

Choose to Be Extraordinary

Good Evening everyone—faculty, families, friends, and of course, the graduating class of 2025.

Today marks the end of one chapter and the start of something entirely new. And as I look out at all of you—my classmates, my friends—I don't just see caps and gowns or finished exams and diplomas. I see potential. Not the kind you're born with, but the kind you create. The kind you choose to step into.

Because that's what I want to talk about tonight: choices.

The average adult makes approximately 35,000 decisions a day. Some are small—what to wear, (well that is not so small for me) what to eat, whether to hit snooze one more time. Others feel a lot bigger—where we want to go, who we want to become, what kind of life we want to live.

But one of the most powerful choices we can ever make is this: Choose to be extraordinary, a phrase coined by High Point University. This has stuck with me not as a slogan, but as a challenge in every aspect of life.

Not perfect. Not the best. Not someone else's version of success. But extraordinary—on our own terms. That means showing up even when you'd rather hide. It means being kind when it's easier to be silent. It means trying again after you fail. It means believing in yourself when it's honestly easier not to. It means taking chances even when they are not comfortable.

We've all been through things—stress, doubt, maybe some really tough days. But here we are. We got through it. We grew. We learned. And along the way, we realized something important: being average is easy. But choosing to be extraordinary? That takes effort. That takes heart. That takes guts. And these are qualities that I've seen in everyone of my classmates up on this stage.

And here's something I've learned: being extraordinary isn't about one big, life-changing moment. It's actually all the little choices we make when no one's watching. The early morning workouts. The conversations where you listen instead of speak. The moments you decide to keep going when quitting feels easier. The kindness you show when no one is looking and the gratitude you express.

As we leave this place and head into whatever comes next—college, work, travel, something unknown—we take with us this power: the power to choose. To choose who we want to be. How we treat others. What kind of mark we want to leave on the world.

So I hope we choose wisely. I hope we choose to lead, even when it's scary. I hope we choose to care, even when it's hard. I hope we choose progress over perfection, and courage over comfort.

I hope we keep choosing—to grow, to challenge ourselves, to live with purpose.

Because the world needs more people who are willing to take a chance on themselves. It needs people like us. People who will choose to be extraordinary.

Congratulations, Class of 2025. Our stories are just getting started—and we get to write them, one choice at a time.

Thank you.