

ANNALISE JIRIK- VALEDICTORIAN

As I set out researching for this speech, I found that the number one graduation speech topic according to the internet... which means it's true.... Is that life is a journey. I'm here to offer a different twist to this old and tired analogy. Life is more than a journey, it's an EXPLORATION... and what I mean by an exploration is that there is no map, there is no itinerary, and SADLY ENOUGH Dr.T won't be there to tweet out when you have snow days. An exploration is not about the destination, it is what we experience all along the way, who we meet, what we see, and what we do.

I'm sure you all remember when we were in kindergarten when we learned the famous rhyme, in fourteen hundred and ninety two SAY IT WITH ME, Columbus sailed the ocean blue. If you think about it, why do we even celebrate Columbus? After underestimating how large the world was, Columbus completely failed in his goal of finding a new route to Asia. But with his failure we still ended up rewarding him with an American holiday and a city in Ohio. Now Columbus may not have accomplished his initial task but instead found something even better.

As graduates, this is our goal. Once we leave here today, each of us will set out on our own personal exploration. So before you hoist your sails, remember, you are already prepared thanks to the educational foundation the Cabot school system has offered us. Navigating through thirteen years of school takes a collaborative effort and we would not be here without the encouragement, love, and assistance of educators and parents on this JOURNEY! So graduates, join me in giving our champions a round of applause {CLAP}

PAUSE

You've probably heard the adage that "smooth seas never made for a skilled sailor". I, for one, from personal experience, can guarantee that the waters are UNPREDICTABLE. In the ninth grade I had the misfortune of failing my first class, Coach Watkins failed me on the driving portion of driver's ed. (i'm not bitter or anything) But, fear not, I drove here tonight! So be careful out there, on the streets of Cabot and the seas of life! My hope for you is that you embrace your challenges, because the biggest WAVES in life can also be the biggest blessings. But whatever you do, DON'T give up and DON'T turn back! Or as coach Malham would say "be relentless."

PAUSE

As you sit in your cap and gown this evening, you probably have a plan for the next few years of your life, or if you're like me, the next 20. JP Gairhan and I were voted most likely to be President. And if I'm going to beat him to the presidency by 40, which will be easy because let's face it, JP is a democrat, I have to have a plan. But ultimately, life is not about your plan it is about FINDING and ANSWERING YOUR CALL. "The call" signifies the moment when you find your passion, whatever that may be. No two calls will be the same. But you will certainly miss your call if you fail to listen! So keep your eyes and ears open!

When Columbus sailed back to Spain, not having accomplished what he set out for, he was received as a hero. Graduates we are prepared for what lies ahead! PAUSE Here's hoping the seas will be calm, but know that you are capable of handling the rough waters. PAUSE with God's grace and little bit of determination may you discover your call, which will be even better than what you set out to find. So with that, Congratulations Class of 2015, I wish each of you the best, and bon voyage!