



My Advice To The Graduates

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June means graduation, and graduation means boring commencement speeches. Actually, May might more likely mean graduation than June, but I didn't get to this until now, so you'll have to indulge me. Also, graduation speeches given by Richard Lewis or Aretha Franklin are likely highly entertaining. But other than that, the first sentence of this essay holds completely true.

In case you cannot make it to a graduation this year, either because you are not graduating from an institution of learning, are not related to someone graduating from an institution of learning, or are embarrassed to attend the commencement ceremony for Harold L. Ickes Junior College, allow me to provide you the experience here. Were I invited to do so, this is the speech I would give to this year's class:

Dear Graduates,

Congratulations on getting here today, particularly as I heard the bus was down. Ha, ha, just kidding. Your degree is a significant accomplishment, unless you studied Interior Design, in which case the unemployment line is that way. Today I offer enlightenment for the trip on which you are about to embark. It's a lot itchier and more bran-deficient than you'd think, so keep in mind these nuggets of wisdom I've collected for your benefit:

Spend a summer working at McDonald's. While there, send me some of those Monopoly game pieces, around 300. Also, a large fry.

Get a plant. Water it every month.

Buy fluorescent light bulbs. They're more expensive than incandescent bulbs, but if you have to return any, you get more money back.

Good fences make good neighbors. But a crappy fence usually does the trick, too.

Start a blog. Then discontinue it two weeks later when you realize you have nothing new or interesting to say, and have no more pictures of your cat to post.

Eat less meat. Unless it's that delicious kielbasa, which is fantastic with yellow mustard and some BBQ baked beans.

Become a model train enthusiast. Construct a scene where the train plows into a herd of llamas.

Dip your broom in a bucket of water before cleaning your floors. That way, you can sweep and mop at the same time.

Here's another great time saver: lightly adhere breadcrumbs to pennies before tossing them to pigeons, thereby providing for the homeless, too.

Wear sunscreen? Sure, but why not just get out of the sun, dummy?

Never have sex with someone who reminds you of a giraffe. Those spots could be contagious.

Compose a poem, but try to keep it to six lines; otherwise I lose interest. Also, keep in mind that if the lines don't rhyme, people might not realize it's a poem.

Trade in your cell phone for a new model. See if the number 628-7667 is available. This will be easy for your friends and family to remember, as it spells "oat poop."

Learn to fly a helicopter, or to jump out of one. But not both.

Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. In it, complain about the price of hot dogs.

Never marry for money. She should be hot, too.

The process of invention is a reward in and of itself. Therefore, you should devise and develop at least one new invention per decade, even if it doesn't make peoples' lives easier or less complicated. For instance, you could come up with a battery-powered beanie for ducks, or a tree that hands out clean underwear. If people ask why, answer them, "Why would I have it hand out dirty underwear?"

Remember: timeliness requires a watch. Or that the person you're meeting is laid back about that sort of thing.

Eat raisins. Were they left out in the sun to dry, while a bird flew overhead and dropped a deuce on them? Or while Mrs. Fly stopped by to lay some eggs on them? Possibly, but otherwise they're healthy.

Play the lottery. But not too much, you idiot, because that's the kids' college fund you're screwing with!

Leave the Earth a better place than you found it. Throw your banana peels in the neighbors' shrubs. They'll appreciate it. The shrubs, that is. Although the neighbors could stand to learn a thing or two about composting, what with all of the disposable diapers from their quintuplets piling up in the landfill.

Always work 2% harder than your co-workers. 1% isn't discernable, and 3% just seems like you're rubbing their faces in it.

Never do laundry on a Thursday. It will make your weekends seem directionless and empty.

Open a restaurant that serves dessert first, then the entrée, then appetizers. You'll be sure to sell a lot more desserts. Appetizers? Maybe not so much.

It's true that you should save 10% of every paycheck. I think it's for the weekend or something.

Finally, if you ever find yourself giving a speech, show up in your underwear. The audience will be so uncomfortable that you won't even notice how nervous you are.