

Summer Viscusi
To the Class of 2019

As we embark on this new chapter of our lives, we will find ourselves confronted with the constant reality that is choice. Everything we have ever done and will ever do is the result of a choice. This year, my classmates and I have struggled to come to terms with the fact that some decisions are simply out of our hands. It is the unfortunate truth of the real world that the things that affect us most are often the things we can't control. Although this is true and somewhat depressing, we must realize that our actions are the only things we can determine, and therefore our actions are the only control we can truly exert over our lives. I want to share some information about behavior and choice that I think will not only benefit the class of 2019 throughout adulthood but could also be beneficial to everyone in this auditorium.

The first and most important thing you need to realize is that rest of your life is nothing more than the outcome of a series of decisions you will make starting right now. Whether you are 18 years old or 60 years old, the remainder of your life has an infinite number of possibilities that you will narrow down with every choice you make. I hope that my classmates have the presence of mind to make the right ones for their health and for their future. Humans are driven to satisfy their most immediate needs, which often conflict with their long-term goals. Keep this in mind when you're choosing whether to go out with friends or attend class.

Make yourself your number one priority, but don't do harm to others for the sake of your own success. It is unfortunate that generosity, empathy, and kindness are considered fatal flaws to have in the world of successful people. Being cutthroat may get you further professionally, but it won't help you spiritually or interpersonally. The most important mark you will leave on the world probably won't be the result of your career- it'll be the impressions you

leave on people.

Remember that the only thing you can give to anyone else is information. What they choose to do with what you share is completely out of your hands. It's best to accept this now before going out into the professional world and finding out the hard way.

To conclude, I would like to thank Portage Area School District for all the memories I have made here as well as the lessons I have learned- and a special note of appreciation for every teacher who has gone out of their way to help me or any of my classmates. The faculty who go the extra mile are the ones who set Portage apart from other small school districts. Thank you to all of our parents, who somehow managed to put up with us for eighteen years. Personally, to my mom, dad, and grandma: thanks for pushing me to always do my best, through both the good times and the bad. And finally, to Hayley Denwood, my sister, without whom I probably wouldn't have figured out how to apply to college in the first place. Good luck to the class of 2019!

Olivia Kissell
Remember When

Good evening and thank you all for being here to celebrate this special occasion

What a bittersweet night.

The night of many goodbyes but many new beginnings.

The night that we may see some of the classmates that we have known for 13 years for the final time.

How do we say goodbye?

Goodbye to every green and white wall which at times made us feel trapped but provided us with safety.

How do we say goodbye to the teachers that have helped shape and mold us into the adults that we have become?

And how do we say goodbye to each other. The classmates that have become family over the past 13 years.

The family that has seen some of us at our weakest. And who has been there to celebrate in all of our triumphs.

This family that is on stage tonight has been through so much together.

From Trying to learn how to pinwheel in marching band, running the dreaded mile in Phys Ed. and even trying to decide on a class song.

Remember when Dom, Trent and Jack shot a movie in a Porta potty at twin lakes. All three guys in one porta potty. Can you imagine that?

And remember Bella throwing her first softball pitch in a varsity game behind her, like not even in the direction of the batter And don't forget Michael Pesta making everyone pee their pants during the drama productions

And what the heck is a Larkie. We were so naïve- thinking they were real animals that we had all seen when it was a random animal that Mr. Trybus made up.

And the football players being tossed up into the air in stunts at pep rallies. They should definitely stick to football and not cheerleading. And we all know that the senior boys will miss performing the alligator song most.

And we can't forget the 7 police cars on the way to prom because we decided to go 20 mph in a 65 on the way to last year's.

And remember making the "Are you smarter than a second grader" videos with Mrs. Single and thinking we knew every animal out there but we actually only knew like 10 max.

And Remember yelling "God Bless You" to Mr. Sease from the different trailers because you could literally hear him sneeze from a mile away.

And how about the time Dom Dave tried to cook eggs on the griddle hooked up to his car.

Flash forward an hour later and there were no cooked eggs and an entire dozen of raw eggs dumped in the back of summer's car. Needless to say, there was only one person who ate an egg the entire morning. Paul, how was that egg?

And how could we forget Jake Washko's backflips at every event that we attended since the 6th grade or Mr. Johnson's cardboard podium falling apart every time he set a paperclip on it. How did he love that thing so much?

And who could forget the mac and cheese that was flung all over the walls and ceiling in the cafeteria. Good thing we had those few extra ceiling tiles for backup.

And REMEMBER WHEN we walked down the halls in our gowns together for the last time on Friday and finally realized that this is the end.

While we may forget the tiring hours we spent studying our biology flash cards, minus CP, or even the Ed Sheeran songs on loop in the anatomy room, we will never forget the memories and times that we shared together.

We have learned together, traveled together, competed together, laughed and cried together.

It has been an amazing 13 years. Years that I will never forget, because of you class of 2019.

The classmates I will never forget.

There is so much to be missed after tonight, but so much more will be relished.

We are all sitting on this stage because of the support of each other and because of the greatest support system in the world. Our amazing families, our teachers and our community.

They held us up, believed in us and continued to push us.

How blessed we are to have started our journey among a community who has been here cheering us on from the beginning.

As the French Philosopher Bernard of Chartres states:

We are like dwarfs on the shoulders of **giants**, so that we can see more than they, and things at a greater distance, not by virtue of any sharpness of sight on our part, or any physical distinction, but because we are carried high and raised up by their **giant** size.

To all the giants here tonight, the school, our families, each other, thank you for lifting us up to become more than we ever thought possible.

To my seniors,

As we turn the page to the next chapter in our life, remember - be true to yourself- we are amazing and

We can do anything!

Our paths will all take different roads, but one thing will never change. We are the class of 2019 and we did it.

Thank you

Taylor Glass

The Twenty Percent

80% of the things you hear from other people are words that bring you down, bring others down, or spread resentment. I am up here to be a part of those rare 20%- those 20% of people that spread motivation and positivity. Throughout our four years of high school, we can all admit we have been a part of or a victim of that 80%. Now that it is time to graduate and move onto bigger and better things, our graduating class and the underclassmen should move towards spreading motivation and positivity in place of the resentment. After high school, it won't matter who you sat with at lunch, what you wore, or what senior superlative you got. Two things that matter most after graduating is 1- taking what you learned and applying it to your dream job and 2- the relationships and the impacts you leave on people. We're only in high school once, so we should spread this positivity to make each person's experience the best that it can be. It's important to spread motivation not only to others, but also to yourself. When you see someone else down, pick them up. You may be the extra boost they needed to fulfill their goal. Being a high school student, we are expected to go to school for seven hours, practice sports/ other activities for another 2, have dinner, shower, and prepare for all of our classes all in one night. After long nights like these, it's hard to have the determination to get out your books and study for the test you have the next day. If I didn't have the parents, friends, and teachers that I had in high school, I wouldn't have pushed through these nights. While I was determined on my own to reach some of these goals, what truly pushes us is the positivity, kindness, and motivation spread by others. Through helping one another, all of us on stage are graduating high school. After graduating, the drive in us and the drive spread from

others is what will help us to graduate from college, start our dream job, and follow our dreams. What I ask after this is for all of us to be a part of that 20%. Be a part of that 20% of people who push others to do their best, spread kindness to others, and motivate and believe in yourself. Here is to class of 2019.

Lucas Rosemas
Don't Blink

Thank you _____. 14 Years. It's hard to believe, but somehow, we've managed to spend 14 years with each other. It seems like yesterday we were in the elementary school stuck in trailers, or in seventh grade dodging mac n cheese. It truly is amazing how fast time goes. Especially when you have a bio test in a week and instead of studying early, you wait and realize that it's next period. Or when you're given a week to write a graduation speech and wait until the night before it's due to start it. Either way, time goes faster than you think, and I believe all of us can agree.

The one unique thing I believe our class had was diversity. Everybody was different. There were people in various sports, music, drama, and many other clubs and activities. We got involved in everything that was available to us. Looking at other classes, I cannot say the same. As many times as our class had our differences, we always managed to figure it out. We really were a special class.

To the teachers, staff, and administration, I would like to say thank you for guiding us along the way. We wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for you. You truly do make this a distinctive school. I would also like to thank my family and friends for helping me get to this point as well as making me the person that I am today. But most of all I would like to thank God for allowing me to be in the position that I am in life.

To my fellow classmates, it was a pleasure spending these years with you, and I would like to wish you all luck in your future endeavors. I hope all of you make decisions that will lead to a happy adulthood.

To other classes, make the most out of this time. Get involved and take advantage of the opportunities you have. Your time here is limited, so make it enjoyable. It wasn't long ago that we were in your position and couldn't wait to get out of here. Even though it is exciting to open a new chapter in your life, you can't wish away today. To conclude, I would like to quote country artist, Kenny Chesney, "Don't blink because life goes faster than you think."

Thank you.