

Jewett Speech Competition

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“I HOPE”

Did you know 11/10 people hate change? Yes, it's shocking. And fellow graduated, I have some bad news, There's lots of change coming up.

Humans by nature love predictability. Even when we're not in control, we like knowing what to expect. I was one of the worst: the notorious planner with a Plan A, Plan B, Plan LMNOP. So imagine me, I'm 18, I know everything (just ask my mother), I had it all figured out. I started as petro and had my next ten years planned to a tee. Knew my classes, goals, where I would live, you name it I had a plan and 6 backups. I was extreme, one of those people, even researching what company had the highest satisfaction and best benefits.

Then, as they always do, things changed. My best friend got sick. I visited her with my roommate, Sadie, in a hospital hours away. My friend did recover, but in that moment I realized how broken healthcare systems can be, especially if you don't have insurance. The instant we stepped outside my friend's room I

turned to Sadie and said “There’s no way she gets better here. I can’t do this. I can’t be an engineer when this problem exists”

Friedrich Nietzsche, a German philosopher, he gets me, he goes “A thought, even a possibility, can shatter and transform us.” That day was my initial shattering. I realized I was an 18 yr old who knew nothing. A ten-year plan going down the drain is terrifying when you’re addicted to predictability, but with the new knowledge I had, the plan would not satisfy. It was better off down the drain.

That was the first domino on a roller coaster of transformation. Radical Transformation. I only plan 6 months ahead. From there, I went on challenging my goals and what I thought was possible. Testing what would make me happy, who I wanted to be with. I challenged my spirituality and those beliefs I was brought up with. It’s been the toughest four years, but they’ve been the greatest four years. And I have God, my family, my friends, and Marietta College to thank.

Our story, class of 2019, is a collective of individual transformations. What if, instead of hating change, we embrace it. Celebrate that we are not the same people. Could you imagine

being the same person today that you graduated high school? Terrifying. I think I speak collectively when I say these past four years have been spent analyzing who you want to become, and what you can offer back to the world. That answer is different for each of us, but that answer matters. And here's why.

Turn on the news. Take your pick: are you in the mood for injustice, hate, violence, war, the climate. There is so much that is broken, it's hard not to turn it off. But I am encouraged looking in the eyes of my classmates. Because I see a generation that has had enough of a broken status quo.

My challenge to you is this: find what bothers you. What is your moment that shattered you? And what are you going to do about it? Now, your story will be completely different than this and that is good. But for me, it looks like switching my major to biochemistry, taking a semester off researching mental health, and becoming an EMT so I wouldn't have to wait to be a doctor to start serving rural folk through medicine. The obstacles low income communities medically face bother me.

What bothers you so much that you cannot sit idle? What puts a fire in your heart? Engage the thing that keeps you up at night. If you don't who will?

Our world needs it's own radical transformation and right now. This moment. Is the perfect time. We are the most connected, educated, technologically advanced generation yet. Change it.

To our education majors, I hope for your huge challenges and huge opportunity. Do I even need to go into how much influence you have in the lives of children?

To the creators of art and music, I hope you design something that brings joy and then take it somewhere dark to be a light

To the business/finance/economics folk, I hope you create us jobs, livelihoods, consider people along with profit in your decisions. I hope you run businesses free of greed. If everyone conducted ethical business, I can't list what that would solve.

The engineers, I hope you design it safe and do it right. Our dependence on oil dictates a lot of foreign policy, sometimes for the worst. It's real, and your excellence matters.

To our languages and leadership majors, I hope you cross borders, get us to cooperate, and unite us. It's tough, but we will get nowhere going solo.

Lastly to the sciences, my people. I hope you bring us your discoveries and solutions. Whether that's the environment, medicine, nanomaterials. I hope you transform whatever industry or institution you find yourself in.

That's really what our diplomas represent. Yes, it's the completion of 120 credits with a satisfactory GPA, right Dr. Bland? But it truly stands for triumph over every moment that has shattered you and transformed you. And those are beautiful, beautiful moments. Treasure them. Treasure your diploma. Hang that thing on the wall and let it stand for the problem in the world you now have the tools to tackle. And treasure who you are right now. Because it's about to all change again, and this time, I hope it does.