

## Graduation 2009 Charge to the Seniors

Good Morning ---Hello Seniors. I am honored to be here at your graduation. I am especially honored that Jeff Leahy asked me to give the “charge to the seniors”. To give a charge means giving a suggestion, a bit of advice on how to proceed in this new phase of your life. My suggestion is that you ask yourself : “What is my real passion in life?” and then to reflect on it daily. This is not a question you ask yourself once this summer and then forget it. This is a question that should always be at the forefront of your mind. If you ask yourself every day: “Am I following my passion and my heart?” the answers you find will shape your actions and help you make decisions,

Like many of you, I am a process person. I like the doing of something rather than thinking about it, or talking about it. That may seem strange coming from a teacher. But it has taken me a while to realize the benefits of thinking about what I am doing. In retrospect it should have been easy for me to realize this because I love painting. Painting is all about the process of doing, and one thinks and evaluates and plans while painting. The final painting is a lot less important than the process.

Life is like painting, the process of living is more fun and more important than the obvious final outcome. And the journey of life, like painting, needs to be thought about while doing it.

You have all heard the quote of Socrates” “The unexamined life is not worth living”. This should mean examining your beliefs, ethics and actions. That can seem intimidating, so I suggest keeping it simple, and just ask yourself what really matters to you. This will help you discover what you should be doing in life.

A few of you know where your path lies, but for many of you finding your passion in life is surprisingly not so simple. So, here is a short check list of questions that I have found valuable:

Number 1. What makes you come alive? What in your life does not seem like work, regardless of how much time and energy you put into it? It does not have to be something you seem particularly good at, but something you would like to be good at. What puts a smile on your face?

Next, What makes you want to learn more? What is that subject or thing that you want to read more about and acquire more skills in? What makes you curious?

Finally, what puts a smile on someone else’s face? When you find that thing that is immensely satisfying, it is rarely selfish. You will find that it frequently inspires others and brings your community to life. The world needs people that are alive.

Some of you may already know where your passion lies. But as you grow and your life changes, your path will evolve also. It is essential that we all continually examine our lives. Be reflective. Think about your choices and actions. And continually ask yourself:

What makes me come alive?

What makes me want to learn more?

Am I helping other people?

The examined life really is worth living. I wish you all the very best! Thank you  
Khara Gaw 6/6/2009