to find me out. So I might as well just go on vacation and have fun. So that first quarter I just goofed around, played basketball, had fun.

And then somebody said something to me, because the night before finals I'm playing basketball, like I'm getting ready to go to the NBA, right? I'm playing basketball, and one of my friends reminded me, he says, "Hey, man, you don't have a future in the NBA, you should actually study." But at that time, you see, I had what they call a Z Option, which was a pretty cool option -- at finals you could write down, I will not accept any grade lower than ___. That's perfect for a brother from inner city LA. I said "C," so I knew that if I got anything lower than a "C," I'd instantly be dropped from the class. So I wanted to pass on my classes. Ah, wow, I started to think maybe I might be okay, but the next semester I really figured it out, since they had the Z Option, you know what I did, I carried a bunch of units, so you carry a bunch of Z units and you Z out, you keep your GPA up. So I carried five, six classes, and said, "Well, I'll accept nothing lower than a B." Boom, started getting the GPA up, started figuring out how to do it.

Well, luckily for me I lived in a special interest hall. UC Irvine had all these resident halls that had themes, thematic halls, and I lived in one called Sierra. It's called the Sierra Project; it's a famous dorm now. They wrote -- they've written several books on it, and they talk about the whole learning environment for students and how to enhance student learning. And so we played games, like Simsock

[assumed spelling] and we had a class in a resident hall, which was only 50 students. But from that experience I decided that this was what I wanted to become. Luckily for me, each suite had two people assigned to the suite. My two people were a guy by the name of Jim Craig, who wound up being the Vice-Chancellor of UC Irvine, and the other one was Art Lang, who is a famous psychologist for writing the book, "The Assertive Self."

And so these guys come in wearing ponytails, shorts, and flip-flops. I would say "thongs," but I don't want you girls to be confused, they weren't doing that, they were wearing flip-flops. And I said to them, "What do you do?" And Art Lang says, "I'm a Counseling Psychologist at the Counseling Center." So, remember, I'm from South central, I'm thinking you get paid to do this? He says, "Yes, man, I get summers off." I went, "Really? Wow. Well, how do I become this?" And so my roommate, who at the time was William Parham -- and William Parham is a famous psychologist, himself, now. He's a former Olympic Team psychologist and works at Loyola University. He used to be the Dean at JFK, and he was Sports Psychologist at UCLA. He was my roommate. And this other guy, who lived next door to us, Larry Jackson -- who is now a psychologist in the D.C. area -- decided that this was what we wanted to do.

And so we then developed what we called a Mastermind of Lives [assumed spelling]. And so, myself, William Parham, Larry Jackson, and a guy by the name of Thomas Parham, who is a really well-known Psychologist and now the Vice-Chancellor of UC Irvine, formed this group, along with their other brother, Thomas Parham, I mean Gerald Parham. And we had Michael T. Brown, who is a Professor at UC Santa Barbara, and we had Jeannie Mineca [assumed spelling], who was also part of our peer group. And we were mentored by the first licensed black psychologist in the State of California, Dr. Joseph White. And Dr. Joe White started EOP in the State of California. So luckily for me I was exposed to the right team. I had gone to high school with the Parham brothers, and we were like brothers. And so with Larry Jackson and Michael Brown and a couple of other folks we formed this group and we supported each other in becoming psychologists.

We were lucky enough in high school, myself and the Parham brothers, to have a black studies class at a white high school in West LA, so we were able to start developing an Afro-centric perspective about life. We were exposed to Gil Scott Heron and the black poets, and folks like that, and were part of the Los Angeles Revolution. Even though we weren't old enough to participate, we were old enough to observe, and we were astute enough to pick-up what we needed to do and what we didn't want to become. And so I decided very, very early on that I wasn't going to be nobody's N-word. I made that very clear, like at 14, this was not happening to me, I wasn't going to be a victim, I wasn't going to be taken advantage of, and if anybody was going to do it, I had to do it for me. So I decided at that point, for myself, to define my own reality.

So it worked, quite a bit worked pretty well. Got there, had Dr. White as a mentor. I was also mentored by Dr. Harvey Williams, who was one of the Counselors at the Medical School. He was also a psychologist. And Dr. Williams did a really great thing. Myself and Bill Parham, he would invite us to his home and he would teach us reading, he would teach us speed reading, he would spend time and effort to make us better. And then I got hooked up with this guy by the name of Lou Smith. I don't know if you

guys are familiar with the Shondona [assumed spelling] Doll Corporation, but Lou Smith was a person who was the President of this doll company, that came up with black dolls. Somehow it was a novel idea, they really didn't have them, and he decided to actually make black dolls that looked like black girls, not white dolls that were painted black. He came up with the Flip Wilson doll and a couple other dolls. And so I was exposed to him, and he taught me contemporary black issues. So I was right there with him, going into his factory, listening to him. So I was starting to get mentored by a lot of people. And I was mentored by this other guy, Dr. Harvey Satsworth [assumed spelling], I took a class with him called Video Interactions. I took three-quarters of classes with Dr. William, with Dr. Sats, because what we did was we watched videotape in a dark room with no sound, paying attention to people's movements, behaviors to predict what they would do, which made me a more astute observer as I worked towards becoming a psychologist. By my senior year, Dr. White had introduced us to the Association of Black Psychology, which then became an organization that met my needs as an African-American scholar and that provided me not only a backdrop for my Afro-centricity, but also an opportunity for me to learn from the brightest African scholars in the world, like Wade Nobels [assumed spelling] and Iene Motbar [assumed spelling] and other people like that, who have had a major, major influence on me.

And even though today's talk is about role models, it is about mentoring. I was -- I had a lot of role models, and a lot of people that you see in mass media are role models, especially for me, the great Muhammad Ali, or someone like Gil Scott Heron, or people like James Brown, who were saying I'm black and I'm proud, who have given us a sense of pride. Because I was lucky enough to be born at a time when I was colored, when we became black, and now we're people of color. You know, we went through a major revolution and transition during my period. I was too young for the Vietnam War and just the right age for Affirmative Action. And I rode that wave, and I rode that wave like Duke Kortamico [assumed spelling] of Hawaii. The right place at the right time, constantly.

Got time to go to graduate school. I had figured out this grade formula of UC Irvine, where balance the classes, and by the time they had gotten -- they figured me out, they got rid of the Z Option, by the way. [laughter] And so they got rid of the Z option, but I had this grade formula, and I just explained to a student a few minutes ago the grade formula, where you took a couple of difficult classes, a class that you're interested in, a couple easy classes to keep your grades up, you know? Have five or six classes, but you wind up really having to study for two or three. So I did that, had a pretty good GPA. Had a girlfriend who was really, really smart, had to be able to keep up with her, who was really, really smart. [laughter] And, as a result, my association with Dr. Chela, my GPA got up, and we decided we were getting married and we were going to go to graduate school. So those of you that were here last semester know Chela applied to 20 graduate programs, Chela got accepted to 20 graduate programs. Pat applied to 10 or 12, I got accepted to maybe three or four. But what we had figured out, that we would go to schools in the same town, so we were -- for some reason we wanted to go East Coast. I don't know why. We got accepted to Minnesota. Okay, the brother from Africa, he got that one -- we ain't going there, right? [laughter] Okay, then we got accepted to -- I got accepted to Temple, U of Penn, and she got accepted there, and then she got accepted to American and GW and the University of Maryland.

The University of Maryland was the one we had in common, so we went. And I had applied to the University of Maryland, assuming they had a Master's Program, and they wrote me back and said, you know, we do not have a Master's Program, this is terminal doctorate, you're welcome to apply to our program. So they sent me my application back; you know, this is way before personal computers. I know that's hard to imagine. So there are all kinds of mistakes in my application, and I re-wrote it, applied to the Doctorate Program. And, to my surprise, I got accepted. Now I didn't get accepted to Long Beach State, which was a non-ranked, no-name program, I get accepted to the number one ranked Counseling and Psychology Program in the country. That sounds good, huh? [laughter] Not good.

Oh, man, this was a tough, tough time for me, 1977, man, it was not looking good. I had been married for a few weeks. Took my bride to the East Coast, and my in-laws are mad at me. My mama is mad at me because I left, you know, I'm a mama's boy, she's mad. My dad is real mad because, you know, whew. And I get there, they're playing football and I show up with my baseball bat and glove, right? I am not even in the right league. I am way over my head. All the students were from Ivy League schools, the University of California, Stanford, and Michigan. I had figured out a way as an undergraduate to come out with a really nice GPA, and nice 3.7, 3.8 in Psych by taking classes that involved writing because I figured if I could take it home I can write it. If I can't write it, I can find somebody else to write it, help me with it, edit it, or whatever. Dr. Butts [assumed spelling], you'd have been my girl back then, back in the day. [laughter] But I figured out a way to get the grades up, once I got there I was not prepared. I didn't know how to take exams, and I definitely didn't know how to perform at a Doctorate level. Flunked my first four exams.

Luckily for me, my advisor, Dr. Bruce Spratts [assumed spelling], was the Chairman of the Department. And he says, "Look, man, I'm going to help you out." So there weren't but seven students in my class, and there were three black students in all the Counseling and Psych. And he talked to my professors and they then allowed me to take my exams over, to take them by myself, with unlimited time, until I learned how to do it. Because it's a real confidence breaker when you get into a Doctorate Program and you flunk the first four tests, okay? So I had to deal with it, and I'm studying, I'm studying all day, every day. I'm studying 10 hours a day, 60 hours a week. I'm covering everything, but I didn't know you don't have to cover everything, so I had to learn how to study. So I went to the Student Learning Center, and I met with this woman, Vivian Blan [assumed spelling]. She spent 40 hours with me one week to teach me how to study, everything from SQ5R to shorthand, to note writing, to everything that I didn't have. Because I didn't know how to take notes because, you know, hell, I couldn't write fast enough. I was trying to get down everything. So by the time they said "the cat in the hat came back," I got cat, hat, and they've gone on to something else, right? So this student in my class, Georgia Royalty -- what a great name, huh? She was Georgia Royalty. She handed me her notes after every class, every class, to help me out. So Vivian Blan teaches me how to study, and then I started doing pretty good in my classes. I actually started learning how to take notes, but Georgia continued to give me her notes for the next four years. And my classmates, mostly Jewish students, taught me how to study. They taught me how to focus on the material. They taught me what was important. They taught me how to anticipate the questions.

So now I'm getting ready, but what I didn't understand was that you have to study old exams from past tests, right? So I had to learn that lesson. So the first -- the statistics class, I had to take this doctorate level statistics. Those of you that have been graduate students at a doctorate level know, and this ain't no joke here, we didn't see no 300-page book. This book was 2,200 pages for a semester of statistics. We went through 2,200 pages of statistics. They're very, very mathematically oriented. They took being number one very, very seriously. There's only two journals in Counseling Psychology, and the two editors of both journals are on faculty, okay? So, anyway, so all the students had a copy of the previous first exam from the previous year. Not me -- I'm studying, right? What does the professor give? The previous exam from the previous year. Everybody gets an A, Pat Patterson and his buddy, Dr. Dan O'Connor [assumed spelling], get C's. Dan O'Connor is a Professor at Sac State now; he teaches statistics. [laughter] We had to learn it or become one, so needless to say I got a C in that class, which just became a major nightmare. I wound up going to the second class, but having to take the first one over, and I continued to get a C. So I got to my third time and I'm in my third year, and I had passed multi varied analysis, I passed all the top stat classes, because I had to take three years as a doctorate of stat.

So I took the final. I go to see this guy, who is the teaching assistant, and this guy was in Cognitive Psych, and he had invented this computer program to beat the national champion in Othello [assumed spelling]. So, he's a nice guy. So I go to him, "How'd I do?" He said, they called me Aldrich -- he said, "Oh, Aldrich," he said, "Oh, you got a B-minus." I'm like panicking now, because at Maryland it's A-B-Fail, and you need a 3.5 or you're on academic probation, and I was on academic probation with 3.499 GPA. I had just flunked out. That was it for me. I'm walking down the hall -- ow I'm, whew, I had to -- I was channeling my, whew, my inner city LA in me. So I'm thinking I've got to go back, I've got to have a nice, little talk to this guy. I could be extremely intimidating and I had my intimidation on, right? So I think I'm going to -- we've got three offers here, I'm either going to offer him a nice little butt whipping, because he ain't had no girlfriend so I was going to get him hooked up, and he was broke as hell so I was going to give him some money, or all of the above, right? So I got my head down, I'm singing the blues, you know, thinking, man, I'm going to be a Xerox salesman now. So he comes running out, he says, "Aldrich, Aldrich, well, oh, you got a B, man, you got a B." I was like this guy doesn't have any idea how close he was. [laughter]

So anyway I went on, did an internship. Luckily for me, while I was there I was a Research Assistant for Dr. William Sedlacek, who is the nation's leading authority on racism in American education, so I had an opportunity to get in a lot of publications in the work with Dr. Sedlacek, who used to sit with me and do statistics problems over and over and over again. And then, since Maryland was so tough, I wound up getting an internship at the Counseling Center, that was headed by the number one Counseling Center Director, Thomas Lagune [assumed spelling], who had the National Databank there, and had all kinds of stuff going on there. And because they had the National Databank there, when it came time to apply for jobs the lady who ran the Databank gave me a list of every counseling center in the State of California. So I wrote every counseling center in the State of California a letter and sent them a copy of my resume telling them that I was looking for a job. And to my amazement, several days later I started getting interest. I got interest from Occidental College, where Barack went for his two years. They wanted me to

apply, but that was only a one-person Counseling Center, so I decided not to go for that. I got a call from Fresno State, but they wanted me to be an Assistant Athletic Director, but basically in charge of study skills and getting athletes prepared, because I had done it as a part of my Doctorate internship, I had a choice either to do – to focus on psychological testing, working with children, or study skills.

And so since I was training specifically to work on a university campus I decided to go for study skills. I mean that's what got me through, Vivian Blan got me through. I had a speaking phobia. I was afraid to speak in front of a crowd, so I went to a behavior therapist, Dr. Franklin Westbrook, and he helped me with that. And so I volunteered for every presentation I could do in graduate school because I was overcome with anxiety to speak.

And so got ready to -- we were headed back home to California, and I get this phone call from a guy by the name of Dr. Don Graham, and Don Graham used to be the Counseling Center Director here; he was the Counseling Center Director for close to 25 years. And he says, hey, Aldrich, man, we got your resume, it looks really, really good. We'd like to interview you tomorrow over the phone. Wow, okay. So he -- they interviewed me. Offered me a job the next day. We came to Chico, never seen it, they had no idea who I was. Show you how naive I was -- it was August. [laughter] I had on a suit and tie when I showed up to my first day at work. Because they hadn't met me, I wanted to make a first impression, right? But an interesting thing happened.

We were destined to be here. When we were at Maryland, one of our best friends [inaudible], her boyfriend, Mike, Dr. Mike Walters, had gone to Chico State, so he kind of told us about Chico State. And then our other best friends, Mark and Elaine Kessner -- Mark grew up in Red Bluff, right? And then Jeannie Minecia, the woman I had mentioned that was part of our Mastermind Alliance at UC Irvine, had worked at Chico State for one year. After she got her Master's Degree from Harvard, they hired her at the Counseling Center, but she recognized that she was totally underprepared to be a Counselor Psychologist. She got accepted to the University of Maryland, and she says, "Oh, you going to Chico, here's some people I want you to know." CC Carter, Chris Malone, Billy and Matt Jackson, Lola Dalton, and Sue, the lady who cuts Chela's hair. [laughter] I would say for the most part she just listed my family. She listed my family, my Chico family, before we even got here. How incredible is that? People would hand you a piece of paper with the names of the people that would accept you into their life and be the difference makers for you? They are the reason we stay because it was one year coming here, just one.

Because when we were driving on 20, and I see all those doggone vehicles and cars parked on lawns and people look like they was married to their cousin and their other brother, Darryl, that was sharing a wife -- I got a little scared. We see this sign that says, "Black Bootie Lake." I said, oh, hell, yes, we going to love it here. [laughter] I know there's going to be some good fishing at that lake, cruising to Bootie County. It was too much. We get here, Chico, first day we walk on -- it was a Sunday, right? We're in the BMU, and this janitor sees us and says, "You guys must be new." There was 23,000 people in Chico, so I know they spotted the new black guy around, so they -- and he gave us a tour of the campus, gave us a tour of the campus. We went downtown, somebody handed us a free loaf of bread, people were extremely friendly. Dick Gould let us spend the night at his house, and Herman and Mandy Ellis let us

keep our stuff at their home. And we just fell in love with Chico, and we've been here ever since. And that's how we got here.

But because of my background as an inner city youth, an EOP student, a recipient of study skills at a school that really, really needed mentoring, I knew students of color needed mentoring, I decided that this was what I supposed to do. That mentoring, although not in my job description as a Counseling Psychologist, was my destiny. People would say to me all the time, when you guys coming to Southern California, when you coming down here? My friends were making money, they were doing things, they were doing a lot of different things. I probably could have been popular as a public speaker, making money. I had gotten top ratings when they brought in nationally known speakers, my ratings were higher than theirs, and we knew we could have done that, our families were down there. And we decided to stay here because of the students. I'd hooked up with CC, and everybody knows CC -- CC is devoted to the students. We've got a meeting tonight at CC's house at seven, about mentoring black males.

Okay, we -- he and I were in the trenches, doing it, doing it, doing it. I was lucky enough to get hooked up with the EOP Program and be an instructor, and their Summer Bridge Program, where they allowed me to give their speech every year to the kids, and to become a study skills instructor. And then the President of the University got wind of me as a speaker, and asked me to do the Freshmen Convocation. So all of a sudden all the freshmen know me, students of color know me, all the students from the general population know me. Every speech I would give I would say, "I'm Dr. Pat Patterson, come see me at the Counseling Center. I'll mentor you."

And they did, they came -- white, black, yellow, red. You know, students come in our life maybe for a reason, maybe for a season, maybe for a lifetime. And I've had mentees that have been in my life a long time, you know, a long time. The poet Langston Hughes says, "What happens to being deferred, does it dry up like a raisin in the sun or fester like a sore and then run, does it stink like rotten meat, or does it crust and sugar over like a syrupy sweet, or maybe it just sags like a heavy load, or does it explode?" Well, I experienced the Watts riots, and even though my family was not poor, I've seen poor people, I see people who did not have the breaks that I have or did not have an opportunity to be at the right place at the right time, like I was.

My dad was a skycap, he made tips, he made lots of money, and I was exposed to people with money. He always had two jobs, and he always took me with him. We used to clean houses in Beverly Hills, and I used to see the beautiful homes and how people lived. And when I was working at the airport I talked to everybody from Marvin Gaye to Coretta Scott King. My dad was always introducing me to people, telling me what they do, and having them talk to me about being a professional. He subscribed to Success Unlimited magazine, and had me read the articles by Clement Stone and Oddman Dingo [assumed spelling] and other people like that to expose me to success literature. Always paid the extra dollar for me to get the extra help for whatever it is I needed, but he always said, "Son, you have a responsibility to give back." My dad was extremely generous, extremely generous, and gave away a lot of what he made.

And so with that mindset involved, Chela and I have mentored hundreds and hundreds of students. Students have lived with us, they have -- used to hang out at our house all the time. We sponsored fraternities, sororities, and she even goes on vacation with students now that are in their 40s. The students have been our lives. We've been to probably 100 different weddings, and we've gotten involved with a lot, a lot of things that involve students.

One of the last big things that I have been involved with from a mentoring perspective has been the Men of Honor. And I want to read to you this pledge I wrote, that they start every meeting with. One of the things that we, CC and I, a couple others of us that got together the idea of Men of Honor -- we decided, one, Men of Honor emerged at a time when the University only accepted 25 black students that year. We were getting threats, we were getting in fights. They were writing stuff on cars at basketball games, we were getting death threats, and all kinds of racial stuff on the rooms in the dorms. And we pulled this organization together because we felt like we needed to be more involved and we needed to mentor. We have an opportunity at this time as mentors and potential mentors to change somebody's life. This is not a dress rehearsal. We have to take this life seriously. Many of us come from places and spaces where most of us wouldn't go armed, and they are here and they need an opportunity to be somebody. So I want to remind these young men as they hang out with their friends, who don't come where they come from, who they are and what responsibility they have:

[Dr. Patterson reads the Men of Honor Pledge] "We are here today because we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. We were all called here today to unite in our common mission as black men. We have been selected and given the charge of being a beacon of hope and keepers of the light. We have a shared responsibility to represent the best that is in us and to be true to our destiny in word, deed, mind, body and spirit. We are our brothers' keepers, and must be committed to excellence. We hold the light of our people's future in our hands, and we vow to hold the candle through the burn. This we pledge because we are Men of Honor."

And so the brothers love this, they even tried to steal it and take credit for it at a couple presentations at graduations over the years, but I had a little talk with them. Ah, had a little talk with them. But the bottom line is this: we cannot afford to let people go who need our help. And so that means even if you work in Admissions or you work at the WREC or you work for EOP or you think that you're already doing your job, somebody needs your help because many of the students were just like me, they didn't know - they don't know what they don't know. And when you don't know what you don't know, you make decisions based on what you do know, and if what you do know is limited you're going to make a limited decision. I thought that a graduate student was someone who had graduated from college, when I had graduated. I thought an Assistant Professor was the assistant to the Professor. I had no idea, because these aren't things they teach us. I didn't have parents that had graduated from college, although my mother did go to Iowa State. My dad ruined that; he married her after her freshman year. She was one of six students. And I do have a great grandmother that graduated from Oberlin University in the 1800s. Wow, yes, that's right, that's good.

But you know we need to have a purpose-driven life, and we need to sell our students on that. And many of them, like I, start off like they're on vacation, and they can't afford to act that way. Students need a success consultant, they need somebody to pull their coattails, they need somebody to care about them, they need somebody to help them develop a vision. A vision is the ability to see things oftentimes that other people cannot see. And if it weren't for teachers that told me that I had ability...I wouldn't be here if we believed, and my mother would have stopped when I was in the third grade when the teacher said I could not read, or when the priest said I'll never be a success at the University of California, which I did graduate in the top 10% of the class, by the way. I could have stopped if I would have heard that.

I talked to a Latino this morning and some advisor in biology told her she wouldn't get into medical school unless she had a 3.7. So she doesn't know better, so if doesn't have a 3.7 she'll probably quit and decide to do something else. And I said, don't, do not quit, do your best and apply anyway. I know a bunch of people that are physicians today that didn't have 3.7s that are great doctors. Do not let somebody set a barrier for you that gets in the way of your dream, you know?

Somebody taught Michael Jackson how to do the Moonwalk. Somebody taught Hendrix how to play guitar. Who are your mentors and how do they make a difference for you? And can you extend that to somebody else because if each one of us do that we're going to make a difference in a lot of people's lives. I know we sit up and we watch TV, and we see stuff on television and we say, gee, I'd like to make a difference. You're here, you have an opportunity at this University to start working with the kids that work in your office, or people that you see on a daily basis, or your neighbors, or whoever. We mentor everybody. I was mentoring the homeless this summer downtown in Chico, talking to them, trying to help them improve their life because this is the fricking right thing to do. I'm not trying to charge them \$100 for that, it's the right thing to do because we have the talent and ability to do it, and we can make that difference. It's only time, and time has a big payoff, a huge payoff. Mentoring is a chance to change somebody's life.

These are just a few points I jotted down last night. This is not an exhaustive list of what mentors should do. These are just some thoughts that came to me last night when I'm watching "The Voice," you know? All right, the first one is to remember that a smile is an international language. If you want to break somebody down and want to become a part of their life, smile. Most of us know what that means, and a friendly face makes a world of difference when you're from another world. I was lucky enough to go to school in West Los Angeles. I had been exposed to white people, in West LA, near the Miracle Mile and Farmer's Market. And so I was used to that. But for students that had never experienced that, this is a different world for them, we have a special program for international students. We didn't have a special program for students that come from inner cities that have not been exposed to this kind of an environment. It's shocking, and it takes a lot from you, and it can make you question yourself when you don't look like -- and people are stereotyping you and they come, and they have all these views about you, it affects you.

The next thing is to remind them that this is not a dress rehearsal. So while you're finger popping around here and show stopping, you either pull them pants up and take this seriously because this is your chance. So I expect you to do better than that. Students respond to that because we already know from the literature that teachers who set high expectations for students have high achieving students, and we know that people who have low expectations for students that don't achieve. So we have to expect that they do better than they do. We've got to set that up for them so they can meet that bar, you know?

I was reading something the other day, these folks have this whole stuff called "mindset theory," and they have what's called open mindset and fixed mindset. So basically if you have a fixed mindset, it would be something like you were always told you were smart, that you could do anything you want. The problem with that is when these people are confronted with a challenge and they can't do it, they don't believe that it's possible. I mean they're smart and they couldn't do it. But the folks who have an open mindset, who believe that anything is possible, are the ones that are more likely to achieve. So instead of saying you're smart, you can do it, you'll say give your best and the best will come. It's open. And so we've got to remind students that many of our students come here with a fixed mindset that they can't do it, that people of their background and viewing their complexion and socioeconomic status don't have what it takes to become somebody. So you have all kinds of doubts about who you are. That's not fixed. It can be fixed, but it's not the truth.

There was a time when everyone goes, those who said, oh, no, when they said black guys weren't smart enough to play quarterback in the NFL. Want me to name the starters right now? We dominate the league in quarterbacks. There was a time when black guys couldn't play basketball in the NBA. That was in the '50s, it was all white. It's a new day. When people believe they can, they can. And a part of what we have to do is teach them that belief. Nothing comes easy and nothing comes free. If you want the sweet fruits you've got to climb the tree, the sweetest fruit is at the top of the tree but in order to climb the tree you've got to put yourself in position to be off balance, and you've got to have belief that if you fail you can get up and climb that tree again. It's our responsibility, I think, to help students have that belief in themselves.

The next point is you've got to know there to go there. You've got to know there to go there. You've got to know who you serve, who are your students? I'm not talking about your job, who do you serve? Who do you serve? I serve any student who knocks on my door that wants help, anybody. Not only students, I have mentored a lot of student affairs professionals, a lot of them. I had one lady who was trying to finish her Master's thesis, had her give me her full-length leather coat. I got a deadline for you, if you don't have this done by this day, that's called behavior modification, that coat belongs to my wife. Yes, she did, she finished that thesis. [laughter] I was also chairman of a bunch of Thesis Committees for students, because people in Student Affairs who didn't get along with their advisors, and I did that. But you've got to know who you serve, and you've got to know what they need. You cannot give them what they need if you don't know what they need. Does that make sense?

And oftentimes, because I'll let students know all the time if reading is something you struggle with, then work on reading. Don't worry about matriculating; work on developing your skills, develop your

skill levels. I told this young lady today, who wants to be a physician, before you become a race car driver -- because you want to take all these hard classes next semester -- I said you've got to learn how to drive your car. Once you learn how to drive it, you've got to learn how to drive it fast, and once you learn how to drive this car fast, you've got to learn how to drive a regular old sports car fast, before you can jump into a race car. So I want you to take your time before you jump out there. You've got to know what they need, and you've got to know how they change as a result of you giving them what they need, and you've got to know what you do.

What is it about you, as a mentor, that is effective? I think what makes me effective as a mentor is that I love the students, and because if you don't love them you can't teach them. If you don't love them they're not going to listen to you. If you don't love them they're not going to come back for more, you've got to love them. I hear from students all the time, there are teachers, there are professors at this University, when students say I love so and so, I want to know who they are, what department they are, and I also want to know the names of the bad ones. You've got to love the students.

Somebody asked the great Mike Tyson, said, Mike, can you describe what your job is? Mike says, he says, yes, you'd think Mike would say pugilist, right? Mike says, "I'm not" -- this is how Mike talks -- "I'm not" -- I'm going to say this nicely for Jeff -- "I'm not malahopperf [assumed spelling] out" - that was his job description, for those of you that don't know what a "malahopperf" is, it starts with an M and ends with an F. At any rate, the point is, is that he didn't say he was a boxer, he basically defined what his purpose was when he was in the ring. And what is your purpose when you're in the ring, being a Counseling Psychologist at this University is just an opportunity for me to affect the lives of someone else who can take it back to their community and change the direction of their family for the rest of history. And that's the whole idea. You've got to teach self-belief. You might say to yourself, well, I shouldn't have to teach self-belief. You should want to be here. They do want to be here, they don't oftentimes know what to do when they're here. So not only do we have to give them the dream, oftentimes we have to give them the vision and point out all the different things they can do, and all the different alternatives until they get it and start believing in themselves.

And then the other part is teaching people to read their own reality. I had an opportunity to study with the great Paulo Freire. I spent one week with Paulo Freire, and if anybody knows who he is, he's the great Brazilian scholar who went around South America empowering people through literacy, teaching them how to read. And Paulo defines literacy as the ability to read reality. And when you can read your own reality you can then make decisions about your reality that will be good for you. And a lot of our students need to read their own reality. Like one student said to me, "I'm from Oakland and I don't know nothing about racism." Okay, okay, all right.

The next one is you've got to teach what power is, and power is the ability to define your own reality, and when you can define your own reality that can give you a lot of power. And then they're in a position as students to make decisions about what they do that will affect their future and how powerful they'll be in the future. The lion's story will never be told as long as the hunter insists on telling it -- African proverb. I'm about creating lions and stories. I want them to be able to have a voice in this world

and how it's run. I want them to make a difference for their own self and their own people. I want them to develop goals and to have a plan. And as Mike, once again, I don't why I keep going to Mike, but he says, "Everybody has got a game plan until they get hit." We've got to teach students how to deal with adversity because they're going to get hit, and many of our students things have come easy to and they don't know how to deal with it when things get hard. And many of our students, things are hard and they don't know how to deal with it when they get hard. And that's why. Thank god for Dr. Fritz, who let me take an exam over or take exams by myself or have unlimited time until I learned how to be a student. As my mentor, Dr. Joseph White, said to me and Tom Parham, once at dinner in Washington, D.C., he says, look here, let me tell you brothers something. There are three things in life you're going to have, that's power, prestige and status. He said, don't worry about making money, if you do good work the riches will come. And it's not necessarily about money that makes you rich, it's about all of the fruits you bear from the labor you give back to people who need it. Thank you.

[Applause]

Dr. Patterson: Oh, man, it's a long road. Yes?

Audience member: [Inaudible]

Dr. Patterson: Relax now. [laughter] Yes?

Audience member: [Inaudible]

Dr. Patterson: You mean Chico? Serving students, no -- I mean I always knew I wanted to do that. I was lucky enough to be a two-time RA when I was at UC Irvine, and was kind of involved in everything. And I've been on a college campus since 1972. I never wanted to leave. I enjoy this, this is what I'm supposed to do. Sometimes you're called, and I know there are people in here that are the chosen ones, and I believe I'm a chosen one. I don't think I'm the only one that's chosen, but I do think I have been. And, as a result of being chosen, I feel like this is the place. And I'm going to retire in May, but I'm going to still be working with Men of Honor, I'm going to still be mentoring students of color for sure. And I mentor all students, I have white mentees. You can tell them, Mike. Yes, I've got groupies that attend all my study skills workshops. I learned study skills by not having them, I told you that. I learned how to speak by not having it. I learned to be an expert on test anxiety by having it. All the things that I'm known for treating are all the things I couldn't do because you've got to share your gift, you've got to be able to give it away.

And when you do you get a lot back. We, Chela and I, we get lots of love when we go places because students know us everywhere and it's just a great feeling. We know their families, we know parents. I mean got a Courialle [assumed spelling] sister, I remember meeting your mom and dad, her two sisters, her brother, all of them live here, three sisters, all of them went to Chico State, know all of them, greatly, and we know a bunch of families just like them that have become a part of our lives, a part of our family. Yes?

Audience member: [Inaudible]

Dr. Patterson: Oh, yes, yes, yes, oh, yes. What she's referring, oftentimes I give speeches, and I have to remind my students that they're eagles, and that eagles, eagles fly with eagles. Eagles don't fly with pigeons, eagles don't fly with chickens, you don't see eagles with turkeys, you don't see them hanging out with ducks. And so why you hanging with them? You got to know who you are, and when you know who you are you've got to fly high because you're not going to get a whole lot of second chances. Chris and I and those of us that have been around here a long time, we've seen star students go to prison, and we've seen students come in here that couldn't read that are doctors today. We've got an EOP student that was on what-you-call-him's team, when they won the Nobel Prize. He did the statistics, on Gore's Team, he's an EOP student, did the statistics for Gore's Team and has a Nobel Prize. So we've seen students go in different directions -- wind up in prison, go to jail for a bunch of stuff, and wind up coming here with nothing and leaving with everything. We've got Javier at Enloe [Hospital]. He went through EOP, he's now one of our physicians. So, you know, it's -- yes, once you figure out you're an eagle, you fly differently, you know, you show up differently. [laughter]

Now if CC stole it, CC stole it like CC does, he's took it. Those of you that know CC know what that means, yes, yes, right? And those of us that really know him know it means maybe. [laughter] We love you, CC. Any other questions? Thank you.

[Applause]