GRADUATION SPEECH

FOR

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(Writer’s note: I do not know the specific theories you were taught in this class, so all I can do is give a brief explanation of what each paragraph is and then you can assign a theory to it)

Hello everyone! It is wonderful to be here with all of you as we simultaneously celebrate graduation and witness the completion of one phase of our lives while eagerly awaiting the beginning of exciting new chapters yet to be experienced. Graduation signifies completion. It tells us that we’ve learned something. Being able to use the word “graduate” to describe ourselves signifies that a foundation has been laid, we have learned the basic lessons of **how** to learn, and we are ready to embark on the adventures of our lifetimes. The well known US Senator Orrin Hatch once said, “There is a good reason they call these ceremonies ‘commencement exercises.’ Graduation is not the end, it is the beginning.” Graduation is our opportunity to look back on what life has been like, remember the incidents and events that helped to shape our time here, and to inspire us to set goals for our future.

(Paragraph above-Introduction: welcomes the audience and gives a brief idea of what the speech will be about)

As we remember and acknowledge those events that really “worked” to help inform and expand our own personal “databases” during our educational careers, it is also a wonderful time to recall and acknowledge what, um (**pause**), may not have worked so well! No matter how many positive points I can cite that bear testimony to my hard work and concentration as a student, I think I may have learned even more from one of the most embarrassing incidents during my time here at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ University. I am sure that each one of us has “THAT” class that was our “Mount Everest,” our roadblock to success, the thorn in our collegiate side. For me, that class was statistics. Heaven knows that trying to absorb the lessons taught in that class was, for me, like trying to learn to speak Martian! I kept thinking, “Statistically speaking, I have a 50-50 chance of passing…or failing!! (**Wait for the laugh**). I knew a poor grade would have a potential negative impact for my entire record. Aha! I had a great idea. I would seek help from a colleague-and that’s what I did. My friend tutored me and quizzed me, and did whatever possible to encourage me towards a successful outcome once I took the exam. Sounds great, no? Guess what? **I failed the exam**!!! I had to take it again and eventually, I passed, but my lesson in failure taught me more than ten successes.

(Paragraph 2 above: establishes the topic and introduces the situation. It also hints at the solution)

Failure is the best teacher I can imagine. I learned failure doesn’t feel so good emotionally. I learned that failure wastes time and resources, and I learned that failure is sometimes the result of not paying attention, not focusing, not being aware of what it means to complete something successfully. I learned that failure is not what I want to be identified with, and I learned that it is better to learn these lessons while I am young so that I can inspire myself and others to succeed. I also learned that with knowledge and maturity comes responsibility and wisdom, along with self-confidence. I also learned that it would not be possible to fail if I did nothing, so we can actually say that to fail means someone has tried to do **something**. There is always something positive to be learned through the act of failure. You just have to search deeply to find it. Embrace failure, for it will teach you the lessons of a lifetime! Everything that I learned through having failed will work for me as I grow older and enter the next phases of my life, both personally and professionally.

(Paragraph 3 above: explains lesson learned in order to empower the audience. Most people should identify with the problem and by offering a solution, you inspire, teach and empower the audience)

As we all stand on the threshold of adulthood, I invite you to listen to and remember the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson who said, “What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies **within** us.” It is our turn to embrace the future and what lies within each one of us is the inherent ability to **succeed**. Whether we triumph brilliantly or fail miserably is up to us. It is also up to each one of us to be conscious of what we do in all circumstances, be accountable, and be respectful of the people we meet and the challenges we face. It is our responsibility to **learn** from each task that challenges us, measure what works and what doesn’t work, get to really know our own strengths and weaknesses while playing to the strengths and fortifying the weaker aspects of who we are, and to find the way to teach and inspire those who will look to us for guidance as they follow us into that future. I want to offer each one of you sincere congratulations and may we all meet in the future to hear of the exciting challenges and adventures that make up our unique lives! Congratulations!

(Paragraph 4: Continues to inspire and empower, allows the audience to further identify with how they can learn from your experience and gives them an idea of how to take this new knowledge and use it to succeed).