There is a level at which engineering is an exercise in failure and frustration.

Thomas Edison, one of the most well known inventors had a lot to say on this topic. This is a guy who held over 1000 patents. He said:

* “Genius is 1% inspiration, 99% perspiration” … in other words hard work is the key
* “I never did a day’s work in my life. It was all fun.”
* “Many of life’s failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up.”
* “Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.”
* “I’ve not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”
* “Discontent is the first necessity of progress.”

Thomas Edison was a man who refused to let “failure” stop him. In fact I think he had a very different definition of failure that most people. What most people call failure, I think Thomas Edison would have called giving up.

As you move forward in life, whether or not you are returning to us, I want you to remember the following…in life:

* You will always be faced with difficult problems
* You will always make mistakes and fail
* You will always face discouragement
* You will always be tempted to give up

And now two corollaries to those Thomas Edison quotes:

* Success is 1% luck and 99% attitude
* Having a positive attitude and outlook on life is \*MUCH\* easier if you put your trust in God.

Okay, so you may ask yourself, what does this have to do with robotics and our end-of-year celebration?

It is this…

We had many successes this year. Those successes were hard won … we had to fight very hard for them. Along the road toward those successes, I’m sure most of you can think back to instances in which you were tempted to give up, cash it in and quit. I’m sure most of you can think back to instances in which you thought you would never be able to get “it” to work. Or you thought your team would never be able to get along and work together.

Whether your team made it to Worlds or not I want you to understand this…you experienced tremendous success this year. In the face of discouragement, frustration, pain and perhaps even tears, you did not give up. You stuck with it, you fought through it, and you persevered.

If you recall I started off by saying there is a level at which engineering is an exercise in failure and frustration. That is true only in that failure and frustration serve to propel s us to grow, to learn, to succeed.

I want to extend that statement: there is a level at which life is an exercise in failure and frustration. This should be true only in that failure and frustration should serve to propel us to grow, to learn and to succeed.

One of my favorite verses is Romans 8:28 which says that “God causes all things to work together for good to those who are called according to His purpose.” For me this verse is what enables me to trust God enough to see failure and frustrations as helpers rather than enemies.

Whether you are coming back to us next year or not, I want you to remember this point and hope the lessons learned this year from robotics helped you learn to persevere.

What are we celebrating tonight? We are celebrating our victories, our trophies, our honors, our accolades. But more than that we are celebrating the intensely hard work you put out, the tremendous work ethic, drive and determination you developed. We are celebrating you, not the trophies or awards: you. Congratulations on a phenomenally successful year in which you built and developed character in the heat of the forge and between the hammer and the anvil.