

Noah Wadhvani Salutatorian Speech  
Class of 2017  
"Embrace the Unexpected, Keep Discovering"

Good evening.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Noah Wadhvani and I have had the privilege of being a member of the Class of 2017 for the past 4 years.

To start off, I want you to think for a few moments about what you believe your future, after today, will hold for you. Now, you probably thought about college, finding a major you are passionate about, partying a bit, graduating, and then either moving onto grad school or going into the work force. Some of you may have thought about marriage and kids, others maybe not. At the very least, most of you have some idea or vision of where you plan to end up and what you plan to do. But is this plan really set in stone?

When I started at CB, I had a relatively set plan for my future. I was going to be a baseball star and play third base for the Falcon baseball team. That did not happen. I thought I would weasel my way out of my parents' insistence that I join choir. That did not happen; I liked it too much. I thought I would rise through the ranks of popularity and be crowned social king by the end of the year. That DEFINITELY did not happen. Most importantly, I thought that I was going to be at CB for the entirety of my freshman year. Instead, my parents carted me off to Denmark for six months. When I did return to CB in the fall of sophomore year, I had accomplished none of my plans, but had gained an appreciation for serendipity.

Of course we all plan and prepare for the future, but, today, I want you to embrace a different idea: the unknown and the unexpected. While we do our best to carve our various paths, we have no way of telling, no way of knowing, and to a large extent, no way of controlling exactly how the rest of our lives will play out. In *planning* to develop and grow, we risk being so focused that we miss the unexpected events and discoveries through which growth and development really take place.

Think about it -- our time at Christian Brothers has mattered in large part because it has been a time of discovery and growth for all of us.

When awkward freshman Noah looked up at the "enter to learn, leave to serve" message on his first day of school in August of 2013, he never expected that in the next four years he would play singles on the CB men's tennis team, sing the Danny Zuko solo of "You're the One That I Want" at a pitch that was way out his vocal range during Hollywood Bowl, or, incredibly, make the decision to move abroad again.

And I'm definitely not the only one. There is no way that a freshman year Alex Cerezo who was afraid to make new friends could have ever expected to be homecoming royalty her senior year. There is no way Nick Hilton could have ever expected to make it onto the sports center top ten as a result of an incredible point winning bicycle kick during a volleyball game, yes, a volleyball game. There is no way that Mary Claire Hancock could have ever expected to be the lead singer in one of the most rocking bands in Sacramento. There is no way that someone like Matt DeSimone, whose testosterone levels are off the chart, could have expected to be belting out show tunes with the de la dudes. Selena Connell didn't expect to gain the amount of confidence she has over the past four years and step up as a true leader at CB. And there is definitely no way that the shy, quiet, and introverted freshman Sam Dixon could have ever expected to become one of the most vocal, compassionate, and loved members of our class.

You also can't forget all that we have discovered collectively. Many of us did not expect to discover how to love ourselves, love one another, and love God through events like Kairos or Venaver. There is no way we could have expected to find ourselves as one of the most athletically successful classes in Christian Brothers history, with over 10 students committed to play sports at a collegiate level. And we never anticipated having to bear the pain we felt that came with the sudden loss of our brother Spencer Pershall. We had no choice but to learn to lean on one another and learn to hold our community together through such grief.

These are all experiences and discoveries that are unique to the class of 2017, and as we go forward into the future, many more experiences and discoveries will become unique to us as individuals. I want all of you to think of the last 4 years at CB as a metaphor for the rest of your lives. All of you have changed in ways that as a freshman you could never have anticipated, and all of you will continue to change in the years to come. While the future for us is unknown, there is one thing that is set in stone. We have to approach our futures not just through rigid planning, but also through openness to unanticipated growth and discovery.

Class of 2017, I thank you for this incredible journey. Remember to embrace the growth that is still to come and keep on discovering. Thank you.