

# “Our Future is Created by What We Do Today, Not Tomorrow”

## Motivational Speech

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### EXCERPT 1

Year over year, we’ve enjoyed revenue growth, and in spite of economic uncertainties, we have continued to make a profit.

**All in all – we feel grateful for our good fortune!**

But over time, we have learned that conditions, markets and customers can change. So there’s no guarantee that things will continue to go this well in the future.

It’s a lesson we have learned time and again throughout all of history.

Just think back 100 years ago to the early 1900s, when so many people in the world were farmers.

Here in the United States, one out of every three families farmed the land!

And they did quite well for themselves, especially in the Great Plains states of Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico, because the demand for wheat was so high.

**Those farmers delivered!** To grow more wheat, they made more farmland – by uprooting natural grasses and plowing acre after acre of land with a new invention called “the tractor.”

With that tractor they plowed, and they plowed – and they kept on plowing.

They pushed their fields to the limit, enticed by the promise of bounty, and record prices for wheat.

It didn't take long before these farmers got what they'd worked so hard for: Harvests of plenty. And plenty of money.

Things seemed to be going very well!

**But then conditions changed.**

In the 1930s, there was a terrible drought, the worse in U.S. history!

That was bad enough! But then things got even worse.

In May 1934, 82 years ago this week, along came a massive dust storm created by that over-plowed land. The effects of this dust storm were felt clear across the country – as far away as the East Coast! Even right here where we are in Keene, New Hampshire.

The Great Plains was renamed “the Dust Bowl” because this dust storm created a Blizzard of Black Dirt – two miles high! – and swept millions of tons of topsoil 2,000 miles across the United States.

Can you imagine?

The storm dumped prairie dirt right here in the city of Keene, in the state of New Hampshire, and in every U.S. state up and down the Eastern Seaboard.

Soil even made it to the Atlantic Ocean, and on ships 300 miles offshore.

Why did it happen?

**Because conditions changed!**

All that land disrupted by the farmers was unprotected and vulnerable, completely defenseless against drought and storms without roots from those natural grasses, which held moisture in the earth, and anchored the topsoil.

**No city was spared.**

I couldn't believe it when I watched a video on History.com.

There was so much dirt in the air, you couldn't even see the Statue of Liberty!

The wall of dust was so tall and so thick, it blocked out the sun! In New York, people were coughing and crying because dust got stuck in their eyes, and in their throats. And hundreds of people who breathed this air died from "dust pneumonia."

It was horrible.

A year later, another massive storm followed, and made the farmers' situation even more desperate.

**When it was over, the Dust Bowl storms of the 1930s went down as one of the greatest environmental disasters in U.S. history.**

Fixing the problems required bailouts from the U.S. government, and lots of new rules for crop rotation, tree planting, grass seeding and plowing.

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As the saying goes: "Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it."

And so what lessons can we learn from the tragedy of the Dust Bowl?

**Just because things are fine today doesn't mean they will be fine in the future, especially when conditions change.**

And they will.

Back in 1934, those farmers were caught by surprise.

Why?

Because they failed to ask questions and plan for the future.

- What *if* conditions changed?
- What *if* there was a drought?
- What *if* we suffered a terrible storm?

## **EXCERPT 2: SPEECH CLOSING**

**The past is our lesson.**

**The present is our gift.**

**And the future is our motivation.**

So today we have a choice:

To either keep our feet firmly planted on ground that is well-plowed and quite comfortable – or to pick up our feet, be curious and step into new ground.

If we do what we've always done in the past, we will stay right where we are.

Eventually, we'll become irrelevant.

And we'll have no future place in this exciting global market.

If we are content with the present, we will be defenseless against what might be coming next, and we will no longer be sustainable.

Instead, we must take a lesson from the farmers, and not allow ourselves to be swept off our feet by the winds of change, and a future we didn't take the time to anticipate.

**Our future is created by what we do today, not tomorrow.**

If we take the right steps today, we will propel ourselves forward.

So let us pick up our feet and take the next step. And the next. And the next.

Let us dare to address our future head on, and embrace our great potential head first.

Thank you.