

Just a Few Dares

Life is a progress, and not a station”

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

In other words, to live is to continually move forward and to keep changing. With that in mind do you dare to change? Look around graduates. Somebody is settling for the same old low standards. But I know it's not going to be us. Somebody is letting those obstacles that show their faces during the journey stop them. I know it is not going to be one of us. Society says we all will give up. But do any of you plan on letting some obstacle hinder you now? I didn't think so. Graduates, we must be different and we must strive to have lives that mean something, not just anything, but something positive and great.

It is our time seniors. This is the day to remember: the day when all of these great minds will be released. Great minds exhibit excellence. Today is the day that excellence—our excellence, is released upon this world. This day will not be remembered as the day many of us joined the statistics. This is the day we decided to defy them.

We have not come this far just to window shop. If we want to progress we have to adapt. This world is ever changing, and time waits on no one. You either hop upon the train of success, or watch it as it disappears into the horizon.

A great story teller once told me that “You are your own story.” Now just think about this. If your life was a story, would anyone want to read it? Would *you* even want to read it? How many things both negative and positive would you want to be a part of your

story? Today we make an effort to guide this story where we want it to go. Today, as it has been said many times, is the first day, of the rest of our lives.

In this story those before us have paved roads. There are the crooked twisting highways and the straight and narrow lanes. We know we must not take the crooked highway, for too many have been lost by following a crowd. Graduates we must strive to not get caught up or sidetracked by things that will stop us from succeeding. We must not get caught up in the same problems that we see around us everyday. We must consider the big picture.

We are all full of great potential. But we are of no good if we don't use what we have. We are taking the straight road, but we do not have to take the road the same way everyone else does. If we let other peoples' limits bind us, we will never achieve what we are capable of: what we want to do. Every great man and woman share one characteristic, and that is, that they have done a great deed that no one else has done. Therefore in taking that straight road we do not have to just walk; we can run, we can jump, we can drive, and some of us will even crawl as long as we get where we need to be. Graduates we can do anything, as long as we are moving forward.

If everyone did things the same way in this world, we would not have anything. If everyone depended on following someone else's footsteps, the world would never advance. Advancement is change. John F. Kennedy said it best when he said "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." Do not let the world shape your story. You shape the world with it.

Now do you dare to be different? In spite of all the negative stereotypes that you may think you fit into. Do you dare to be different? In spite of that person who tells you

that you'll never amount to anything, do you dare to be different? In spite of that person who tells you that you should just quit and forget your dreams? Do you dare to have that story that blows the world away letting everyone know that you are indeed full of greatness. This is that moment. We've been guided, going to school these years, but that is not enough. We are done letting other people's pens write our stories. Graduates make sure you are able to remember this day as yours, not someone else's, rising action. Remember this day as just a prelude, a foreshadowing of what is to come. Remember this day as the day you began to excel in your story.

When we do finally exit this institution of ours, and finally get a taste of that real world, what's beyond Hamilton, what's beyond these crowded hallways, what's beyond the people who can't stand to see us succeed, what's beyond all of these obstacles? What, are we going to do?

We have come back to those two roads in our story again, the crooked and the straight. But why must we take that road at all? We have potential. We don't want the road that's been made for us. We see the path; it is right before us. We know where we are going so why don't we just fly?

Fly up graduates, and just take a look around. There is a vast world out there. Now choose your course. No doubt turbulence will come but we've got jet engines to pull us right through.

Now fly with me; remember today, excel, and soar. Now I dare you, to let someone shoot us down.