

1. Hello, Class of 2021!
2. I'm honored to be able to celebrate with you all today--this major life accomplishment that we've all achieved. It's been a marathon of papers, exams, and studies, and today, we all cross the finish line together...[Words of affirmation]
3. During a sophomore year internship, I was introduced to the developmental power of self-reflection... So, I wanted to ask all of you today...what do you remember from the months leading up to your first year of college?[Introduce follower to developmental opportunity]
4. For me, those days seem like yesterday... One thing that sticks out was being asked, on a daily occurrence, "What do you want to study in college?"
5. I had no idea, because this question seemed to be synonymous with "what do you want to do for the rest of your life?" And, at the time, I questioned why I needed to have this all figured out. [Question critical assumptions]
6. So, to divert the attention away from me, I'd ask if they had any advice. To which they'd tell me something like (IMPERSONATION) "Actually, I don't even use what I learned in college for my work." Or, they would take the time to teach me a life lesson like, "Whatever you study or whatever work you do, always respect people." [Seek different perspectives; teach life lesson]
7. When I asked my grandmother, she told me "from this point forward, time would only move faster." After that, I realized that these life lessons were not just preparing me for college, they were preparing me for adulthood. [Seek different perspective; teach life lesson; present different perspective]
8. As I began asking more people for advice on college and adulting, I seemed to receive a collective response of "Don't just let these years pass by." [Seek different perspective; teach life lesson]
9. These conversations helped shift my mindset from thinking about choosing a major and a career path, to thinking about how I was going to make the most out of my college years...[Provide different perspective]
10. As I stand here today...looking back on my college years...I see that the professors, classmates, friends, and intellectual growth I encountered along the way, helped me make the most out of my college years...by shifting my desires from 'wanting to have all of the answers', to 'wanting to ask the best questions.' You all have truly impacted me. [Provide different perspective; words of affirmation]
11. You all taught me a life lesson that helped me get the most out of these years...that the purpose of learning is not merely to be the most intelligent person in the room; instead it is to be able to better understand the perspectives of everyone else in the room. [Teach life lesson; Present different perspective]

12. In fact, I saw this lived out as my peers and I frequently questioned why there is so much hate in the world, and what we could do to produce more love. Witnessing in these conversations the developmental power of listening. [Provide different perspective; Introduce follower to developmental opportunity]
13. So, Class of 2021, as this next chapter of our lives begins, I challenge you to use what we've learned to ask great questions, rather than to always have an answer for everything. [Introduce follower to developmental opportunity]
14. And, to spend time reflecting on how you and your classmates have grown, it's truly something for us to be proud of. [Words of affirmation]
15. Thank you, and congratulations to the class of 2021!