

Good morning graduates and guests,

I am both honored and humbled to be here today to speak to you. And, truth be told, more than a little terrified. I've struggled to find the right words to share. Something classy and dignified that would stick in your memories. But, in talking with an old friend of mine last week, I was reminded that that's not my style. My style is to be straightforward and honest, to be blunt. So, here goes.

You're entering a world that will be scary, challenging, overwhelming and, at times, cruel. There will be times you'll want to quit, to give up. You'll believe that you can't do it anymore, that settling for "good enough" is all right.

Feeling inspired, yet?

The good news is that you will succeed and overcome the obstacles that life throws your way. I know this because in the past four years I have witnessed firsthand the growth in you from the crazy kids in my 5<sup>th</sup> hour freshmen English class into the young adults I see before me today. You have become wiser, more mature, and stronger. I have seen you overcome hardships and tragedies, both personal and in the larger community, each of which could have broken you but didn't.

I believe that one of the reasons you've been able to persevere is that you have each other to lean on. One of the greatest things I have seen in my time at Henry is the support you have for one another. When someone is down or needs help there has always been another who is willing to lend a hand, to help that person back to their feet. As long as you continue to have that support for each other there is no way any of you will fail. As long as you are there for each other you will continue to experience growth and success. As long as you are there to support each other the class of 2012 will accomplish many wonderful things in life; benefitting not only yourself but those around you.

I am confident that great things are yet to come to the class of 2012 and from the class of 2012. It's been an honor and a privilege to have known many of you and to have been part of your time here at Henry. I'd like to close with a passage from the illustrious Dr. Suess.

Congratulations!

Today is your day.

You're off to Great Places!

You're off and away!

You have brains in your head.

You have feet in your shoes

You can steer yourself

any direction you choose.

You're on your own. And you know what you know.

And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.

You'll look up and down streets. Look 'em over with care.

About some you will say, "I don't choose to go there."

With your head full of brains and your shoes full of feet,

you're too smart to go down any not-so-good street.

And you may not find any

you'll want to go down.

In that case, of course,

you'll head straight out of town.

It's opener there

in the wide open air.

Out there things can happen  
and frequently do  
to people as brainy  
and footsy as you.

And when things start to happen,  
don't worry. Don't stew.  
Just go right along.  
You'll start happening too.

OH!

THE PLACES YOU'LL GO!

Thank you.