

## Convocation Speech

Good morning Bentley... we're here today to kick off the academic year and to recognize both the new members to our community, the kindergarteners in front of me and to acknowledge the seniors in the back who are less than a year away from the next phase of their lives.

I want to spend a few minutes today talking about a feeling that we all enjoy but somehow learn to ignore as we get older. The kindergarteners have it right; I've seen it when my youngest brother, also a kindergartener, Lucas plays at home. Aside from having fun learning, he is not afraid to be amazed by the world around him. The best example actually comes from when he was just under two years old. If any of you have spent any amount of time watching young kids, perhaps a brother or sister, you'll know what I'm talking about. For Lucas it was just like any other day, except this day he found his first super bouncy ball. Now it is tough to know exactly what was going through his head, he only knew a few words at the time, Mom, Dad, ball, Audi TT, wrx, (The men in my family are a bit into cars) so I had to infer a bit, however it was clear that this might have been just about the most exciting and amazing thing he had ever witnessed in his entire life. He was jumping around excited, trying to catch the ball while hardly being able to run; it was a great deal of fun to watch. MORE And it didn't have to be a super bouncy ball to get him excited either, he had the same reaction when he figured out that he could roll matchbox cars down a xylophone and make a fun series of noises.

Somehow as we get older we decide that being amazed is somehow uncool or makes us seem stupid when in fact the opposite is true. It's an easy mistake to make, if you were to see me standing in a field looking at the moon like this (moon the moon) you might think that I had a few screws loose. In fact what I would be doing is confirming, to my amazement, that when the moon is on the horizon it looks smaller upside-down than it does right-side-up. MORE Guess

what, there's a fullish moon tonight and you can try it at about 7 pm when the moon is about to set. If people laugh at you then you'll further understand part of the reason that we train ourselves out of amazement and tend to stick to the comparative lameness of socially acceptable astonishment such as movie special effects; we even get too cool for magic tricks.

Being amazed isn't essential to life, many people go through life having lost that feeling forever, however if you can bring a sense of amazement back into your life, trust me it will be so much more fun and fulfilling. My proposal to all of you, over the course of this year, is to allow yourself to be amazed, bring yourself back into the state of mind you had on the first day of kindergarten. For those of you in the front row this should be pretty easy. For those of you in the back row, it is going to take some work but it will be well worth it.

This isn't to say that I expect you to go home and throw bouncy balls around and fake amusement but rather to always be on the lookout for the amazing little details in your life that you might have missed before. Take the annoying little ant, for starters they can lift 11 times their weight, imagine me lifting a Honda civic over my head and there are so many other amazing things that people spend their whole lives studying ants. Or the cell phone, even if you don't know how they work, they are having a profound effect on the way our society operates. When I was at school, you could sit in the office sick waiting all day until one of your parents got home and checked the messages, if you were going to make plans with your friends, you actually had to make plans, not just text them later.

So whatever it is that gets you excited, allow yourself the freedom of being amazed, whether it's the shapes of clouds, the fact that Shakespeare, 500 years later, is still the standard for theatre or the fact that a 6,000 pound water hippo can run 30 mph on land. 30 MPH! Capture that emotion every chance you get and not only will you say goodbye to boredom forever but you'll be smarter and happier for it.