**GRADUATION SPEECH**

**FOR**

**VINOD BAYA**

Hello everyone, and thank you for joining us on this happy occasion. Today is a very special day, indeed, and I can imagine all of you understand why.... Yes... Mihir has taken some precious time from his busy.... **really busy**... schedule to **join us** today!!! Good to see you Mihir!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Your mother and I are also glad that you really made the most of this time in your life.... the way in which you fully participate in life and in school, culminating in your graduation... we are thrilled to celebrate you... you **KNOW** how we love a party!!! All jokes aside, you’re a great young man, a wonderful student, and a super friend to all.

There’s a saying that goes, “If you want to be interesting, **be interested**.” Mihir, you’re the embodiment of that expression. Every time I check on you, each time we speak, you’re indulging in a great passion... a new project... a fascinating discipline.... and whether it’s exploring your interests in Tae Kwon Do ...practicing and teaching Bollywood dancing.... perfecting your spike in volleyball, or even just hanging out with your friends, your enthusiasm for life is inspiring and seemingly boundless.... I’m still trying to figure out where you get all of that energy.... oh. Wait... I forgot... your **OTHER** hobby... **sleeping late**... (**Wait for the laugh**).... but it’s true... you **DO** manage to wake up early when exams are involved...

Mihir, ever since you were a young boy, you’ve showed tremendous poise and an interest in life and in humanity that have consistently betrayed your youth. Your mother and I marvel at your ease with people from all walks of life and whether you realize it or not, we have a friendly, silent rivalry as to where you have inherited these wonderful gifts and traits... naturally.... **I have to take MOST of the credit**.... (**Wait for the laugh**). (**If this works for you and it’s not too harsh, you can say**) Is there **ANYTHING** you can’t do? Oh.... wait... there **WAS** that time when you started to drive once you turned sixteen... there was that first fender bender... we’ll put that “accomplishment” on your mother’s list of inherited gifts... (**Wait for the laugh**).... all jokes aside, even when **THAT** happened, you got the message. You realized the importance of accountability, taking responsibility, the non-negotiable necessity of safe driving, paying attention, learning by doing and getting “**back on the horse**.” Oh... and it doesn’t hurt that **WE** don’t have to drive you all over the place anymore!!

.... And speaking of... I know it’s no secret that I am so proud of you and your sister, Mira, and I take great pride and pleasure in somehow finding **SOMETHING** I can **still** teach you, seeing as how you do so much and have so many interests. Some of those times that stay with me happened last summer during our “adventures in horseback riding.” (**If you want to make a joke you can say**) Who wouldn’t be thrilled to spend time with these majestic animals???? Oh. And the **horses** weren’t bad either.... (**And wait for the laugh**). No... **really**... while I am an experienced rider, rediscovering this wonderful sport through the eyes... and ears... and **noses**... of my kids was beyond special... brushing them.... **the horses**... **not** my kids... cleaning them, walking them, running them... it was fun, educational, adventurous... a true bonding experience that will stay with me for a long, **LONG** time, and for that I’m so thankful.

Mihir.... you’re the kind of son that parents wish for. As I’ve said, to be able to see the world through your eyes has been a great blessing of life. To observe your poise in any kind of situation is so gratifying for your mother and me.... and I can name a thousand times when I’ve admired your fascination, curiosity, diplomacy, acceptance, pride, and resilience....

* **Fascination** when you had to handle earthworms to understand their neurological system for your science project.
* **Curiosity** when discovering new sights... sounds... aromas... on our trips to India
* **Diplomacy** when interacting with **ANYONE**... your poise with friends, teachers, your elders.... is something to admire
* **Acceptance**... yes... the fender bender... and most importantly, you **LEARNED** from that
* **Pride** in your Indian culture, it’s festivals, language, and history.
* **Resilience**... your ability to adjust and adapt and go with the flow.... even in the searing heat of the New Delhi markets.

You and your mother, Mira and I have had a wonderful ride so far, and I know that as we observe you and encourage you through your college years and beyond, it will get even better. It is a blessing to support you in realizing your potential as an intelligent, active, engaged, and interesting young man... one filled with integrity and intention.

Whether or not any of you here believes in Karma is up to you, but I have to say that (**Name your wife**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I have been blessed with a strong marriage and two wonderful children... Mihir, we hope that as you take your place in this world, you think of your heritage, your family, and what it means to **be good** and **do good** in this world. Life’s gifts are not a given... everyone must work for them... the true joy of life comes from **APPRECIATION** for what is placed in front of you and in continuing to **LEARN**.... every day.

There was a songwriter named Richard Rodgers who said it best when expressing appreciation for life’s blessings, and I wish the same for you:

“Somewhere in my youth or childhood,

I must have done something good.”

To all of you.... and especially to you, Mihir.... do **good**, be **good**, and congratulations!!! We love you!!!