



I have seen the future, and it is bright!

It is the day after the horrific attacks in Paris and the world is in shock. Paris holds a special place in my heart as I lived and worked there for a few months many years ago. I loved my time in Paris; the city oozes beauty, love, and dancing lights. Working in Paris, it was obvious to me that the people of France love life. Fine art, beautiful music and delicious cuisine are not a luxury reserved for royalty; it is a way of life. The national motto – liberté, égalité, fraternité (liberty, equality, fraternity) – reflects the values of a nation who birthed human and civil rights in the [*Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*](#) in 1789.

I remember being nervous to work in France. My French was – as they say – comme ci comme ça...which is really code for “please don’t butcher such a beautiful language.” I was hesitant to speak in French and worried I would be greeted with a snooty “anti-American” attitude. But nothing was further from the truth. My French colleagues were wonderful and embraced me with open arms. The people of Paris were warm, welcoming and helpful. I even received periodic French lessons from my waiters at neighborhood cafes, who were all too patient with me.

When I was in France, I felt free.

The attacks yesterday pierced the heart of Paris and stunned the world. The scars from the attack on the Charlie Hebdo offices are still fresh, making this traumatic déjà vu even more incomprehensible.

The murderers senselessly killed fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, friends and scores of others whose heartbreaking story will inevitably unfold before our eyes. The news was so terrible, so tragic; it is hard to fathom that something like this could happen in a civilized and industrialized nation. We, here in the United States, are still shocked by the horror of this senseless attack on a nation who champion freedom and human rights around the world.

My aching heart goes out to the people of Paris.

I first heard the news yesterday as I was with my colleagues in the middle of my students' final project presentations at the [Kelley School of Business](#). Notifications buzzed across our smartphones alerting us that there had been a potential terrorist attack in Paris. We immediately flipped open CNN to see what was happening. The brief glimpse of gruesome headlines was enough to change the mood from a joyful academic buzz to stunned silence.

I have been following the story since then, consuming as much of the developing news as I could bear.

I had planned to write a "wrap-up article" about my semester teaching some of the most talented students I have had the pleasure of instructing. At the end of the semester I usually try to distill some modicum of wisdom from my observations during my three months of "professoring," but the only thing I can think about is the darkness of this global tragedy.

Yet, I am reminded that, while terrorists tried to extinguish the light of Paris, half-way around the world in a classroom in Bloomington, Indiana 93 students glowed bright and demonstrated that the darkness of ignorance, hate and violence will not prevail in the long-run.

As I watched my students present their final projects yesterday I swelled with pride. In three short months, I no longer recognized these inexperienced undergrads. They were now true masters students: dynamic, intelligent business executives. Watching the teams present their projects was like listening to a beautiful symphony with different instruments perfectly melding to form something wonderful. It occurred to me as I took in their presentations, knowing what was going on in Paris, how ironic it was; how a group of disillusioned young people carrying out a mission of murder could exist while a bright group of young leaders demonstrate they are prepared to deliver the world a better tomorrow.

Suddenly, I felt hope. I felt peace. Once again, like so many years ago in Paris: I felt free. And despite my sadness for the people of France, I was reassured that our young people – our students around the world – are the keys to abolishing hate through the power of education.

The quality of our students is a leading indicator for the quality of our future. Well, I have seen the future, and it is bright. Very bright!

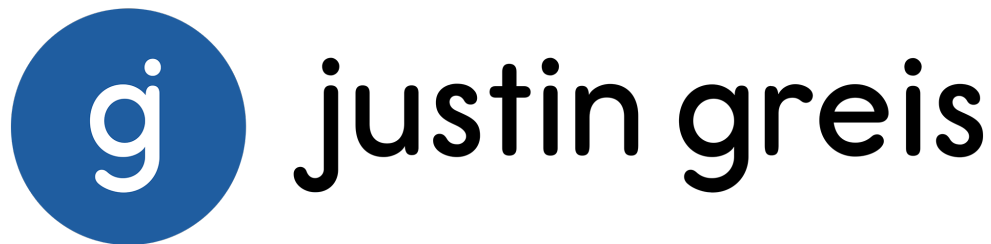
The media may never cover our final presentations, case studies or class lectures. Nor will CNN care that classrooms around the world are filled with students excited to innovate new products, invent the unimagined and change the way we view the world.

But I am here to tell you: they are here and they will make a difference. The light will prevail.

And the millions of young people filling classrooms around the world – cultivating themselves into leaders who care about the future of our world – will not stand for anything less than liberté, égalité, fraternité.

Vive la France!

Et vive l'éducation!



hi, i'm justin
(nice to meet you)

I post weekly **professional insights** and **personal stories** from my life as a management consultant, a dad, and an eternal optimist.



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