

Good afternoon. I would like to thank the Laredo's Job Corp administration, and especially Miss Adriana Perez for choosing me as a speaker tonight. I know there are dozens of successful stories that started here in Job Corp and it is an honor for me to be in front of you today.

I want to share with you three lessons that I learned in a conference by Jim Rohn and that I are a fundamental part of my personal and professional life. But also, I want to share these three lessons with you because I can assure you that if you apply them in the same way that I did, you will be able to accomplish wonderful things. At the same time I will be giving you some examples in how these lessons have been part of my accomplishments.

1. Number one: It's not what happens what determines your life's future; it is what you do about it that will determine your destiny. Because anybody has problems; personal, economical and professional; but only the best will do something about it.

I was born here in Laredo, Texas but I lived my first 18 years in Ciudad Acuna, Mexico. As you know things are not doing so well in Mexico and there are many unresolved problems. But again, the problems do not determine your life's future; it's what you do about it what will determine your destiny. And I wanted my destiny to be something better so I did something about it. When I turned 18, in 2006, I enrolled in Laredo Job Corp where I got my GED, and completed a vocation in accounting. The same things that you all have done.

And with only six months in the United States and with little knowledge of the language I enrolled in the Laredo Community College. And not knowing the language it's a big problem as you can imagine, but I didn't let that problem to determine my life's future, and I did something about it. And what I did was to study very hard. Every day I read; every day I practiced; and every day I became better. But don't get me wrong, I am not perfect, I still have many things to learn and I am still learning today, but it is because I am doing something about it. With time and effort I became better in my classes and I was able to join and serve as vice president of Phi Theta Kappa, an International Honor Society; and I had the opportunity to represent Laredo in different events across the state and the country, the most important one was in Philadelphia at the national convention.

2. Now, number two: for things to change you have to change. So it is not a matter of wanting things to be different but it is a matter of acting different. Don't wish something to be easier, wish you to be better. Don't wish for less problems, wish for more skills. Don't wish for less challenges, wish for more wisdom. Accept the challenge because you cannot grow without challenge, the same way as an airplane cannot fly without gravity.

Once I obtained my Associate's Degree in Arts, in 2008, I transferred to Texas A&M International University (TAMIU) where besides of my studies I served as member, team leader, treasurer, and finally vice-president of another student organization: Students In Free Enterprise (SIFE). In this group we developed several projects aimed to the improvement of small businesses and non-profit organizations in our community. And we had many projects because there are many needs in Laredo, but we knew that the only way that things were going to change was if we changed, if we changed our minds, if we changed our actions, and started to do something to benefit our community. So we didn't ask for fewer challenges but rather for more skills to help the others.

And it paid off because now I can say that I was part of the team that represented Laredo at the Regional Competition and we obtained the privilege to represent the South Texas Region at the National

Exposition in Minneapolis, Minnesota. In fact, one of our projects, focused on environmental sustainability, placed second in the nation in a competition by Sam's Club.

3. And finally number three, and probably the most important one: you can do anything you want as long as you have your mind set. Because the mind it is the most powerful tool that anybody has, if you are determined to do something, nothing will stop you.

I obtained my bachelor's Degree in Accounting in December of 2010 with an overall GPA of 3.9, not bad for someone that came from Mexico with little English knowledge, and I started my Master's Degree in Professional Accountancy the next semester. My expected graduation date is May of 2012 and so far I have a 4.0 GPA. I also expect to obtain my license as a Certified Public Accountant by the end of next year. And this has been possible because since I was here in Job Corp my professors, counselors, family and friends helped me to have my mind set in what I wanted: a better life.

So, just to finish let me tell you ONE big secret that anybody should know. You have the ability to accomplish all the things I've done and many more if you wish. Your GED is only the beginning and now the sky is the limit. Do not let anyone tell you cannot do something because you can do anything you want as long as: number one, you do something when problems arrive; number two: you change in order for things to change; and number three: you have your mind set in what you really want, do not let anyone to stop you.

Congratulations on your accomplishment and thank you again for the privilege of being with you tonight. Thank you.