

On Monday, September 5th, 2005 our lives were put into a routine we would have for years to come. Our parents held our tiny hands, and let go once the bus doors opened. Each of us climbed those three mighty steps, waving from the window. Yes, you guessed it, the first day of kindergarten. Everyone told us we would love going to school. And so our journey of primary education began. Once high school finally came around, most of us learned, our love for school would not quite stick.

Fear isn't really apart of being a child. Meeting new people went a little something like this. "Hi, my name is Grace, what's yours? Do you want to be friends?" It's not until we grow up, that we learn life can be tricky. Hesitation, fear, and worry can hold us back. All of us made mistakes along the way, but that's a good thing, because some of the most influential lessons have been learned through being wrong. Those bumps in the road we have encountered, are stepping stones of knowledge. Confront them with love, and you will better yourself each day.

My dad reminded me of a quote by Yogi Berra once said when I told him about this speech. The 1940's catcher for the Yankees stated "when you come to a fork in a road, take it". I think this is really important for graduates to hear. He isn't telling us to go left or right, he's telling us to be decisive on instinct. Don't get stuck or too comfortable out there in the real world. Make choices, as they will push you on a path to greatness.

Today doesn't just mark a chapter ending in our lives, it marks the day we start a new one. F. Scott Fitzgerald once wrote "so we beat on, boats against the current, borne ceaselessly back into the past". I see this quote as a challenge. Fitzgerald tells us to keep pushing forward, amongst all the setbacks and hardships and past hopes and dreams. That is the biggest lesson high school has taught us. That we must carry on, no matter how hard it gets.

We should challenge ourselves to attempt new things like a fearless child would. Take what NHS has taught us and keep it close, but never let it hold us back, because lipper ships are not meant to be anchored at shore, they are meant to wander.

Be open minded to new experiences, take a job that scares you, travel, go the path less taken, swim in the seven seas, and most importantly, introduce yourself to someone new, and see if they can be your friend.

As for the parents, we ask one single promise from you. Let us fly. You did your job well, as you can see by all the wonderful people behind me. But your role has now changed.

Encourage mistakes, guide us knowing that your not letting go of your child's hand so they can spend half the day at kindergarten. Your letting them go so they can explore all that the world has to offer; so let them. We will mess up, but we will keep surging forward. Welcome to adulthood Class of 2018, I have a lot of faith in your ability to thrive, we've got this.