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Entrepreneur stresses need for community

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Keiretsu Forum CEO and Founder Randy Williams kicked off the seventh year of The School of Business and Management's Distinguished Speakers Series on Sept. 26.

Williams, who founded Keiretsu in 2000, spoke on the importance of building a compassionate community and fostering relationships in creating a successful business.

"Successful entrepreneurship grows from community" Williams said. "It's always been about community with me. It's always been about relationships."

Williams offered the audience his 11 tips in building their own community; his advice ranging from "Never give up" to "Do good" and "Make a Difference."

Williams also emphasized the importance of saying thanks, and being grateful to the people in your community who have helped you to succeed.

He even strayed from his presentation at one point to ask the audience to think of two people (other than their parents) who have helped them get to where they are today.

"Those are the people you should thank - your mentors," said Williams, who admitted he never got the chance to thank his mentor.

"(Success) is about people believing in you... When creating a business, gratitude has to be in your heart."

That gratitude is evident in William's Keiretsu Forum, an organization that runs a non profit sector focusing on charity work and donations. In fact, giving back to other communities was a huge topic in William's lecture.

"Have a higher purpose when building your community," urged Williams. "Insert a charitable aspect (into your community) ... make a difference".

Williams added that "paying it forward" is a major touch point within his own community and very important in building your own. "You've got to give before you receive."

The CEO also shared his interest in teaching youth to be charitable. "If I had learned to give early on, it would have been more impactful. So I want our kids to learn to be givers," said Williams, who offers the opportunity for kids to visit the Keiretsu Forum during their summer and holiday breaks.

Williams extended that invitation to visit the organization and sit in on meetings to students.

He wrapped up his presentation with advice to students looking for success, stressing the importance of relationships with people outside and inside your community.

"The six degrees of separation is so powerful in a community. Give, but don't be afraid to ask," he stated. "Have it in your DNA never to give up."

For more information on how to sit in on a meeting at the Keiretsu Forum, contact Vice President Sonja Markova at .

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