NYU 2013 Commencement Speech

The administrative staff - faculty - family members, and friends, last but not least - the two thousand and thirteen graduating class of NYU - I salute you today - Let me begin by saying - I salute those who are graduating Magna Cum Laude - I salute those who are graduating Suma Cum Laude - I salute those who are graduating Cum Laude - and I salute those who are graduating plain ole Thank You Laude - I made it - I am going to be brief - I have learned over the years that people like brevity - I have not always been aware of that - But a few years ago I was doing the commencement at Gambling University in Louisiana - and a lady who had heard me at the commencement at N.C. A&T University - on that note you might not long remember what I say - But you will long remember that it did not take me long to say it

I would like to share this thought with you today - Don’t quit or sit in amazement - go forward using your education - don’t leave here today bragging about having a degree from N.Y.U while you are resting on your laurels - and not working to make this world a better place to live - (amazement) - Let me point out there is no easy road to success - there is no short cut - or fast track. Everything worth having - all of your achievements - all of your successes - will only be accomplished through hard work - the only place that success comes before work is in the dictionary -

Let me convey to you - your first job will not be president of a major university - your first job will not be president of a fortune 500 company - unless your mother or father own the company there are steps in between that you must take - and don’t be afraid to
take them – The Late mother Theresa said something a long time ago, and I quote her today – she said – If you are successful you will be sure to make some false friends and some true enemies – but be successful anyway – what she was saying was don’t quit – that in life, there will be some ups and some downs – there will be some good days and some bad days – there will be some easy tasks – and there will be some challenging tasks – some of you will be applauded and praised – but believe me graduates – some of you will also be criticized – but in spite of your criticism – be successful anyway – Don’t let anyone interfere with your ability to succeed – no matter – what circumstances you face – always remember – that your success and your failure are in your hands – you have your degree and you are qualified to move forward – don’t put your degree on the shelf or in a closet and start bragging about how you have a degree from NYU – and then do nothing with it – yes you have earned your license to succeed and become successful – but don’t be selfish – don’t quit or sit in amazement - give back to your fellow man or fellow woman – Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was right – when he said – I can not be what I ought to be – until the world is what it should be – Give back and please remember, today is the first day of the rest of your life.

So take your degree and your training and help solved the problem of homelessness – take your degree – and help bring about a solution to sexism – racism and warism – and all the other isms - use your degree – don’t you give up – if you apply for a job and the person responsible for hiring says no – don’t you be discouraged or disturbed – the more “no’s” you get out the way the closer you are getting to a yes – when you get that job be careful how you treat people –
Bank Experience

Ralph Waldo Emerson said if you build your house in the middle of the woods and you make a product better than everybody else the world will make a beaten path to your door – in order to purchase that product – but in order to do that – you must refrain from making excuses – somebody said excuses – are the tools of the incompetent – they build monuments to nothing and roads to nowhere – and those who specialize in excuses seldom excel in anything else – but making excuses - let me point out something else about excuses – most of the time if you carefully examine them – they don’t even make much sense – let me give you a couple of examples – (hot iron) – (teachers)

Try not to make excuses – Recognize that when something is in your way that means you are on your way – if you are not going anywhere nothing will ever be in your way – so don’t quit or sit in amazement – class of 2013 – New York University

I challenge you today to go into the cities and countryside using your knowledge and crisis intervention skills – and create jobs and educational opportunities – eliminate substandard housing, desolation, and blight – and deal with the lack of adequate health care and the systematic destruction of the family – Go – Go eliminate poverty and despair – take your degree and – Go – Go solve the problems – find the solutions – more than ever - we need solutions today – we need to turn night into day – despair into hope – the trampled down into the upward bound –
So don’t quit or sit in amazement. You talents are needed today.

Let me conclude, graduates, by saying. You are going to have some ups and you are going to have some downs – you might be dissed but don’t you quit – you might be disappointed – but don’t you quit – or sit in amazement.

You might be disapproved – but don’t quit or sit in amazement
You might be disavowed
You might be disallowed
You might be disturbed
You might be distrusted
You might be disenchanted
You might be disinherited
You might be displaced
You might be dismayed
You might be discouraged
You might be distraught
You might be disdained
You might be disliked
You might be discussed
You might be disrespected
You might be dismissed
You might be disgusted

But don’t you quit. Let the world know – that in spite of it all – you are a graduate of NYU – and the faculty has assured you that the ability to succeed runs in the NYU family

So don’t quit or sit in amazement – There is a lot of work that needs to be done – Go do it

Class of 2013 – New York University – Don’t you quit or sit in amazement –
Congratulations – and much success – don’t quit or sit in amazement.