

**Good morning family, friends, faculty, and fellow graduates.**

Well, we did it. We all accomplished one of the major early milestones of our lives: high school graduation. This is a major step in the journey of our lives, one that should be recognized for its immense significance. It is an act not only of personal commitment, but also one of pride. We all worked hard to get to this day, and our work did not go to waste. A high school diploma is a wonderful tool in this world, one that opens many doors of opportunity for anyone who is lucky enough to have one.

But graduation is not an end goal in itself; it is instead a part of the larger journey of life. Wherever your future takes you, let it take you somewhere. Life is a journey, and all accomplishments we achieve during its course should be taken as starting points for further achievements. Our graduation should serve as such a launching point, projecting us to wherever our futures are meant to take us, whether we land ourselves a career, take up a trade, or continue our education at college or Vocational/technical School.

But before we can begin to reach for the stars, there is one more personal milestone that we all need to reach. Most people who graduate from high school experience only one graduation—that from high school. But we all have one more shortly ahead of us. We've already shown our commitment to personal growth through making it to this ceremony today, but soon, all of us will experience another ceremony when we graduate from our programs. As I said before, life is a journey—we don't stop growing once we get our diplomas. Life is *about* growing, and being in our programs gives each of us new opportunities to continue growing and to learn new skills that we will carry with us for the rest of our lives.

And we don't have to stop there! This graduation has already shown us how capable we all are of accomplishing our goals when we commit ourselves to them. I hope all of us here today can take this personal accomplishment as an example of how anything is truly possible when we put our minds to it. As we all continue on in our lives, let us take each new problem on with confidence, knowing that we have achieved great heights and are equipped with the necessary tools to tackle our futures.

The road that lies ahead won't be easy. There will be obstacles and missed exits, potholes and roadblocks. There will be times when each of us will feel like we cannot possibly go on. There will be times when each of us will think he or she is alone, a back against the wall. But we are not alone—we are all in this journey together. We've made it this far—why should we back out now? Nothing worthwhile is easy, and that includes making the most out of our futures. But that doesn't mean we give up on ourselves. We will keep pushing, because we know we can achieve our dreams, and because we are worth it.

## 2013 Student Graduation Speech

From this day forward, let us make each decision with our best interests in mind. Let us believe in ourselves so that we may reach our goals and fulfill our dreams. Let us be the best that we can be so that we may fill our lives and the lives of those closest to us with happiness and with pride. We've already taken the first step by making it to this ceremony today—now, it's time to take the next steps in the journey that is our lives and begin to build our futures.

Congratulations to the class of 2013!