

Thank you so much for that kind introduction! It is wonderful to be with you for this special occasion!

I should admit at the outset that this is only the second graduation speech I have delivered, and before today, I have mostly just been in your shoes, sitting in the crowd.

I will try and remember the lesson I learned at my own graduation: I hope she's done soon! But I do want to share a few pieces of good advice I've gotten through the years, I hope that it can help you as much as it has helped me.

The first piece of advice is an old saying that I heard a long time ago and that you probably

have heard before: If you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life. To me, that means that we should all find work that we are passionate about and that makes us happy. I've been lucky in my life, because I've been able to do this in several ways, in all of the jobs that I've had.

For the last decade, I have worked as a yearbook sales representative. I get to work with high school and middle school students and teachers, helping them get their yearbooks printed. Ever since middle school, I loved everything about yearbook. Something about the ability to capture and record the moments and memories that were happening around me was always interesting to me. The **camaraderie**

and **spirit** of the yearbook team, working together to create a project that didn't really reveal itself until the end of the year was very rewarding.

I also got to be a journalist and graphic designer all at the same time. So, when I got the opportunity to work on yearbook and earn a paycheck, I jumped at the chance. The job wasn't easy, there were lots of deadlines and lots of challenges, but I loved it-- at the end of each day, I was helping students find their passion for writing, photography, and design. I always felt like my yearbook job was the best ever, and something that would keep me happy for a long time.

Of course, there are always new things around every corner, and I discovered a new passion for public service. After I moved back to Washington from college in New York, I started paying attention to our city government. I went to some meetings, and figured out that I could probably do that job of serving on City Council just as well.

Today, for me, working in city government means that I get to make decisions that literally shape and change how my own community looks, and I get to help people that are my neighbors. And unlike politics in Washington DC, in Mukilteo, we work together and we get good things done.

This year, we were able to preserve 140 acres of land in Japanese Gulch, a gulch that extends

from the other side of Boeing down to our waterfront. It's a big accomplishment, that we never imagined we could get done just seven years after we first started discussing the preservation of the gulch. I love that I got to be a part of that.

I also love going to work every day- I work with amazing people who serve our Mukilteo residents and visitors very well and with dedication. I'm so honored to work alongside of them.

So take it from me, do what you love. It might take some time to find your way there—I did work in another job early in my career before I found my way into the yearbook printing industry, but I eventually did find my way there,

and discovered my interest in local government along the way.

Every part of that journey was worth it, to be where I am now!

My second piece of advice is to remember where you came from. Each one of you has a unique story, and you've had to work hard to get here today. I'm sure some of the people that supported you along the way are here in the audience, as well. Those experiences that you've had, and that those family, friends and supporters have shared with you, will keep you **grounded and keep you humble**. You should remember your own story, and value that it's all part of what brought you here today.

For me, part of my story is what my parents taught me as I grew up in the Mukilteo area.

I learned about hard work from my parents.

When I was growing up, they both worked at a local cabinet shop. They worked hard to save up money so my sister and I could go to college, something that neither of them got to do. They still live in that same house where we grew up, which is a good reminder of where we came from, and who we are.

I've learned even more from them in the last few years. That cabinet shop, open for over 80 years, closed last year, after several difficult years during the recession. My mom was laid off a few years earlier at age 58, and it took

time to learn to navigate the unemployment system, to find jobs she might be interested in and where she could be hired. It took her six months to find that first new job, and then she faced another job search a couple years after that. Today, she's still working very hard, on her feet all day, and doing what it takes, to **contribute** and **support** her family. She is an inspiring example to me.

When the shop closed last year and my dad started **his own journey** through unemployment, job hunting and resume building, I worried it would take just as long, and be a big hit to both of them. He's a hard worker, I knew that much, and I rediscovered something I first learned as a young kid- **my dad is very**

resourceful! He was on the phone all day after the shop closure, and had several good leads and job offers within a week. He's definitely landed on his feet and is still doing what he loves, at a cabinet shop in Lynnwood.

My sister and I took those lessons to heart—the ones they taught us as young kids, and what we continue to learn from them today—and we have both done our best to work hard at what we do, and to try and use the opportunities we've had to help others. Today, my sister Anne is a second grade teacher, and every time I get a chance to visit her classroom and see her with her students, I am so grateful that we had such great parents who loved us and helped us succeed. Anne dedicates her time to

her second grade students—it's not uncommon for her to go to a t-ball game to watch one of her kids, or attend a celebration of other achievements of her current and former students. She works hard for those kids and ensures she encourages them to succeed. I know an important driver for her is the great example—and the support—that we both received from our parents.

Today you are taking the next step toward a new phase in your life. But, no matter how far you go in life, always remember **the people and experiences** that got you there.

My third tip is to think about life as a journey of constant self-improvement. I think it can be tempting at graduation to feel like you're finally done, and that the journey is over. But I've seen in my own life that learning and improving yourself never ends.

Almost ten years after I graduated from college, I decided to go back to school and get my master's degree in city planning. I was a city councilmember, so it fit my interests, but I wasn't sure exactly how it would fit into my future. I just hoped I would figure that part out along the way.

It was the best decision I made. I use those skills and lessons every day. So, I encourage you to keep your options open and always be

ready to learn and grow. You took a big step towards doing that in coming to the ITT program, and enrolling here, so it's something you know how to do—just don't forget that interest in learning and improving!

This is also something I remind our staff at City Hall to think about. Just because we've always done something the same way, doesn't mean it's the best way to do things. People expect government to continuously improve, and that is what I remind my staff, and what I seek to do as Mayor.

You are preparing to enter fields that are **rapidly changing**, so remember to practice this

skill of continuous improvement in your work, and in your own life.

Learn a new skill, try a new hobby, make a new friend. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow.”

In those moments when you first try something beyond your abilities, it can be challenging. But, if you seek out those opportunities and try new things, you will be better for it. You will keep growing and improving.

Now I have to insert a tiny bit of my bias in here, and ask for your help. It’s about a subject that is very relevant to where you’re all heading, and something that has been important to me in my journey towards my new job as Mayor of

Mukilteo. You've just completed training, and you're stepping forward into new workplaces, careers and opportunities. You'll join companies and have a chance to share your skills and your viewpoints, and to contribute to these companies. You'll sit at new tables, join a new team as part of workforce, and have new opportunities.

I believe that we need more empowered, strong women in science and technology. I need your help to make that happen—and all of us here are in a position to help.

Nationally, we know that women make on average, less than 80 cents for every dollar a man earns, for doing the same work. This isn't

fair, but it's also not good because it means our economy isn't as **strong** and **competitive** as it could be.

So if you are a woman, I need you to be brave and strong and let your voice be heard. Mentor and encourage the women and girls around you, help them along, and to show them that your path is a viable and rewarding one for them, too.

I am proud to be the first woman to be elected Mayor of Mukilteo. But I have to be honest with you, in the beginning it felt like there were more naysayers than there were supporters. But I didn't let that get me down, I worked to convince my community that I was the best

person for the job, and when the votes were counted, they agreed. It was very important that I had mentors and supporters along the way who encouraged me to stick it out, and to work to prove that I could do this job.

All of us can be those voices of support and encouragement for others.

If you are a man, I need your help too. It's not your fault that the economy is unfair to women, but for the sake of your wife, sister, mother, and for all our sakes, we need to make sure that everyone is treated **fairly**. Encourage the women around you to stand strong and fight for what they deserve. And in professional settings, do your part to make sure that everyone has a voice in the workplace. Studies show that

women too often let their voices stay quiet, so **do your part** to encourage everyone to contribute and speak up. It will make you, your company, and all of us more successful in the long run.

Also remember that having a voice also doesn't just mean words. Having a voice includes being respected, having your opinion be valued, and contributing to whatever team you're on. I think that's important for everyone to remember.

My final piece of advice is to get involved in your community. I wouldn't be doing my job as mayor if I didn't remind you to do that! (and, yes- we're on the final piece, which means I'm almost done!)

I have a little story about something that drove me to public service, and when I learned that it was important to be involved in the community- and that being involved can lead to true change.

When I was growing up, a big housing project was planned for the giant forest behind our house. My parents were worried that it would destroy the beautiful stream with salmon and the special marshes and bogs that were there. So they got involved and spoke out. It took them a lot of time, and was a challenging process to navigate—but it was part of their values system, and important to them. So, they did it- they dragged me and my sister to public

meetings, where we sat in the back and played games while they testified about these important streams and wetlands. Their actions led to real change.

Thanks to my mom and dad, and others like them, they saved those bogs and protected those streams. If you ever drive through the Waterford Park or Discovery Crest neighborhoods in Mukilteo, you'll see the bogs and wetlands that are preserved because of my parents.

They took a risk to give back to their community, and made a difference.

You all are here because other people have helped you along the way. Maybe your parents, a supportive teacher, or a friend that

encouraged you to sign up for this program. Our lives are all enriched by the people that help us find our path. So, I hope you will pay it forward. Make sure you are giving back to the community around you, to leave it a **little better off** for the next person.

Alright! I think that's enough advice for now. Today is also about celebrating! You have finished something big, and you deserve to enjoy it. As mayor, I am glad to know that our great aerospace and technology companies in Mukilteo have some fresh new talent. We need your skills and your energy to keep our city growing. So have some fun, celebrate, but remember, we are counting on you!

Ensure you have a voice, help others find their voice, do what you love, seek to always improve, and give back to your community!
Congratulations!