

**Feeding Your Mind, Freeing Your Mind**  
**by Robert L. Canida, II**

Young brothers, you have 2 choices in life: to accept conditions as they exist in your life, or to accept the responsibility for changing your life!

So you may ask, “How can we change? Well it all has to begin with you!

So, young scholars, you must have the mindset to

**FREE YOUR MIND, BY FEEDING YOUR MIND!**

And you can begin to feed and free your mind by believing the three A’s: Attitude, Action, and Achievement.

**Attitude:** (SAY ATTITUDE)

What type of attitude do you have?

Attitude can be described as a settled way of thinking or feeling, typically reflected in your behavior. Your attitude affects many people, from your family to the stranger you smile at on the street corner. Your attitude can and will affect YOU! Your attitude is particularly important when you face seemingly hopeless situations, such as losing a job, a family member, or a friend.

My advice is to try to keep an attitude of gratitude. You will need the right attitude to get through life. Saying “I can’t” will not get you far. As Winston Churchill once said, “Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.” So develop a positive attitude toward going to college!

**Action:** (SAY ACTION!)

Those of you that take action are the ones who most likely will end up succeeding in life. When you understand this, the more you take action with a positive attitude, the better results you get. Your life becomes so much easier. An action simply dictates the process of doing something, typically to achieve a goal.

The Hebrew Bible tells us in Habakkuk to “Write the vision and make it plain!” Take action today and write your vision, (Where do you see yourself in the next 1-3 years?). Write down your goals and plans. As an educator, I strongly support and challenge each of you to take action and earn a college degree. Something else that you should practice daily is “Carpe Diem” or Siese the Day! Take advantage of every opportunity that your high school has to offer you. And if your school is not encouraging you to go to college, please call or text me.

How many of you have heard about or seen Andres Lara, aka the Cuban Guy?

When he came to UNCP, he told the students that the one thing that keeps them from succeeding is fear and not taking action. He told them about GOYA (Get Off Your Anatomy) and taking action. **Say GOYA!!** By a show of hands, how many of you would like \$20 if given the

opportunity? Andres said, “You can want all you want, but unless you (have them say) GOYA (which means???) and take action, nothing is going to happen. So if you want to go to college, be like Nike and just do it! In order to succeed, move forward, and take action: Say GOYA!”

Let me share something else with you. **Dr. Tyrone Bledsoe**, Founder and CEO of SAAB (Student African-American Brotherhood) told 17 of my young men on this past Thursday,

You were created to (say with me) Believe, Belong, and Become!  
Believe in yourself, as we believe in you!  
Belong to something positive that will propel you into greatness!  
and Become the man you were predestined to be!

### Achievement: (SAY ACHIEVEMENT!)

We believe that every student can succeed. It is even more important to believe in your mind, heart, and soul that you can succeed. If you believe it, you will realize it and work harder. Achievement is simply the things done successfully, typically by effort, courage, or skill. Soon, many of you will graduate from high school. Some of you will go to college; some of you will go into the workforce or military. Regardless of what you do, as we say in Kappa, achieve in every field of human endeavor. And I’m not talking about achieving by other people’s standards; true achievement is when you feel accomplished -- when you have done your very best. So what will you achieve? Just achieve and never, and I say **never**, let anyone tell you that you cannot achieve. As Yolanda Adams tells us in her rendition of the song, “I Believe I Can Fly,” “If you can see it, then you can do it. If you just believe it, there’s nothing to it!” So can you see yourself in college? I can!

Hear me when I say that you might find it harder without a college education. According to Dr. King, “The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education. Through education, one’s true potential can be used to the maximum extent.”

If Dr. King’s legacy teaches us anything, it should teach us that despite our differences we are tied together in the garment of mutual destiny, through our positive attitude, our actions, and our achievements. Young brothers, we all are in this together -- with you!  
And remember what I’m about to tell you, if you remember nothing else that I have said.

*Do not let your current situation, define your final destination! (say it AGAIN) ---Dr. Tyrone Bledsoe*

But remember, success starts by freeing and feeding your mind with the right Attitude, strategic Action and your personal strive for Achievement.

In closing, I want every young man to stand one more time (pause for a moment).

Because you are the present and our future, I want you to know that we expect great things from you! More importantly, you should leave here today, expecting great things from yourself!

Now repeat after me, I STATE YOUR NAME will free and feed my mind to stay encouraged, stay focused, keep a positive attitude, take proactive actions, and strive to achieve in every field of human endeavor.

Robert L. Canida, II is the Director of the Office for Diversity and Inclusion at UNC Pembroke. This speech was given as part of a Men's Day program (100 Black Men) at Mt. Pleasant African Methodist Episcopal Church in Rowland, NC.