

Welcome;

I don't have much time here today so I'm going to get right into it. We have all been working for this moment since some of the earliest moments we can remember, and through all of those years friendships were made, goals have been achieved and limits have been surpassed. Before anything I need to say congratulations.

However, thinking about the work I put in and the sacrifices we have all made something was tugging at my mind and I recently heard a question that simply and elegantly put all of my reservations out in the air “Why are you doing this?” I had initially dismissed it, but it never truly left my mind. The question would periodically come back. “Why are you doing this?” Obviously I had come up with answers. Why am I doing this? Well I need to get into college, I need to get a job, I need to be successful; I couldn't understand why but none of that felt satisfying, it just felt a little bit wrong, so I thought about it. I thought about it for a long time.

Why am I doing this? It took a while but I finally came up with an answer. I'm doing this for my family, I want to reassure them that when I leave home I'll be ok; I'm doing this for my friends, in ten years I want to look back today with the friends I have that I met in Mineola and I want to remember all of the unforgettable memories I have; but in the end when push comes to shove I'm doing this for me, I'm doing this because I want to accomplish this milestone of life, I want to join the people in this room who went through what we're going through now, I want to be able to help anyone who is struggling because I can finally say that I've been there and I made it through.

At the end of the day, my reasons are my own. Everyone in this room will have different reasons for being here today. So before I leave you, I want you to look at the people around you

and think about it. What are your reasons for doing it all? Or put in the only way it made any sense to me; Why are you here?