
Guest Column: The world now belongs to you

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Dear Graduates,

What a joy it is to see so many of your beautiful young faces in the pages of the Triplicate these past two weeks. High school graduation! The moment you have looked forward to after years of hard work. And now, a new chapter begins, perhaps the first chapter in your life over which you will be in control.

This doesn't mean that you can disregard the guidance and direction offered by your parents and others who love you and care very much about your happiness and success. It just means that, ultimately, you will be the one who decides what direction your life will follow.

You don't have to be in too much of a hurry. You don't need to plunge into commitments you are not ready for, or decisions that are not yet comfortable for you to make. Enjoy this time, this precious moment when childhood ends and adulthood begins.

Look around at the beautiful faces of your classmates. Savor your friends. The friends you made in high school may well be the friends you will keep for life; the friends who will be there when you need them, and those who will need you, too. Protect your friends, and maintain those relationships. They are amongst the most valuable elements of your life.

You are bound to make mistakes. We all did, and still do. Learn from them. Don't let mistakes become a way of life, or an easy excuse to avoid taking responsibility or making the hard decisions. And don't let anyone else make those decisions for you. Your high school diploma proves that you have what it takes to think for yourself.

You will find that doing something the right way is easier, faster and less costly than doing it the wrong way. The best time to get back on track is NOW. Don't wait, it will be harder later on.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. You will need help more often than you may realize. Learn to distinguish between those who want to help you and those who want to help themselves by using you.

You are stepping into an uncertain world. Much of what your world becomes will depend on you. Don't be afraid. You have already faced down pandemics, economic rollercoasters, political and social realignment, and a technology revolution that has placed into the palms of your hands the power to do good or evil, to build your future or to waste it.

You have already seen more change during your young life than your parents have in nearly half a century. Learn how to recognize change, to prepare for change, and adapt to change, whatever it may be.

But, don't turn your back on the past. There are a lot of us older people out there who are still doing things the old fashioned way because, believe it or not, it is still the better way. That's right, plenty of good ideas were thought up before you were born.

Please, oh please. More than anything else, take care of your heart, your mind, your body and soul. Avoid those people, products and promises that will prey upon your enthusiastic desire for excitement and adventure, or that will lure you into a lifetime of debt, dependency or sadness. Walk away from those traps.

We need you, each and every one of you, to be healthy, safe, happy and successful in life. Go forth, Class of 2022, the world now belongs to you.

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