

BREATHE—SLOW DOWN—ENJOY THE MOMENT

Good evening Christian Brothers faculty and staff, family, and friends and especially the Class of 2016!

I stumbled upon the topic of this speech rather unexpectedly. While trying to brainstorm a list of some wise advice I could give as an 18 year old to a group of 238 other people who have lived just as long, give or take, I overheard some rather wise words from my mom's daily screening of One Tree Hill: "Every person is born for a reason and has something to add to the world. The point of life is to find this reason." And like any resourceful writer would, I decided to appropriate this idea and call it "inspiration."

Christian Brothers has prepared us better than any other place (specifically two other ones that graduated here this week) to find not only our own reason, but also to see others'. Each year at CB gave us

new experiences so that we would be better equipped to fully discover the reasons for our own lives when today came.

As timid little freshmen 4 years ago, we entered into a new environment. I, for example, came from a class of 30 students in a town of 60,000 to a class of 270 in a city of 500,000. YAH it was scary. But, all of us got through that first day and first year and assimilated into the community. Luckily, with teachers like Mr. Caselli, Ms. Spinelli, and Mr. Guro, we learned to trust CB and we learned to trust others. But let's not linger in freshman year because no one wants to talk about freshman year.

As sophomores, we gained a little confidence having finally escaped "annoying freshmen" status. Despite being freshmen 3 months earlier, we complained about the freshmen clogging up the hallways. Sophomore year was a year for exploration both academically and socially. With a newfound sophomore confidence, we ventured to satisfy our curiosities. Some of us experienced our very first AP class, some founded new clubs while others designed robots and experimented

with new sports. CB encouraged our initiative, taught us to stay curious, kept us thirsty for adventure and gave us the opportunities to experiment with the new, and, in doing so, we discovered what excited us.

Come junior year, the days of babying were over. Bluntly put, junior year was hard and weird. It was the dawn of those dreaded SATs and ACTs and teachers expected more from us. Testing and homework nibbled away at our social lives. Lack of sleep was real. We were at the teetering point between knowing we still needed to push through school and wanting to flip the table, give up, and be seniors already. But, we pushed through. If nothing else, junior year taught us to stick with it.

This year, we realized that our time with our friends we had made here was quickly ebbing. And for that reason we started to become more aware of our relationships and began to value them more. With college essays and Kairos, we learned to truly look at ourselves and value our relationship with the self.

Now, we're finally here where the only thing standing between us and the diploma is me and the rest of my speech, so I'll make it extra long. No, just kidding—I won't. I'll keep it short and to the point. As we leave CB, there's going to be bright days and on a day like this, it's easy to feel like those bright days will never end. That's how I'm feeling anyway. But there are also going to be dark days. Days where you're going to want to give up. But you have all these experiences that CB has given you, whether you know it or not. You've learned to place your trust in those around you, learned to seek adventure, learned to persevere, and learned to value relationships with our friends, family, and ourselves. Rely on these lessons when you feel like giving up. And when you feel like giving up, don't. Because whose going to fill your spot? You're here to fill that purpose. You are here for a reason. I mean if had Mr. English given up, who would be able to give those lectures that are simultaneously bland and strangely intriguing? Who would fill us with the wise words of Mr. John Wooden if Mr. Coyner wasn't here? And who would tell us every day the world got better on the day of our births; that there is no one better than us if it wasn't for Ms. Wanket?

So go find your purpose and pursue it because only you can fill it.
And remember, we're All in this together. Good Night and Good Luck.