

I am honored to be here with you today. It has been a pleasure to share this journey with you. We have gone through so much together as we embraced dreams, faced fears and spent endless hours together on applications, essays and senior projects. Throughout these events we shared frustration as well as tremendous moments of joy. I have walked the line between loving you completely and being impatient with your human inconsistencies- as a kind of surrogate mother who plays many roles that include celebrating your vast accomplishments, kicking you in the butt as needed, offering hugs and reassurance and reminding you on occasion to breathe. I loved these relationships and I feel incredibly fortunate to have known each of you. So...This is my one last chance to play this role. As most of you know, I am a bit of a sentimental sap, and I enjoy the deep thoughts usually found on refrigerator magnets, bumper stickers and greeting cards. As you move on to the next chapter in your lives I want to leave you with these sentiments.

Everyday Grateful (This is from a wooden plaque that I gave to a sick friend)

You may feel that you have inherited a world with so many issues that is too hard to stand for anything, difficult to be hopeful, and you resent the constant requests and rhetoric asking you to repair all the wrongs we face today. Yet, this world is a good place. We have hardships in our lives but ultimately we have abundant gifts and opportunities. I urge you to find the good in your everyday lives and go forward fully aware and appreciative of all that you have in this life rather than focusing on what seems to be missing.

"Barns burnt down- now I can see the moon" (this is a magnet on my refrigerator)

Attitude is everything-. We can't always control what life throws at us but we can control how we respond. The essence of who you are comes out during moments of difficulty and these experiences define you. Difficult situations can be a gift as they push us beyond what we knew ourselves to be capable of. I honestly hope that your path is not always smooth and that you are challenged to roll with the punches, problem solve, learn and grow from that which is not in your control. You are each smart, capable and amazing. Embrace challenges and figure out what you are intended to learn from them.

Whatever you are- be a good one (Embroidered on a pillow in my son's room)

In my job, I have had the unique opportunity to watch you grow and evaluate yourselves over the past four years, lamenting mistakes, lost opportunities and planning new futures. Many of you wish that you had worked harder as freshman or that you had taken the time to do the quality of work that you are capable of. The experience of applying to college was just the first of many throughout your lives where you are measured by what you actually do rather than what you are able to do. Ultimately we can't practice life, there are no dress rehearsals and there are a limited number of retakes. This is it. Your life is precious and now is the time to live it. Whatever you are- be a good one. There is no time like the present-

Treat others as you would like to be treated (Just the basis for everything)

The first principle of every great religion is to treat others as you'd like to be treated. It is the only ethical standard in life you need. Imagine a world where everyone followed this basic premise.

Leap and the net will appear (A card tacked to my bulletin board)

Your CRMS experience has taught you much more than you recognize at this point in your lives. If nothing else I hope this school has taught you the importance of being open to new adventures and believing that you can succeed in whatever you set your mind to. At CRMS you have learned what value there is in participating. Did you ever imagine when you arrived here that you would be able to do the things that you can do today. Create an intricate piece of art, navigate a gnarly rapid, climb a difficult route, or write an eloquent yet convincing argument. Your lives up to this point have been guided and determined by others. This is the beginning of a life where you make choices and direct your own path. It is time for you to leap. The world is ready for you and you are ready to create the life you've imagined. You leave with confidence, optimism and hope but also with ambivalence, insecurity and perhaps fear. This is your moment- this is your life – swallow those feelings of fear and walk forward.

"Enjoy yourself because these are the good old days that you are going to miss someday" (I found this message on a tea tag the morning of my high school graduation)

These very moments right now in your life will reward you with wonderful memories down the road. Difficulties encountered over the years will fade while the friendships, laughter and all of your amazing experiences will endure.

All know the way- few actually walk it (A card I gave to my son intended to inspire)

Take what you know to be true and just in your heart and mind and live your lives deliberately. Find the passion in your lives that creates meaning for you and let this guide you. Follow the path that you know is honest.

Being nice to people is a really good idea (Magnet on my fridge)

Recognize what a kindness can do. A smile translates in every language. Simple compassion and consideration can make the world a better place.

Congratulations to the class of 2010!