

DEAR GRADUATE,

Eighteen years of work, effort, friendship, family, learning, fun and life experience. And after tomorrow, things will never be the same. You will be an adult. A graduate. The person in charge of your destiny. No one telling you when to be in class, where to live, who to become, or what path to take.

You get to choose. Which is both exciting and overwhelming in the best possible way.

SO HERE ARE A FEW THOUGHTS THAT MIGHT HELP AS YOU SPREAD YOUR WINGS.

CONNECT.

There is no substitute for real people, real community, real conversation, and real connection. Seek it. Prioritize it. It's not easy in a tech-heavy world, but it's worth it.

KEEP LEARNING.

Learn at work, at a university, as an apprentice, through books, trade school, or online classes. It doesn't matter where or how, but take every opportunity to increase your knowledge. You will never regret it.

LIVE YOUR VALUES.

Take time to figure out what really matters to you, at your core, and let those principles guide your decisions. Living a value-driven life will give you so much peace and purpose.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY.

It's the only one you have. Exercise. Eat nutritious food. Drink water. Sleep. If you treat it well, it will help you fulfill your dreams.

STEP UP.

When everyone else passes the buck, leaves the mess, makes excuses, or walks away, choose to be different. Take responsibility. Own your part. Do more than your share. Stay.

TAKE RISKS.

Don't live scared. Be willing to try. You can always come back from defeat. Success is a fun companion but failure is a beautiful teacher. Learn from both.

ASK FOR HELP.

You don't have to have it all together all the time. You don't always have to be strong. We were created to need each other. You have so many people in your corner. Lean on them.

ENJOY THE SMALL THINGS.

Don't wait to be happy until you are in the next stage, have the next thing, or reach the next level. You will miss out on so much of your present joy. There is good in every season of life. Find it.

BE HUMBLE.

Perfection is an illusion. It's ok to not know. It's ok to make mistakes. It's ok to be young and inexperienced. You have plenty of time to become an expert.

CONNECT WITH GOD.

Invite Him in. Talk to Him. Love Him. Figure out how He speaks to you. Trust that He will make "all things work for your good."

BE KIND.

The world has enough hardness, cynicism, anger, and greed. Be different. Stop for a stranger. Think of others. Be patient. Speak with love. See the good. Say the good. Be the good.

AND REMEMBER

that no matter how old or successful or popular or struggling or lonely or difficult or far away you are, **WE ARE ALWAYS HERE FOR YOU.**

The last 18 years have been such a gift. So much joy. So many lessons. So much growth. You might not believe it quite yet, but you are ready.

SO GO. DREAM. FLY.

Step into the spotlight that is waiting just for you. And when you need a reset, a moment of rest, or just somewhere to do your laundry, our door is always open and our fridge is always stocked. Because no matter where you settle,

WE WILL ALWAYS BE YOUR HOME.

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