Father’s Graduation Letter to His Daughter

Cynthia, first of all, congratulations on completing your high school education! I have been impressed with the determination, drive and hard work you have demonstrated these past four years. You are graduating with a 4.0 while at the same time participating in soccer, golf, basketball, and softball as well as the other various clubs and organizations. All the while, you've been faithful to the church! You've missed practices and left games early to get to worship and Bible study. Ball camps were skipped so you could go on mission trips or youth rallies. Your demonstration of priorities has meant more to me than any of the awards you've received over the past four years!

I've been blessed by having the opportunity to watch you grow from an incredibly cute small child into a beautiful young woman. Only yesterday you were a short, bouncy, inquisitive little girl and Friday you will be graduating high school and heading off to college. Though it may seem to you that it's taken forever to reach this point, it happened all too quickly for me. I'll admit that it saddens me to see you start the rest of your life, however it cannot compare to how happy and proud that I know you are so well prepared and dedicated to your dreams. Never lose sight of those dreams and never compromise anything to reach them.

Having said that, I encourage you to remember that life is made up of a lot of small journeys and you want to strive to make them as enjoyable, interesting and rewarding as possible. When you embark on a journey you never know what will happen along the way and where it will end up, which, at least to me, is incredibly fascinating. Regardless of the path you choose I know you'll be fine. But try to pursue something you really want to do although it is not always easy to know what that is. One piece of advice: never let money be the primary motivator for what you decide to do. Success is not measured by your job, your education, how much money you have or what kind of car you drive. Success is determined by who you are and how you lead your life.

I could spend a lot of time providing advice, but I'm sure you'll figure it out along the way, which is the way life is. But I'll share a few things that I have found of great help and perhaps could have done more of during certain parts of my life:

- Treat all people with respect and be nice to everyone — no exceptions.

- Always maintain the integrity of your personal character — it defines who you are.

- Have lots of good friends — they'll see you through some hard times.

- Don't expect too much from others — but expect a lot from yourself.

- Do what is right even if it's difficult -- it is always tempting to take the path of least resistance.

- Don't worry about the past or things you cannot affect — it only makes you miserable.

- Never criticize and complain — it doesn't require skills, intelligence or experience.

- You have more power and abilities than you think — yes, you can move mountains.

- Do more than expected at work and at home — don't expect pats on the back. Rewards will come.

- Never be afraid to tell the truth even if it is bad news — hiding problems only makes it worse.

- Be an independent thinker and make up your own mind — lead, don't follow.

- All relationships require lots of work from both parties — mutual trust and respect is the key.

- Stay healthy — don't put things in your body or do things to it that are potentially harmful.

- And remember: life is too important to be taken seriously.

You are ready! Whenever I sit and wonder if we've done a good job of raising you, all I have to do is look at the young lady you've become. If we had messed it up too badly, there is no way you would be as intelligent, thoughtful, creative, funny, and loving as you are. I don't tell you this anywhere near enough, but I'm really proud of you. I absolutely adore the woman you've have grown into. I love you so very much, and that is why Friday will be one of the best days of my life, and also one of the toughest. It's one of the best because you are now ready to get out there and take on the world and I know you can do it. But it's one of the toughest because I am going to miss you terribly when you go away to college. So, again, congratulations and I love you!

For His Cause,

Daddy