COMMENCEMENT SPEECH

FOR

DENISE HEINTZ

Hello everyone. I want to congratulate all of the graduates and I’d like to acknowledge all of the family members, friends, and loved ones who are here today to share this milestone with all of our “newly minted” alumnae. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**Name the person or group that extended the invitation to speak to you**) for inviting me to speak with all of you today. To the faculty and administration of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**Name of college**), you’ve dedicated the past several years to tapping into the knowledge and experience you’ve earned throughout your lives and sharing what you know so that these students would be equipped with the educational foundation, skill sets and tools required to survive in our rapidly changing world. I imagine that for many of you, it wasn’t that long ago that you completed your formal education, and in fact, I’ll take a guess and say that more than several of you actively participate in continuing your education. I would also imagine that the more experience you earn, the greater is your appreciation of all that you have learned. It is a great example for our graduates to see people actively engaged in replenishing their core knowledge base.

Graduates, welcome to the **beginning** of your lives!! Yes, of course today signifies a major completion, and although you’ll be leaving the context of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**Name the school**), you will now start on the road to fulfill the purpose of building on what you learned for the past 4 (or less, or more) years. A college education is no longer just a “good idea.” It’s mandatory in order to have a chance to survive in this world. You have spent this time building the foundations required to live a worthwhile adult life, and throughout our respective college careers, we all learn so much more than facts, figures and basic skills. We learn independence-for many of you, your journey took you out of your comfort zones of home and daily routine and gave you new routes and processes to manage. We learn greater degrees of socialization-being in college gives each one of us the opportunity to interface with a much broader spectrum of people, personalities, and situations, and most of all, if we pay attention, we learn the biggest lessons there are to learn in life, and that is about ourselves. Take every single thing you’ve learned in college and use it. Use the independence you’ve earned and go confidently into unchartered territory. Use the social skills you’ve honed and meet the unfamiliar. Use the gift of self-realization to sharpen your intuition and learn to trust yourself and be responsible for your life.

And most of all, keep your lessons close to you-if you’re truly smart, you’ll refer to, and use them, every day, and you will learn and grow from them. Consider your time here as providing you with the seeds to nourish your brains and your souls and remember that survival depends on the replenishment of that food source in order to keep feeding **you**. The learning is never done. Our personal evolution as human beings is never done. Keep in touch with current events; make it a practice to continue learning about subjects that interest you. Don’t wait for life to come to you. Go out and use what you’ve learned to find and build your life. You see how quickly the world is changing-literally. I am sure you’re all aware of how frequently you have to perform software updates on your computers and Smartphones. Your brains are no different! We all need regular updates in order to remain viable and relevant in this world! In her book, **“A Short Guide to a Happy Life**”, author Anna Quindlen wrote, “When you leave college, there are thousands of people out there with the same degree you have; when you get a job, there will be thousands of people doing what you want to do for a living. But you are the only person alive who has sole custody of your life.” I invite all of you graduates to keep that thought with you. Each one of you is unique, and each one of you has sole custody of a very special life-**YOURS**. You’ve learned how to learn. Now learn how to be curious and to build your knowledge base. Make it a habit to find and quench your thirst for knowledge-you’ll need it. You’ll need it for every step you take in life, not only for yourselves, but also for the young people who will begin to look to you for guidance and inspiration. Each one of us is responsible for our own existence, and building on the education we have received while continuing to learn is the key to a life well lived. I wish each one of you much success in whatever you choose to do, and may you all be open to new, exciting ideas and experiences. Congratulations again and thank you all!