

Everybody's Free (To Embrace The Dark Side)

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Vassar College class of 1999 ...

Embrace the Dark Side.

If I could offer you only one tip for the future, the Dark Side would be it. The long-term benefits of the Dark Side have been proven by the Dark Lords of the Sith, whereas the rest of my advice has no basis more reliable than my own meandering cruelty and conquests. I will dispense this advice now.

Enjoy the power and beauty of your planet. Oh, never mind, you will never understand the power and the beauty of your planet until after the Empire has destroyed it in a futile attempt to find the Rebel Base. But trust me, in twenty years, you will look back at photos of your home and recall, in a way you can't grasp now, how blissfully ignorant you were, and how fabulous your planet really looked before it was a pile of burning space rubble. Your planet is not as dull as you think.

Don't worry about the Rebellion - or worry, but know that worrying is as effective as trying to make the Kessel run in a landspeeder. The real troubles in your life are apt to be things that never crossed your twisted mind. The kind that fire a direct hit into your reactor core at 4 PM on some idle Tuesday.

Do in one Death Star officer every day.

Scheme.

Don't disobey the Emperor's orders; don't put up with people who disobey yours.

Hate.

Don't waste your time on Stormtroopers. They can't hit the broad side of a barn. The battle is long and in the end, it's only with yourself. And your idiot son.

Remember the prophecies of the Emperor; ignore the whinings of your bratty upstart farm boy of a son. If you succeed in doing this, tell me how.

Keep your old light saber, but change your costume slightly with every sequel.

Destroy.

Don't feel guilty if you have no misgivings about joining the Dark Side. The most interesting people I know didn't have any respect at 22 for their victim's lives. Some of the most interesting 40 year olds I know still don't.

Have plenty of minions. Be kind to your right hand, you'll miss it when it's gone.

Maybe you'll marry, maybe you won't. Maybe your son will join you, maybe he won't. Maybe you'll convince your daughter to become a Sith and assist you in your campaign of hatred and destruction; maybe she'll become a rebel leader and marry a stuck up, half witted, scruffy looking nerf herder. Whatever you do, don't congratulate yourself too much, or berate yourself either. Your destiny is half chance. So is everybody else's.

Enjoy the Force. Exploit it every way you can. Don't be afraid of it or what other people think of your "sorcerer's ways". The ability to destroy a planet is insignificant next to its power.

Kill.

Listen to what the Emperor has foreseen, even if you don't follow his prophecies.

Do not take your mask off, it will only make you feel ugly. And vulnerable.

Get to know your parents. You'll never know when they'll turn out to be your archenemies. Be nice to your siblings. They are your best link to your Jedi lineage and the ones most likely to become Jedi in the future.

Understand that lackeys come and go. But with a precious few, you should keep from crushing their tracheas. Work hard to bridge the gaps in geography and lifestyle, for as the more desperate you become, the more you will need to send bounty hunters to do your dirty work for you.

Live on Dagobah once, but leave before you get foot rot. Live on Tatooine once, but leave before you get heat stroke. Travel, preferably in your own custom TIE Fighter.

Accept certain inalienable truths: rebellions will rise, the Imperial Senate will have to be disbanded, you too will get old. And when you do, you too will think the populace was compliant, the Imperial Senate was subservient, and citizens respected their Emperor.

Respect your Emperor.

Don't expect your son to rule the galaxy with you. Maybe he'll give into his anger, maybe he'll strike you down, but you'll never know when he'll whine pleadingly and you'll find yourself swayed to the Light Side and saving his sorry butt.

Don't strike down your old Jedi Master, or he will become more powerful than you could possibly imagine.

Be careful whose advice you buy, but be patient with those who supply it, or I'll crush your throat. Advice is a form of nostalgia. Dispensing it is a way of fishing your humanity from the depths of sin, wiping it off, putting black body armor over the ugly parts and redeeming it for more than its worth.

But trust me on the Dark Side.