

Father Tony, our honored guest Lydia Reid, Members of the Education Commission, Mrs. Reith, faculty, parents, families, friends, fellow classmates,

It is a St. Peter's tradition to give out silly awards at the senior breakfast. Most are funny, some are serious, and a few are definitely perceived as negative, but the award for most likely to come back and teach at St. Peter's is one that no senior wants to win. It is no secret that the teachers at St. Pete's do not make much money. Yet, they do not complain. (Well, at least most of them don't). They love teaching, and for them, that's all that matters. They are passionate about their jobs and have realized that money cannot buy happiness.

In contrast, our class could be defined as realistic. We have always understood that good things simply are not going to fall in our laps and we have done what we need to do to create opportunities for ourselves. We are focused, we are aware, and we are ready to take on the world. All of this is outstanding and I am proud of what our class has achieved.

However, I am not here today to simply praise the efforts of my classmates but rather to give them direction and advice as we move forward. Trust me, I don't want to be up here anymore than you want to be out there listening to me. And I have to admit, it's unfortunate that my great REWARD for receiving this honor was that I get to write a speech and perform it in front of 500 people. Then again, I guess it is a good opportunity for me to get a few words out without being interrupted; something that we all know doesn't often happen in a class that is infamous for being opinionated and loud. And I know we aren't perfect, but our class is also

notorious for its drive. Well, okay maybe senior year we were better known for our LACK of motivation but overall we are OBSESSED with the idea of making something of ourselves.

Hardly a day went by when I did not over hear discussions of ACT scores or what positions offered the highest salary coming out of college. I'll admit, I usually played a major role in these debates and it wasn't until very recently that I realized the error of my ways. I was putting the emphasis on the wrong things. I truly believed that success was all about the numbers. I thought it could only be measured by how many cars you have, or how many houses you have, or how much money you make in a year but, I was missing the point. I couldn't see the fact that these superficial things are not what really matter. Don't get me wrong, those things are all great but they shouldn't be our main priorities. That is what I hope my classmates can take from this speech. I want all of you to see that happiness does not go hand in hand with money, fame or prestige. Focus your attention on doing what you really want rather than forcing yourself into something you don't enjoy. Our society has a perverted idea of what makes a person successful. Do not give in to this falsehood. Let yourself be guided by your heart, not by your wallet.

George Burns really said it best when he stated, "it is better to be a failure at something you love than to be a success at something you hate." Honestly, I'd be lucky to end up half as happy with my future career as the teachers at St. Pete's are with theirs. In my eyes, the award for most likely to come back and teach at St. Pete's is synonymous with the award for most likely to succeed. The teachers come in here everyday with the opportunity to make a vital

difference in the lives of their students and in the case of Mr. Henrich, the chance to teach the most important and meaningful class that you'll ever take. I hate to disagree with someone as wise and inspired as the one and only Puff Daddy, but really, it's NOT all about the Benjamins. The key to success is realizing that money cannot buy happiness.