Principal Glen Worthy

Hillhouse High School

**Graduation 2019**

**Hello EVERYONE, WELCOME.**

Here at Hillhouse, as in so many thousands of high schools around our state and our country, this is graduation season, with *commencement* meaning the *beginning* for so many young people. A start of the next chapters in their lives, truly a very exciting time.

I know so many of you who have joined us here today. And for those whom I have not had the pleasure of meeting, my name is Glen Worthy, the principal of Hillhouse.

Today we’re gathered to honor the students whose efforts have brought them to this scholastic achievement. But equally important we want to recognize those who gave these young people the life-skills to reach this goal. We can never thank enough the *parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts,* and even *siblings,* who have in one way or another assisted these young men and women in reaching this finish line. There were *others* too; their clergy, their *employers*, there *friends* and their *neighbors*. So, to every one of you here today that falls into any of those categories, you can take pride in knowing that you contributed in some small, or large, manner to the youngsters you see in this Hillhouse class of 2019.

I also want to send a powerful thank you, and words of appreciation, to the entire staff here at Hillhouse. To the teachers, counselors, administrators, coaches, you are the ones who have put together the fabric of **this** class and so many **others** before them. You are responsible for showing them the field of play, the rules, the guidelines, the duties, of their jobs as students, and their personal responsibilities as young citizens.

And to everyone else who keeps this school alive, the bus drivers, the food personnel, the maintenance staff, custodians, security, EVERYONE, we could not function without all of you, so thank you.

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Earlier I mentioned the hundreds, the thousands, of high schools who are participating in graduation ceremonies just like we are. But we are not like most of those schools. While there are similarities, there are significant differences too. What sets us apart is that we do not waver in the face of challenge. We do not lower our expectations in educational curriculum. We do not accept the notion that to lower standards is the new normal, because to lower anything is unacceptable. And what sets us apart is that we expect our kids, our young men and women, to become examples, to become leaders, and to do that with morality and integrity.

Hillhouse has had its challenges, Hillhouse has seen change. And through all those obstacles, we have held steadfast in our commitment. We have responded to the challenges in a manner that keeps us moving forward, keeps us improving, and keeps us a valued member of our community. And you as students, you as the class of 2019, have been part of that force of perseverance, of resilience, of determination. And whether you’re aware of that or not, it has been, and will be, a valuable lesson for each of you as you go out into this world.

Many of you know where you’re heading, and many are still going over all the options that are available. Never limit your possibilities, either in education, training, or jobs. With the right preparation and training, you can accomplish almost anything you can dream of, or picture in your minds. The world does not end at the New Haven City limits. The world doesn’t end at the Connecticutt state line. And the world certainly doesn’t end at the Atlantic or Pacific Oceans. If you think it can be done, if you read of others who do it, THEN YOU CAN TOO. From welder, to pilot, to nurse, carpenter, or police officer,…………. to teacher, doctor, translator, artist, writer, or pastor,…….to jet mechanic, tank commander, food truck owner, fashion designer, or pro or semi-pro athlete,….. it is ALL,…**ALL** within your reach, within your capabilities.

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And how, you ask, is that all possible? It is possible by asking questions, researching sources, contacting those who train and hire, applying for student loans, and even asking for apprenticeships. It is getting out there and **doing** and going out there and **making it happen**. And it is doneby **positive** attitudes, **courtesy**, and **good morals**.

And here’s what it **isn’t**. It is not sitting around **feeling sorry for yourself** because the first job you applied for you didn’t get. It isn’t taking a job you hate instead of **looking for and finding** a job you really like. It isn’t **blaming others** for things **you** could have done differently.

It is also becoming a man or woman who is responsible, trustworthy, dependable, and kind. Yes, I said *kind*. Kind to everyone you meet until they prove otherwise. Kind to those less fortunate. Kind to those who suffer hardships and personal challenges. And kind to your families, your friends, and to yourself.

The world we live in has so much to offer. Yes, there is strife, aggression, and sadness. But we must look above that, take the high road, we must work to be a part of the solutions, and not part of the problems.

The next four to five years of your lives will be as important as any you will ever live. This next decade will be the foundation for the rest of your life. So, when you put those building blocks into place in one year, or two years, or six, set them **correctly**, and set them **firmly**.

When you return here in five years, ten, twenty-five, or even fifty years, there will be two things you’ll come back with. And those are ***what*** you **have**, and ***who*** you **are**. The **What**, those very cool and neat material possessions, you certainly should be proud of from all your hard work. But it is the **Who**, that shows the **person** beneath the gold and glitter. It is the person who set a moral compass to good choices and right decisions. It is the person who set their standards high and kept them that way. It is the person who displayed patience and civility though not only the good times, but also through the less than good times. It is the person who took care of their family, protected their family no matter what, provided guidance for

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their family and set the right examples for their children. It will be the person who treated their spouse or partner with respect, thoughtfulness, and loyalty. If you **remember one thing today**, your **legacy**, your **reputation**, will be your **honesty**, your **integrity**, and your **compassion for humanity**. These are the character traits I see out here, right now, today in this audience. And these are the traits I am **confiden**t that **will come back here** to **Hillhouse** and **our** community in the years and decades to come.

It has been an *honor* and *certainly* my *pleasure* to speak to everyone today.

Thank you, *parents*,……..thank you, *families*,…….thank you, to our *community*,…………and thank***you*,** the ***Class*** of ***2019*.**

**Please** be **careful** on your way home, or to other events you attend today.

And,…**until** we **meet again**,….**Goodbye.**