

Upworthy's Pariser delivers Commencement keynote address

Eli Pariser, co-founder of the digital media company Upworthy, received an honorary Doctorate of Laws degree and delivered the keynote address at Dominican University of California's 2016 commencement ceremony May 14 in front of an appreciative crowd of more than 3,500 at Forest Meadows Field.

A total of 458 students -- 306 undergraduates and 152 graduates -- received degrees.

"You matter because you contain within you a great capacity to do good. To act with love," Pariser told the Class of 2016. "Technological change is stirring an existential fear. That fear is stoking the wildfires in our politics and society. But when we're reminded that we matter, things get better. We're more likely to act as good citizens. We're more likely to be our best selves. We're more likely to actually solve those problems.

"So having a sense of self-worth isn't some kind of new-age, hippy-dippy thing. It's important -- and maybe even the key to saving democracy and solving the biggest problems we face."

Pariser twice during his keynote address encouraged graduates to pull out their cell phones and take "selfies."

"I want you to capture yourself in the context of everyone around you, everyone who has traveled this journey with you," he explained. "Instead of a selfie, let's call it a `with-ie.' With your friends. With your classmates. With your professors. With your family. With as many people as you can fit into the frame. The whole context."

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Pariser has dedicated his career to determining how technology can elevate important topics in the world -- as a best-selling author, a pioneering online organizer, and most recently, as a co-founder of Upworthy, one of the fastest-growing media companies of all time.

Pariser joined [MoveOn.org](#) in 2001, serving as Executive Director from 2004 (at age 23) through 2009. During that time, MoveOn revolutionized grassroots political organizing by introducing a small-donor-funded and email-driven model that has since been widely used across the political spectrum. During Pariser's leadership, MoveOn.org quickly grew to more than five million members, who gave over \$120 million to campaigns on topics like climate change and campaign finance reform. During that time, he also co-founded Avaaz.org, which is now the largest online advocacy organization in the world, with more than 30 million members. Today he serves on the board of the Open Society Foundation's US Programs.

In 2011, as a senior fellow at the Roosevelt Institute, Pariser published the *New York Times* bestseller *The Filter Bubble: What the Internet Is Hiding from You*. The book highlights the ways important content can get lost in the newsfeed era. The [TED talk](#) Eli gave based on *The Filter Bubble* has generated nearly four million views -- one of the 50 most popular TED talks online.

Insights from *The Filter Bubble* helped to inspire Upworthy, which Pariser founded with longtime collaborator, Peter Koechley, in March of 2012. To date, the Upworthy community has logged more than 1.5 billion minutes of attention on topics ranging from the criminal justice system to advertising's adverse effects on body image to clean energy.

Pariser graduated summa cum laude from Bard College at Simon's Rock in 2000 with a B.A. in law and

political science.

To follow Pariser on Twitter, please [click here](#).

Navi Dhaliwal, Isabel Cremer and Jessy Marshall delivered the undergraduates student address at Commencement 2016. Gilda Estevez delivered the graduate students speech.

Jessy Marshall, a Business Administration major and student-athlete, was named the Most Outstanding Student and Salvador Chavez, an Occupational Therapy major, was presented with the Veritas Cup, an award voted on by the senior class and presented annually at Commencement to a graduating student considered “a friend of the class.”

Jaime Castner Libby (School of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences), Micheal Shane Cosby (Barowsky School of Business), Lindsay Anne Gray (School of Health and Natural Sciences) and Gilda Estevez (School of Education and Counseling Psychology) were named Outstanding Graduate Students of the Year.

Dr. Diana Spain from the Department of Natural Sciences was chosen as Teacher of the Year and Cheramie Leo from the Department of Literature and Language was named Adjunct Teacher of the Year.

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