



# Stanford eCorner

## Stay Out of the Grey Twilight

**Alec Ross, Advisor to US Secretary of State**

**May 26, 2010**

Video URL: <http://ecorner.stanford.edu/videos/2477/Stay-Out-of-the-Grey-Twilight>

Referring to the words of Theodore Roosevelt, Senior Advisor for Innovation in the Office of Secretary of State Hillary Clinton Alec Ross encourages Stanford students to take bold steps and to be audacious in their career. Don't fret over winning or losing. Fling yourself into a project, live it, and learn from it, he suggests.



### Transcript

And Theodore Roosevelt in 1899 said, "Far better to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs even though checkered by defeat, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat." And I would argue that there is a lot of gray twilight out there. There is a lot of comfort to be had by people getting good jobs, by a wariness to take the bold step and to dare mighty deeds and to win glorious triumphs, but then to have similarly big failures. And what I've learned is that failure isn't the end of the world and in fact, it makes you a lot stronger. And I think that success in this world has to do with the spirit of audacity. You've got to be audacious and not care so much if you win or lose or to fling yourself into things, mind, body and soul. And more likely than not, even if you lose, you're going to have fun and you're going to learn from it. And the people who I've gotten to know who are now several steps past you and your lives. People who are in my age bracket, in their mid- and late-30s, people in their 40s and people in their 50s. If you ask them, oftentimes what it is that they regretted is that they regretted not taking up those big chances. So the last piece of advice that I'll give to you just as many of you begin your careers is stay out of the gray twilight.