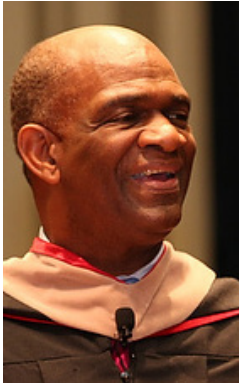


In her opening remarks, President Amy Gutmann said, "This baccalaureate ceremony we celebrate today, is intended to refine the spirit and uplift the soul. It derives from the medieval custom of honoring Bachelor degree candidates prior to the awarding of their degrees. This is a quieter and more intimate opportunity to reflect. Our students—this remarkable Class of 2014—have learned and grown and advanced in so many ways in the past four years. They are an enormous and potent force for good that we are about to release on the world. This is our opportunity to give thoughtful attention to all they are capable of achieving—and our heartfelt thanks for all they have meant to us in the years leading up to this moment. Members of the Class of 2014: an ending is in sight, but so too is a glorious beginning."

Baccalaureate Address given Sunday, May 18, 2014 by The Reverend Kirbyjon Caldwell, WG'77, senior pastor, Windsor Village United Methodist Church

## Three Simple Concepts: Character, Courage and Creativity

Photograph by Stuart Watson



Kirbyjon Caldwell

Well I'll tell you, Dr. Price can make anybody sound good, can't he? That's very gracious of you. First of all, congratulations to the 2014 graduates! I want to thank Chaz (Charles Howard) for being instrumental in inviting me; I appreciate it very much. I want to thank Dr. Gutmann for allowing me to come. And will the gentleman who is in charge of the lights bring the house lights up just a smidgen please? Let's recognize the parents and the members of the extended family who have helped to pay for, pray for, pull for and whatever for, to make this day a reality. Won't you please stand? You deserve some recognition—to all the parents and members of the extended family—as I say in my business, show them some love!

As a father of 16, 14 and 12-year-old children, I look forward to this day, but not too

quickly. Well Spencer, you mentioned experience. T.S. Elliott one day suggested that we have had the experience, but we are missing the meaning. We are having the experience, but don't miss the meaning. Let's be clear about this, and I want to salute the graduates again. Number one—you got into the University of Pennsylvania. That's no small feat. Number two—after having been admitted, you stayed in. I mean not everyone can say that. In some cases there were circumstances beyond other folks' control that meant that they just had to leave. So you got in, you stayed in and now you've graduated. What an experience! But the question is—what does it mean?

I want to offer three simple concepts here this afternoon that will help you to maximize the meaning of this experience. This is a heart-to-heart, a very relational talk that I want to share with you.

Three simple concepts and I have a friend whose going to help me with these concepts. His name is David. He is straight from the Broadway play entitled *David and Goliath*, found in the First Book of Samuel, in the 17th chapter.

Concept number one is character. Character—you can have the IQ of a zip code. Or in today's parlance, the IQ of your ID password. You can have an IQ that's the length of your ID password, but if your character is in the toilet, no matter how expensive the toilet may be, you are a train wreck waiting to happen. Carnage is on the way. Let me put it to you this way. If your competency is here, but your character is there, if your intelligence is here, but your integrity is there, then this is how far you have to fall. And the wider that gap is—did you just hear that thud? That thud is the noise you will make if your integrity doesn't rise to the level of your intelligence and your character to the level of your competency. Your community—this country—is full of folks who had tremendous potential. They had competencies but they lacked character. I want to encourage you today to have character and not be a character. As my grandmother used to say, have character but don't act like a character.

I've been blessed to serve on a lot of boards, from grassroots 501(c)(3) boards for which I got paid nothing, to Fortune 500 boards for which I'm very thankful. And one common theme, which exists in all those boards is the following: when you hire good people, the probability of good output is increased. I don't care how excellent your procedure or your practices is. I don't care how excellent your structure is or your systems may be, if the folks you hire suck eggs, then you are cruising for a bruising. American corporations are doing a better job of this now than they were back then. But think about this for a moment. Back in the day, corporations, companies, even 501(c)(3)s would hire people primarily based on what they could do, on their competencies. Think about this, often times, when folks lose their jobs, otherwise known as getting fired, often times they didn't get fired because of competency issues, they got fired because of character-related issues. Such as messing with the money, messing with the honey, not playing well with others in the sandbox, or just being a straight up big-headed,

unmitigated, unparalleled fool who sucks all the air out of the room when he or she walks into it, such that other folks suffocate because there's no air left. They find ways to get rid of them. We now realize that hiring for character is just as important as hiring for competency. So I want to say to the graduates, as brilliant as you are, make certain you have character.

I know of several instances where a person—in this case a male—had the capital to buy a major league franchise—baseball, football, whatever—and had the competency to run the major league franchise if he were to get it. But in several cases, call no names, bear no blames, they did not get the team, not because they couldn't buy it, not because they couldn't run it, but because of character issues or even the perception of character issues. They had relational skills that were in the toilet or their reputations were such that the other owners simply did not want to have anything to do with him. I hope your colleagues would never be able to say, "I don't want to mess with him or her because of their reputation." As a matter of fact, you know you have a smooth reputation when you own a parrot, and you don't mind selling the parrot to the biggest blabbermouth in the community. Even Albert Einstein said, "What makes a great scientist great is not his intellect, but his character."

David is knocking on the door, come on in David. David is saying yes, yes, yes, this guy named Goliath sold wolf tickets for 40 days in a row, and I decided to step up, the character in me propelled me to challenge him.

I am going to move quickly now, from character to courage. You know, while preparing this message, it dawned on me. Some folks may have character, but they are unable to espouse or manifest character because they lack courage. Do you know it takes courage to manifest character? It takes courage to say that's right when everyone else says that's wrong. It takes courage to stand up when everyone else wants to sit down. In the case of David, David's daddy did not step up, David's brothers did not step up, King Saul did not even step up, the leader of the army Abner did not step up, every day for 40 days, a member of the Israelite community turned tail and ran when Goliath challenged them at the top of the hill, except David. David says I'll have the courage to face the Goliath.

Nelson Mandela said in essence, courage is not the absence of fear, courage is doing what you know is the right thing to do in spite of the fear. You can have all the character in the world but if you don't have the courage to back it up, you are a great potential that never achieved.

Character, courage and lastly, I love this one—creativity. Now Caldwell, how in the world does creativity fit into the David and Goliath paradigm? I'm glad you asked. Here's Goliath, somewhere between six-feet-nine-inches and eight-feet, depending upon whose account you believe. Here's David, described as a little runty guy, who was literally on a cheese mission. He was simply there to deliver cheese to his brothers. He was sent by his dad, but while there, his courage and his character rose to the challenge. How does a little runty guy knock off the giant? David knew that the Goliath walked slowly. He was not very nimble, not very mobile. David knew that Goliath did not see very well. So David took his strength and matched them against Goliath's weaknesses. You know the story. David takes the slingshot because he was a slinger and bam, he hit him right there where the armor was not. Who could have come up with something that creative—a stone and a slingshot? Now you might be thinking, wait a minute, I've read about David, and David pulled up five stones for one Goliath, he must not have had that much courage. I'm here to tell you, not only did he have courage, he had knowledge. David knew that Goliath had four brothers. So after he wacked Goliath, he said to the brothers, this is off the Bible, but I'll tell you, if you brothers want some of the same thing, I have four more stones just for you and I can use them as creatively on you as I did on him. You want some of this? Come on and get it! See, when you have courage and when you have character and when you have creativity, no weapon formed against you shall prosper.

Dr. Gutmann says she's going to release you on the world. I decree and declare as you are released, your character, your courage and your creativity shall even exceed your own expectations. God bless you, and God bless the University of Pennsylvania.

Penn Commencement Address given on Monday, May 19, 2014 by Penn President Amy Gutmann at Franklin Field.

## Composing the Soundtrack of your Life

Photograph by Marguerite F. Miller



Amy Gutmann

Welcome everyone, to the 258th Commencement of the University of Pennsylvania!

Members of the Class of 2014: Today, you become our newest Penn alumni. Bravo!

We celebrate your achievement with pomp and ceremony, with speeches and salutations and of course, with music. Every Penn Commencement ever held has included music—and for good reason.

Music marks the defining moments of our lives. We connect certain songs to our happiest memories, to our heartbreaks and to the history of our time. Song by song, we construct a soundtrack to our lives.

Consider, for instance, how you felt on move-in day your freshman year—

Song #1

*Ride of the Valkyries*

Or those days when you were juggling classes and exams and OCR—

Song #2

*Night on Bald Mountain*

Or your crushing disappointment when classes were cancelled due to snow—

Song #3

*Hallelujah!*

But the soundtrack of our life is not something that simply happens to us. Each of us also composes it—by the choices we make, the places we go and the people we meet. It is the history of our memorable experiences made audible.

The most memorable moments of the soundtrack of my life revolve around three themes: freedom, community and courage.

*Freedom:* I was a teenager during the great human rights movements of the 1960s. Martin Luther King led a march on Washington and proclaimed a mighty dream. Gloria Steinem inspired a new wave of feminism. The gay community stood up to police raids in the Stonewall Riots. Everywhere, including in my own school and small town, I could hear the once voiceless taking up the call for that first and foremost ingredient of human freedom...

Song #4

*Respect*

Only when we engage one another with respect can we all be free. Respect enables the overcoming of prejudices, and the opening of our minds to new, life-affirming possibilities. When respect takes root, freedom flowers.

When I joined the non-violent civil rights movement, there were those who thought we could change the world in one fell swoop.

Song #5

*Revolution*

But the true revolutionaries I've met haven't been armed with guns or bombs. They have armed themselves with irresistible ideas: ideas that erode prejudice through their power.

No individual in our lifetime demonstrated this power more successfully than Nelson Mandela. When he passed away late last year, we said goodbye to one of the greatest champions of freedom the world has ever known.

I had the life-changing honor of meeting him, and I shall always cherish his supreme song of freedom: "To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

This great man suffered imprisonment and torment for 27 years, led a tough liberation struggle against often ruthless oppressors, yet taught us that freedom comes by the ways we engage one another with respect.

As Penn graduates, you exemplify the ethos of talent coupled with drive and determination. It's what you've got—*GRIT*—that's the essential ingredient in individual success. But we *gritty* individuals must never forget that we are truly successful and free only together.

*Community:* A great community, indeed a beloved community, has been key to success in my life, as it will be in yours.

It's the Penn community: the commitment of great faculty who bring out the best in their students; it's the commitment of passionate students who make the most of their Penn education and create friendships that last a lifetime; it's the commitment of loving Penn parents and families; it's the commitment of dedicated Penn staff; and it's the commitment of generations of accomplished alumni who have made the Penn community what it is today.

It's the Penn community that has made my lifelong ideal of increasing access to the best education not merely a vision, but a reality. It's the Penn community that also has been there and lifted me when I've been down.

In my down times—and make no mistake, we all have our down times—it was the Penn community that taught me how important it is not just to give to others, but also to accept support from others. It's not enough just to "lean in." We also need to learn, and help our friends, to do something else...

Song #6

*Lean on Me*

Today, I want to express my appreciation to this Class for the way you have bonded as a beloved community, the way you have both learned from and leaned on one another. You've grown with people from all walks of life and every part of the globe. Together you've learned so many things—

Song #7

*Gangnam Style*

Not everything we learn at Penn is edifying.

Being Penn graduates, you know this critically important insight. To succeed at the truly big things—like freedom and community—it takes something extra. It takes what great liberators like Nelson Mandela taught us...

Song #8

*Brave*

*Courage:* Courage can mean facing down historic oppression and stepping into the line of fire. But no less life-changing are the small braveries, the everyday braveries: the courage of coming out, of being your honest self, of speaking your mind with integrity, all the more so in those moments when others stay silent.

Our soundtracks need a song that reminds us just how exhilarating it feels to stand up for who we really are...

Song #9

*Firework*

Graduates, there is nothing greater than the joy of composing the soundtrack of our lives, listening to it and sharing it with others.

Composed with freedom and courage and shared throughout our beloved community, the soundtracks of our lives join us together in a spirit that words—without the wonders of music—cannot possibly capture.

So, accompanied by the wonderful music of our own Penn graduate and honored Commencement speaker John Legend, I ask everybody here today to do one more thing...

Song #10

*All of Me*

I ask everybody to stand together—moms and dads, spouses and partners, grandmas and grandpas, sisters and brothers, family and friends, our honored guests, my fellow trustees and faculty. Please stand with me and give your all in showing just how proud we are of our 2014 Penn graduates!



Remarks given Monday, May 19, 2014 by Claire Oakes Finkelstein, Algernon Biddle Professor of Law, Penn Law and professor of philosophy, SAS, director, Center for Ethics and the Rule of Law; and Incoming Chair of the Faculty Senate.

## Three Responsibilities: Nourish, Cherish and Cultivate Yourself

Greetings Class of 2014! I have the honor of addressing you as the incoming Chair of the Faculty Senate on behalf of the roughly 4,464 faculty of the University of Pennsylvania. This speech is my first official duty. Now in case you think that students are the only ones who receive assignments, I should share with you that my assignment from the Office of the Secretary is first, to offer some sage words of advice to the graduating class, and second, to mention Benjamin Franklin in the process. I have just accomplished the second of my two assignments. On to the first.

I graduated college this month 28 years ago. My youngest child will probably graduate college 13 years from now. And your children will start graduating from college approximately 22 years from now. The last of your children will graduate approximately 45 years from now. Some of you will probably be sitting right here, in 2059, as your children process into their seats, thinking wistfully of today and what changes, and what stays the same.

What changes? Twenty-eight years ago, in 1986, email was barely a twinkle in the eye of the National Science Foundation, but that was the year it began. I went through college thinking I had the latest and greatest of typewriter technologies, because it had the ability to auto-correct up to five letters! It was also the year the Space Shuttle Challenger exploded on live TV as well as the disaster at Chernobyl Nuclear power plant. Pre-9/11 generation that we were, we gave little thought to national security challenges, and the suggestion that a government agency might have access to our personal letters and documents would have sounded to us like a *Saturday Night Live* send-up of a bad science fiction novel. Just as it is difficult for you to imagine the day you will receive your first Mother's Day flowers by *drone delivery*.

What stays the same? Most of you have roughly a five-year horizon for thinking about your futures, as I did when I graduated, and your children will at theirs. Human beings are pre-programmed to focus disproportionately on their immediate welfare, as the philosopher Thomas Hobbes so eloquently pointed out over 300 years ago. But what that inveterate bachelor didn't know is that having your own children usually works a dramatic change in human nature. Because when you imagine the lives of your children whom you love, and you imagine the child they will have that they will love, and the grandchildren they and their children will love, you can no longer imagine a



Photograph by Marguerite F. Miller

Claire Finkelstein

future world without your children or their children or their children somewhere in it. And when you do, those not-yet-in-existence facts of their world define the conditions under which your children will struggle to realize their ambitions, just as the conditions of your world today define the terms of your struggle and the conditions of my world defined mine.

To the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania, you are our intellectual children. Your future paths, as professional leaders, will be the coming to fruition of the education we have sought to extend to you and your own creativity and hard work in receiving and continuing it. On this day, we pass the torch to you. You will help shape the lives

not only of your own children, but of those aspiring young people who will look up to you as teachers, mentors, role models and moral leaders.

It is a heavy responsibility you bear. But it is also a great opportunity. An opportunity to make the lives of future generations better, more fulfilling, more inspired and more inspiring for others. As any parent or teacher knows, there is no greater reward than improving opportunities for those who follow in your footsteps. And this is why we, the faculty, share with your parents the pride and satisfaction they feel as they watch you graduate today.

So what about my first assignment—to give you advice? For the sake of brevity, I'll content myself with this: As we pass the torch to you, take it up and carry it as high as you can. The best way to do that, to live up to the responsibilities you now acquire, is to be the teacher and parent to yourself that others were, or should have been, to you. Nourish and cultivate yourselves and your futures as you would those of your students and children. To love and cherish yourself is a responsibility, but it is also the greatest of opportunities.

On behalf of the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, I wish you my deepest congratulations and my heartfelt wishes for your future!

Penn Commencement Address given on Monday, May 19, 2014 by alumnus John Legend, Grammy-award winning singer, songwriter and musician.

## Love Yourself, Love Your Work, Love the People Around You



John Legend

Thank you. Thank you so much. Good morning. And congratulations!

Now I'll try to be brief this morning. As a musician, this is about 10 hours before I normally go to work, so I'm gonna need a nap soon. And you've got degrees to receive.

And I also have a feeling some of you are already tired of me. The thing about pop radio in America, somehow they've scientifically determined that the public is only capable of liking the *same 10 songs* at any given time, so they simply play those songs over and over and

over until you're finally completely exasperated. Then they move on...

I've had a 10-year career as a solo artist and none of my songs has ever been one of those 10 songs. Until this moment. And now "all of you, are so over me; you're tired of hearing that I went to Penn. Why'd they bring him back again?" (sung to the tune of *All of Me* chorus)

That was my humblebrag way of saying I have the biggest song in the country. Very artful, wouldn't you say?

But, honestly, I am truly humbled and honored and grateful to be here at the commencement of one of the finest universities on the planet. I first visited this campus as a high school senior named John Stephens in 1995—19 years ago—and I would have never thought at that moment that I would be standing here as John Legend, speaking to you today.

The reason I'm here, the reason I've had such a wonderful journey so far, is that I've found love. Yes, love. We were all made to love. And I've found that we live our best lives, we are at our most successful, not simply because we're smarter than everyone else, or because we hustle harder. Not because we become millionaires more quickly. The key to success, the key

to happiness, is opening your mind and your heart to love. Spending your time doing things you love and with people you love.

My life could have gone differently though. At first, I had a pretty good childhood. I grew up in a small blue-collar city called Springfield, Ohio. I was surrounded by family, including two loving parents who cared so much about our education that they home-schooled us for several years during grade school. And they took the time to teach us more than academics. They taught us about character, about what it meant to live a good life.

My father often talked to us about his definition of success. He told us that it wasn't measured in money and material things, but it was measured in love and joy and the lives you're able to touch—the lives you're able to help. And my parents walked the walk. They gave of themselves to our church. They took in foster kids and helped the homeless, even though we didn't have much money ourselves.

Growing up in the Stephens' house also meant you were immersed in art and music and encouraged to be creative. We had a piano and a drum kit in the house. I begged to take piano lessons when I was four. I started singing in the church choir and in school plays by the time I was seven. So I fell in love with music at a very young age.

My family was like a model family in our church and local community. My parents were leaders, raising intelligent, talented kids in a loving environment. We even had a little singing group called the "Stephens 5."

But things started to fall apart when I was 10. My maternal grandmother passed away that year when she was only 58 years old, and her death devastated my family. She was our church organist, and on Sundays after church, I would go to her house just to hang out with her. She would make chicken and collard greens and corn bread. And she would teach me how to play gospel piano. She was one of my favorite people on the planet.

She and my mother were also very close, and her death sent my mother into a deep depression that eventually tore our family apart. My world was shattered. My parents got divorced. My mother disappeared into over a decade of drugs and despair. And I was confused and disoriented.

(continued on next page)

## PENN COMMENCEMENT 2014 Address by John Legend (continued from previous page)

After the initial shock of my family breaking apart, my outward response wasn't very emotional. I coped by being stoic and seemingly unaffected. I thought if I didn't expose myself to any more pain and vulnerability, I could never get hurt. If I didn't fall in love, no one could ever betray me like that again. I busied myself with school work and lots of activities, and tried not to think too much about my family situation, tried to avoid pain whenever possible. A big reason I only applied to colleges on the east coast was to make sure I had no reminders of home in my daily life.

The only thing I allowed myself to really love without reservation was music. I put all of my passion into it. I spent so much of my spare time working on it, that I barely got any sleep. At night, I was doing community choir, show choir and musicals in high school; a cappella and a church choir in college. I wrote my own songs. Played in talent shows. I put a lot of energy into becoming a better artist, a better writer and a better performer. And in some ways, it made me a better student and a better leader. Because when you actually care about something, you want to lead. Apathy's not so cool any more.

When I graduated from Penn, I had many of the traditional opportunities in front of you now, and I took a job at the Boston Consulting Group. But I couldn't shake my passion for music. I had followed the path that the Penn graduate was supposed to take, but I didn't fall in love. I immediately started thinking about how I could leave BCG and become a full-time musician. I spent hours during the day preparing PowerPoint presentations and financial models. And I spent almost as many hours at night writing songs and performing at small gigs around New York & Philadelphia.

I always believed that my big break would come sooner rather than later. In fact, from 1998, while I was still at Penn, to early 2004, I spent each of those years always thinking that I would get that big record deal within the next few months. I always thought my moment was just around the corner. But I was rejected by all the major labels; some of them rejected me multiple times. I played for all the giants of the business—Clive Davis, L.A. Reid, Jimmy Iovine, you name it. And all of them turned me down.

But I did find a young producer from Chicago named Kanye West who believed in me. Kanye happened to be the cousin of my good friend DeVon Harris, a classmate and roommate of mine here at Penn. DeVon introduced me to Kanye in 2001, and we've been working together ever since. Our collaboration has been a huge part of my career, and it had a lot to do with me finally getting a major recording contract in 2004.

Now, Kanye and I have very different personalities, as you might have guessed. But what unites us is our true love for music and art. We love to create, and at no point in our creative process do we stress about what will sell or what's already popular. We think about making something beautiful, something special, something we can be proud of. We truly do this because we love it. We put all of ourselves into it.

And it turns out that love *requires* that level of commitment from you. Half-doing it is not doing it right. You have to go all in. And yes, your personal relationships require that too.

I know what it's like to be all ego in your 20s. I know what it's like to be selfish and just focus on your immediate wants and desires. I know what it's like to protect your heart from pain and disappointment. I know what it means to be all about the rat race and winning.

But years from now, when you look back on your time here on earth, your life and your happiness will be way more defined by the *quality* of your relationships, not the quantity. You'll get much more joy out of *depth*, not breadth. It's about finding and keeping the best relationships possible with the people around you. It's about immersing yourself in your friendships and your family. It's about being there for the people you care about, and knowing that they'll be there for you.

I know. It's not easy to go all in on love. I'm 35 and I'm married and I'm still learning how to do this completely. But I've found someone who makes me want to try, someone who makes me want to take that risk. And it's made all the difference.

Now, I've already talked about the power of love in your work and your personal lives. But I also want to talk about how love changes the world. There are seven billion other people out there. Seven billion strangers. I want you to consider what it means to love them too. What does it mean to love people we don't know, to see the value in every single person's life?

Think about that. It's a pretty radical notion. It means your daughter or son, your neighbor's daughter or son and the daughters and sons of people who live thousands of miles away, all deserve the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It means we let go of fear and see each other's humanity. It means we don't see Trayvon Martin as a walking stereotype, a weaponized human. We see him as a boy who deserves the chance to grow into a man, even if he makes boyish mistakes along the way. It means American lives don't count more than Iraqi lives. It means we see a young Palestinian kid not as a future security threat or demographic challenge, but as a future father, mother and lover. It means that the nearly 300 kidnapped girls in Nigeria aren't just their problem. They're *our* girls too. It's actually quite a challenge to love humankind in this way.

Professor Cornel West gives us a word for what this kind of love looks

like in public. That word is justice.

If you're committed to loving in public, it requires you opening your eyes to injustice, to see the world through the eyes of another. This is not a passive activity. You have to read. You have to travel to other neighborhoods, other parts of the world. You may have to get your hands dirty. You have to allow people to love you, and you have to love them back.

My team and I met a young girl named Rose from a small, impoverished village in Ghana. When you're working with development organizations and visiting the communities they work in, you're not really supposed to single out one child to fall in love with. You're supposed to stick to the program and focus on the interventions that lift the community as a whole. But we couldn't help it. We fell in love with Rose. Something about the spark in her eyes and her indomitable spirit made us want to go the extra mile to help her. So we decided to use our own funds to sponsor her tuition to secondary school.

We've stayed in touch with her over the past seven years, and we're so proud of what she's done individually. But we're also happy that she inspired us to formalize and expand our scholarship program to many girls in communities like hers throughout Africa, communities where the parents often invest in the boys' secondary education, but don't do the same for the girls.

In my travels around the world, I've looked in the eyes of many young girls and boys from Africa to Southeast Asia to Harlem, kids who had big dreams and needed someone to believe in them and invest in their future, in their education.

What would our schools look like if we were committed to love in public? If we cared about every kid in our school system, we would make sure they didn't go to school hungry. We would make sure they had proper health care and counseling. We would make sure they had excellent teachers in every classroom. We would make sure we weren't unfairly suspending them and criminalizing them for minor behavioral problems. We'd make sure all of them had the resources they need.

Every religion has this idea of philanthropy, love for mankind, at its core. But you shouldn't do this just to make sure you get into the "pearly gates." Look at the work of Marty Seligman here at Penn, who has literally written the book on happiness. Look at the work of Adam Grant, whom I hear is the most highly rated professor here: He has the data to show that giving works. There's an increasing body of research and knowledge that tells us that living a life of love and compassion is the true path to success and contentment.

So what's going to stop you? What's going to stand in your way? What's going to keep you from achieving your success? What will prevent you from going all in on love?

We're taught when we're young that the opposite of love is hate. But it's not. Hate is a byproduct. Hate is a result. Being a hater isn't cool. Nobody wants that. But hate comes from one thing: fear. And fear is the opposite of love. It's not a coincidence that when we talk about bigotry, we often talk in terms of fear: homophobia, xenophobia. Fear is what blinds us. Fear is corrosive. Fear makes us hold back. It whispers to us, tells us that we'll fail. It tells us that our differences are too much to overcome. Fear locks us in place. It starts fights. It causes wars.

And fear keeps us from loving. Even though we're made to love, we're often afraid to love. We're afraid of being hurt deeply. Afraid of feeling the pain I went through when my parents divorced. But you're never going to really love something or someone unless you put those fears aside. Don't hold back. Being in love means being ready to give freely and openly, and being ready to risk something. Risking pain and disappointment, conquering your fears and becoming anew.

Alice Walker once said, "The more I wonder, the more I love." Love calls you to open your eyes, to seek, to search, to wonder.

Love is all-consuming—it infiltrates your body, it's what allows you to experience bliss, joy and true friendship. You'll be more disappointed when something goes wrong. You might fall harder. But the only way you'll reach any height in life and in love is by taking the chance that you might fall.

You have to give your *all*.

Yes, I've been not-so-subtly working in my song lyrics. And some might think it's all a bit too much. Here I am, this R&B singer with an album called *Love in the Future*, who's recently married and wrote the biggest love song of the year, and what did I choose to talk about? *Love*. It's so *corny* isn't it. It's much cooler to be detached and apathetic, right? We all like a little snark and cynicism and irony, especially from our favorite artists and comedians and writers. I get it.

But that cool detachment only gets you so far. Passion gets you a lot further. It makes you a better entrepreneur, a better leader, a better philanthropist, a better friend, a better lover.

I want you to live the best life you can. You can be world-changers. When you leave here today, you're going to be looking for a lot of things: security, money, friendships, sex, all kinds of things. But the most important thing you'll find is love.

So love your self, love your work, love the people around you. *Dare* to love those who are different from you, no matter where they're from, what they look like and who they love. Pursue this life of love with focus and passion and ambition and courage. Give it your all. And that will be your path to true success. Congratulations to the Class of 2014 and thank you so much!