

Class of 2019 SALUTATORIAN ADDRESS

“Change Happens”

By Nicholas Cameron

Thank you Dr. Stimmel, Dr. Criscione, Mr. Hoffer, members of the board, and all you cool people out there. Congratulations Class of 2019, we did it (you just need to survive through my speech to get there)!

It has taken a lot to be here. We have gone through twelve years of school, at least three different buildings, over seventy-eight different teachers, and 12,960 high school bells, all to get here (yes, I did the math). We have done countless homework assignments and lost countless hours of sleep. We have lost the game plenty of times and we have gone on many field trips together. All of this happened in the past twelve years and during this time there have been plenty of changes. Some of us have been in Sayville our whole lives, others came more recently. We have made new friends as time passed and we have kept old ones. We learned how to use smartphones and how to submit an assignment on Google classroom. We have probably changed our career goals and where we will be going in the next year. There may have been changes we couldn't predict or control. Additionally, there are changes that have happened outside of just Sayville. There have been three presidents in the past twelve years. The political climate is getting more polarized, the Constitution is being questioned, and in eleven years we have seen twenty-two Avengers movies.

Furthermore, the past five years have been the warmest on record and this leads into questions about the future. What will that be like? Will the climate continue to warm? Will smartphones continue to waste our time? Will politics continue to get more aggressive? Will these changes continue until they become the new normal? We can only see as far as the futurecast goes, courtesy of Maxwell Gallo.

There's talk of trade wars, and international conflicts. Britain still trying to leave the EU, and sea levels are rising. It can all become overwhelming and seem threatening.

But there are also good and positive changes that are on the horizon. Humans are working to make the world a more accepting place. Technologies we could only once dream of are becoming a reality. Do you remember when 3-d printers were the next up and coming technology? Now our school has five of them, and anyone can use one at the Sayville Library. IBM is working with bacteria that can digest plastics and driverless cars will help to prevent accidents.

My point is this, it often seems that the only constant in our lives is change, and with all of this change happening around us, it can become difficult to focus on the most important thing: who we are. We are the people we will spend the most time with during our lives, so it is

important that we know who we are, and how to confidently stand by our core values: the set of fundamental beliefs which guide our decisions and help us to define, for ourselves, the difference between right and wrong. And as Dumbloedore said, the difference between what is right and what is easy.

By sticking to our core values, we can understand who we are and follow the path that our values guide us towards when facing the unexpected that is always happening in this rapidly changing world.

Personally, I value the importance in leading a balanced life. I can't always keep my head in the books, even I get bored from taking derivatives sometimes. I like to sometimes take a step back when things get overwhelming and relax. It's amazing what can happen when you spend a day hiking in the woods and or spend some time building sets backstage or playing an instrument. And these values help with change. If I face a problem, I can take a step back, relax, and think of all the situations I have been in before and then attack the problem.

This ability to adapt is best said by Maya Angelou: "If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude."

Your attitude can change but your core values can remain, and it is important to stick to those. Find your core values no matter what they are. Some people work to always stay positive, others want to see something finished until it is perfect. Some value the importance of teamwork and others can always rely on humor getting themselves through a tough situation. We will never know what situation we will find ourselves in, but it's true that we will be there for it, so it is important to know the core values that we will each have when facing the unknown.

The thing is, life isn't always going to be easy or fun. Things are always going to change. Remember when having both an iPod and a phone was what we were used to. It just matters how we face that in order to continue to be ourselves. In the face of change, we could be brave, or analytical, or creative, or humble, or humorous. As long as we know who we are then we can take on anything. And as we have all learned, Shakespeare once wrote, "To thine own self be true".

Class of 2019, we are about to face the rest of our lives and it is important that we know who we are. I challenge us to identify our core values, become the person we want to be and take on all the changes that the world will throw at us.

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