

John Krebs

Graduation Speech

Congratulations to all. We've done, done it. We graduated public high school. Speaking for the whole senior class, I would first and foremost like to thank our teachers, families, parents, and others without whom we couldn't have done it. Thank you very much.

A young soldier and his commanding officer got on a train together. The only available seats were across from an attractive young woman who was traveling with her grandmother. As they engaged in pleasant conversation, the soldier and the young woman kept eyeing one another; the attraction was obviously mutual. Suddenly the train went into a tunnel and the car became pitch black. Immediately two sounds were heard: the "smack" of a kiss, and the "whack" of a slap across the face. The grandmother thought "I can't believe he kissed my granddaughter, but I'm glad she gave him the slap he deserved." The commanding officer thought, "I don't blame the boy for kissing the girl, but it's a shame that she missed his face and hit me instead." The young girl thought, "I'm glad he kissed me, but I wish my grandmother hadn't slapped him for doing it." And as the train broke into the sunlight, the soldier could not wipe the smile off his face. He had just seized the opportunity to kiss a pretty girl and slap his commanding officer and had gotten away with both!

Like the young soldier, we must take advantage of the opportunities in our lives. He wasn't afraid to take a risk, so he got exactly what he wanted. The soldier captured the complete essence of the phrase... "Carpe Diem," or, "Seize the day." This afternoon, I would like to focus on five ways all of us, both graduates and those in the audience, can better Seize the day.

First, it doesn't matter what you do after high school. Whether it be going to the army, heading to college, going to work, taking a year off, or being a self employed video game tester... be your best at it. Work your hardest, and always be the best you can be. We all have the potential to complete great things. Since third grade, my teachers have been telling me that I'm very talented and very smart, but that I don't have the work ethic to match it. I have not been fulfilling my potential. If any of us go through life working half-heartedly, doing just enough to get by, we'll be stuck at the bottom tier and never achieve our full potential. We MUST try our hardest and do our best. People will notice and our lives will be blessed. We each need to Seize our own potential.

Second, don't make this High School graduation your peak. Continue up the mountain. Keep climbing. It's awesome that we have graduated, that we have worked hard and done all the things needed to graduate, but think how astonishing the future will be, since this ISN'T the top. We can all aspire to more than a high school diploma. We can accomplish great things, and be great people. Keep moving up the mountain, step by step, and we'll amount to greatness. Seize Your Future.

Third, remember the people that have helped you. They have spent their time to help you succeed. They have given back to you. I liken it to those *leave a penny, take a penny* jars. We are taking the pennies, but we need to make sure to put them back, too. We need to give back by emulating the people that helped us. Help like they helped. Be there like they were for us. Set an example like they set for us. Lead like they led. Live like they lived.

Fourth, we have so many chances for greatness. If we add up all the hours we have spent at school, we have attended the equivalent of 600 days of continuous school. We are all educated and armed with weapons to fight the attacks of the ever troubling... *real world*. Take a step onto the front line; take advantage of the chances and opportunities that we see daily. Don't waste your time, because it'll be gone before you know it. Ralph Waldo Emerson asked... *What would be the use of immortality to a person who cannot use a half an hour well?* Time is always passing, always ticking. Use it. Take it. Bend it at your will. Seize Your Opportunities. *Don't it always seem to go that you don't know what you got 'till it's gone.*

Fifthly and finally, don't wait. Dr. Seuss said "*Waiting for the fish to bite or waiting for wind to fly a kite. Or waiting around for Friday night or waiting perhaps for their Uncle Jake or a pot to boil or a better break or a string of pearls or a pair of pants or a wig with curls or another chance. Everyone is just waiting.*" If you wait for good things to happen your whole life, it'll be over before you know it. Make good things happen for you. Go out in the world and get what you want, seize the day, be who you want to be. The great sixteenth president Abraham Lincoln said "*And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years.*" Don't let your years go to waste.

Graduates... we must be our best, we must keep moving forward, we must become an example, we must grasp our opportunities, and we must get to work, this is the end of the beginning. Carpe Diem... seize the day friends.... Make your lives extraordinary.