

Fellow graduates, wise and supportive parents and family of all branches, faculty, and *especially Principal Rosenberger*, I just wanted to warn you all about my therapist's bill, because without treatment I would not be able to give this speech, and I didn't ask for all this responsibility!

In all seriousness, I have two prefaces. First, I agree with likely all others in my position this year and any other that my having a high-ish GPA does not qualify me as best-fit for this position. Yes, speaking terrifies me, but most pertinently the purpose of such a speech doesn't require the most skilled grade chaser, but someone who well-characterizes this graduating class, encapsulates all the enthusiasm possible to portray it, and who can deliver a type of humor that is, well, humorous, and fits *perfectly*, like a non-threatening pamphlet in a full bookcase between questionable fiction and inspirational memoirs of presidents and whatnot. Secondly, I don't intend to be particularly lengthy about this. Hopefully shorter than a class meeting in the auditorium, but probably not shorter than our president's attention span.

I intend only to talk about a quality which is seldom recognized: passion. I think there are better words for it, but this one is the most accessible I think.

Your passion (and you can have several) is what you would ideally do as your job; the creative thing you do when you don't want to work. It is *your* medium for expression or fulfillment. It frees you. It allows you to mold yourself like an artist who's lived a thousand lives, even if your passion isn't in the arts. Many might say you should be chasing happiness, but happiness is the end, not the means.

Your passion is your way to make *anything* enjoyable, and I mean *anything*.

For example, mine is music!

Keep in mind that this is a crash course, which calls for drastic measures.

get guitar

It's been a long day: I'm cranky because I didn't eat breakfast, tired after all that dread of homework and relentless tests, embarrassed because my crush saw me staring in her direction and wow, I really need to stop that and I can't stop thinking about it. Also, I'm giving a speech to way too many people.

Say no more!

I'm sad:

play don't think twice

Wait, no, I'm happy:

play the girl

I'm feeling...saucy!

play spanish ditty

I can exaggerate any feeling I have, and I choose ones that fulfill *my* life, give *me* purpose.

return guitar

Can someone play a little? I'm still feeling saucy.

Similarly, you can use any passion just like mine.

You're a writer? No problem!

get out heavy typewriter

Imagination! *wave hands*

I'm feeling...angry at another guitar player (because you write *and* play guitar, obviously).

chink chink chink

shhhhhCHINK

What do a vacuum and guitar player have in common?

When you plug them in, they both SUCK HAHA

(courtesy of Tyler Larson, MusicIsWin guitar jokes on YouTube)

put away heavy typewriter

Like cars? Pick your favorite persona!

I'm living the night life in a sleek import...

vvvvvvv tsss vvvVVVVV tsss VVVVVV tsss RRRRR *spin*

Yes, even if you drive a slow little Honda like me.

If you find and follow a passion so adamantly, so wholeheartedly that someone suggests you're insane because of it, you are doing a fantastic job! It is unfortunately unusual for someone to make a living out of a passion, let alone *find* that passion. Allow me to extol my believe-it-or-not genuinely hopeful view for this graduating class: we are, luckily, a class full of character. I would be hard pressed to find a recently-graduated class so individual, so knowing of itself — so in tune with its own passions and goals — than this one. In my view, we have little to worry about beyond what many might call this cage of adolescence due to this; I think many of us have long awaited it with anticipation.

Some of you clearly know *exactly* what your passion is, and the T's and I's of getting there are already crossed and dotted. Some of us have no idea who we are or where we're going — but this isn't to worry you. In fact, it is liberating to know that the world is still a clean slate, ready when you are. And after all, this is only high school; it is never such an ordeal later as it seems now. Life is indeed too short to push off finding your passion when it's right in front of you, but it's also too short to force finding something that's just not ready.

Along the same vein, I promise that failure will not block the road to your passion if you don't let it. Failure is something I could go on about for ages, but in simplest terms, failures will be your greatest teachers: if, in looking for your purpose, you *don't* encounter failure or disappointment, evaluate your strategy and be sure you're not taking life *too* safely. You weren't born with all the knowledge and experience required to do everything perfectly, and neither was I, so why expect it anyway? Search for goals which are achievable, but daunting in that you may just be inviting failure in your midst — or better yet, a new teacher.

In leaving, I want to reiterate my hope for my fellow graduates, no matter what rung on the academic ladder you think you occupy. I have the upmost trust that every one of us will find something into which to pour our hearts and precious time, something to make us feel like we did right to ourselves in this life — something that makes us feel *saucy*. I know you've all earned it.