**[EZ Speech Writers No. 15478]**

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Remarks by Mr. Andrew Cruz at the commencement of the 2016 graduating class at [name of high school].

esteemed administrators . . . teachers . . . all you wonderful parents and families: I feel it a great honor and terrific privilege to have this chance to address you today: the graduating Class of 2016!

It’s often been said that graduation is the end of one chapter of your life, and the beginning of another, so i think it’s entirely fitting and proper that we recognize and celebrate what you all have accomplished here in the last four years. i hope you feel that your education’s been a great ride so far, and that you’re looking forward to the next chapter of your life — however you plan to write it — with joy, enthusiasm and, i hope, some measure of gratitude for the education you’ve received here at [first name of high school]. for my own part, i’m tremendously grateful for being given the opportunity to be transformed by the many wonderful experiences I have had as president of [first name of school]’s board, working with such a gifted staff of brilliant teachers and dedicated admnistrators.

When I became aware that one of my duties as Board President would be to give a brief commensement address here this [morning/afternoon/evening], i was both gladdened and a litle apprehensive. I’m not the best public speaker in the world — as i’ve been told many times — but I figured I’d have plenty of time to prepare and ponder what I would say to you. And after much cogitation and contemplation, i decided to begin by telling you about the polaroid camera. yes . . . a camera!

now i know that probably none of you youngsters have any idea what i’m talking about, but a lot of your parents will. the polaroid was one of the very first cameras to be marketed as an “instant camera;” but in reality, it wasn’t instant at all. because of how the camera was designed, there was an unavoidable “wait” time of several moments before the chemicals imbeded in the film reacted and the final image emerged. some people thought that waving the filmstrip around in the air would speed up the process, but of course it didn’t: that final image emerged in exactly the amount time it was supposed to. when the chemicals had finally worked their magic, The final image popped out, crystal clear.

so despite all the advertisements and all the hype, the polaroid camera was in fact anything but “instant.” for most of ***you*** kids, however, “instant” is an everyday thing. you grew up in “an age of the instant” — the age of the internet and smart phones and all kinds of global technologies that can put information a at your fingertips with a tap on a touchscreen or a click of a computer mouse. for most of you, “instant” isn’t just a convenience . . . it’s an *expectation*!

well . . . i’m not so sure that “instant” is always such a good thing, frankly. in many, many situations in life, i think you’re gonna find that a “waiting period” would be a very good thing. it gives us time to think about what we want to say, how we want to react, what the best course of action might be in any given situation.

back in the day, y’know, when all there was was the u.s. post office, you couldn’t get a written answer to a question or a writtten reply to a proposal in anything less than two days, even if your corrrespondent was located just across town! but today — with emails and instant messaging and twitter and snapchat and facebook, and all the rest — there ***is*** no waiting period. today,

communication is virtually instantaneous, and one of the problems with this, i think, is that the “age of the instant” has also spelled the death of contemplation.

i think this is really a tragedy, because in the end, contemplation is the cornerstone of reason. so that’s why i very much hope that your education here at [name of school] will — if nothing else — have taught you the value of contemplation . . . of thinking things through from all angles . . . of thinking deeply about the choices you will confront in the years to come, and about the kind of person and spouse and parent you MIGHT someday WANT TO BE.

i want you to contemplate all these things . . . BUT first and foremost, I WANT YOU always to be yourself and *THINK FOR YOURSELF*. BE YOUR OWN PERSON. DON’T BE SO QUICK TO BUY INTO THE “GROUP THINK” THAT THE AGE OF THE INTERNET — WITH ALL ITS websites and FORUMS AND CHATROOMS AND ONLINE BULLETIN BOARDS and so on — HAS SO INSIDEOUSLY FOSTERED.

UNDERSTAND that the person who has the most control of what happens to you in life is ***YOU***. no one — not even your partents —

was put on this earth to think for you, to decide for you. to say what’s best for you. AS THE GREAT AMERICAN POET AND WRITER, Ralph Waldo Emerson, once SAID, quote *“To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else, is the greatest accomplishment.”*

so It is my prayer for you, and my fervent hope this [morning/ afternoon/evening], that the education you’ve received here at [name of school] will the open doors of prosperity for each and every one of you. and in closing, i would only implore you: Don’t stop questioning things . . . don’t stop examining things . . . stay curious, and strive always to put your education, energy, and enthusiasm to use in making this a better world for generations to come, and in making a better and even more blessed America. as horace mann said to the first graduating class of the college he founded in ohio: *“be ashamed to die until you have won some victory for mankind.”*

thank you.

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