

Thank you very much. I am honored to be here to celebrate our heritage as Americans and as Asian Pacifics.

I want to thank my wife and my partner Sarah for being here.

I also want to acknowledge Grace Whitcomb. I know she is in Toronto with her mom. Grace invited me to speak to SCE employees a dozen times over the last 15 years. Her commitment to this company, to her fellow employees and to the larger community always inspired me. One of her final acts before she retired was her invitation for me to be here today. So I am here by the grace of Grace! Help me acknowledge Grace Whitcomb for her leadership and for her many years of distinguished service.

We are so fortunate to be here to contemplate and celebrate who we are and what we want to be. Our heritage. **Our ancestors, their sacrifices have become our opportunities.** But what are we doing to honor them?

My grandparents and my parents were put into concentration camps during WWII. Their lives and their careers were altered. For many reasons they pushed themselves to establish a better life for their kids—for me. My wife's mother Youngsook and her family escaped North Korea. She became a Korean War bride and entered the US not really speaking any English. She went on to earn her BA, MA and PhD in Anthropology and wrote a textbook that is still used in colleges today. Her story is another reflection of the American dream. These stories shape what I do every day and what I have tried to do with my life.

Each of us has incredible family stories of immigration, hardship, discrimination. We can never forget these stories. Not to use them as crutches but to inspire us. To push us to do something with the gifts of opportunity each of us now has. As we sit here on a beautiful day to celebrate much of our community, our nation and our world suffers. What is our role and our obligation to make a difference, to help others, to become

the best we can be? **I submit to you that we each need to do more.**
We can never forget our ancestors and our families that have come before us. I ask again, what are we doing to honor them?

Comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable

We are the comfortable. We need to get uncomfortable.

This is an amazing time to be alive and to be an Asian American! 50% more Asians than African Americans in LA County. There are more APA college graduates today than any other non-white group. We are becoming many but are we much? Yet we are the most under-represented in the Board rooms, the C suites and in Sacramento and in Washington DC. We are conspicuously absent. Yes there are extraordinary challenges but there are also enormous opportunities. We live in a time of great abundance. We have so much to appreciate and so much more we can each do.

Some people reminisce about days gone by. Others dream and hope for a better tomorrow. Both are missing this moment we live in. Now. The greatest time of all. For there is no other time but NOW. There is a past now and a future now. Now is the only real time. It is our time to become the best we can be, to assert our voices and our talents, the time to help others and to help our communities.

The present requires our full and total attention. Those stuck in nostalgia and those waiting for the future to come have to snap out of it! They have to wake up!

Sea squirts

I meet a lot of people that say they want stability. They want things not to change. They want to keep what they have. These people are liars. They deceive themselves. No one who is ambitious and wants a better life for themselves wants stability. No parent who loves their kids wants things to

stay the same. Nobody who is alive, who is conscious of the needs in our community, of the inequities in our society wants things to stay the same.

John Wooden hand gestures.

Here's three lessons I have learned as an APA that guide the way I live:

1. **It is not about me it is about WE.** We can't do it alone. We need to help each other, understand one another. We are Asians AND Americans. We are both. We have to navigate two worlds, not isolate ourselves into one. And **We** have to build bridges to other diverse communities. Get out of our enclaves of comfort. Build and cross bridges of understanding, bridges of collaboration, bridges of innovation, bridges to a stronger and more interconnected community. We value family but we need to extend this value to the larger family of our community. We have to embrace our common destiny. That our hopes and dreams all linked, connected, networked together. We have to get beyond me and strengthen the WE.
2. **Align our lives with our passions.** Competence is not enough. Never enough. Who are we? What do we really want? How do we awaken the spirit within each of us that we have a lot more to give? **Not just looking good but doing good.** Pablo Casals Takes courage to listen to your goodness and act on it. Deepak Chopra--Why do we take jobs we don't want, to buy things we don't need, to impress people we don't like. We have to live our lives with passion and compassion.

Stanford.

3. **Lead by example.** We have to mentor and help one another. Each of us is a role model whether we like it or not. People look to us as an example of what to do and how to live. Our children look to us, they are watching us---what do they see? Can our children follow our example, should they? One of our great responsibilities is to teach others what we know and to lead by example. All children are

immigrants, they need to assimilate. They need to learn how to be citizens. They need guidance and mentoring on what success is. They need to see what is possible. Jeremy Lin showed us a glimpse of this. What example are we setting? Who are we mentoring? What difference are we making? **We each have to live our legacy. Our legacy is the example we set. That is the legacy we leave.**

The greatest limitation to our advancement is our own imagination our own concept of ourselves. We impose many constraints on ourselves. Yes there is discrimination, prejudice, racism and stereotyping. Sad to say these are omni present forces that can hold us back. But we must rise above these enemies of our growth and ambitions by becoming stronger. We have to grow to be more visible, more assertive, and better leaders. We cannot wait to be recognized, to be invited, we must seize our opportunities.

This is our time. Right now. To remember our ancestors to appreciate our opportunities. What will we do to honor them?

Not about me it is about we—our destinies are tied to one another

We have to live a life of passion and compassion.

Lead by example and live our legacy.

We have much for which to be grateful. But what will we do to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. What will we do to avoid being sea squirts? What will each of us do to make sure our kids understand the roots of their past and give them the wings to their future?

Thank you for asking me to share my thoughts. I appreciate what you are doing today, but I am more impressed with what each you **will** be doing!

Thank You.

