

2019 Bexley High School Commencement Address
by Lexi Moore

When I was in fifth grade, my teacher gave the class an assignment to write letters to our future selves, creating a time capsule that we would open at the end of our senior year. Now, I'll admit, back then I didn't even know what year I was supposed to graduate, so when the words "Class of 2019" were projected onto her SmartBoard, two things distinctly came to mind: my unexplainable and ridiculous dislike for odd numbers, and the unfathomable feeling of how far away 2019 was. Back then, the thought of nearly doubling my current lifespan was unbelievable.

I've grown a lot since then. Obviously in height and stature, but most importantly, in character. From a young age I understood that, like characters who exist in their own books, we are the protagonists of our own stories. As we live our stories, we develop into dynamic thinkers, doers, risk-takers, go-getters, and we all have our own points of view. The only difference between us and fictional characters is that we are living, breathing people. We haven't just skipped over days or weeks or months with the turn of a page; we've experienced every second of every day of our existence.

Now, I know not all of our stories read the same way. I grew up on Broad Street, my best friend grew up on Brentwood, and several of my friends didn't even come to Bexley until our sophomore or junior years. Some of us have played sports, some of us have jobs, some of us have filled our entire schedules with music and theatre, and some of us fall into a crazy mix in between. No matter the path, though, all of us are right here, right now. It's 2019, and we're graduating high school.

When I was in fifth grade, I didn't know what to say to myself. I'm pretty sure I wrote about my crush and the egg drop challenge. Heck, I was ten—I probably rambled about anything that slightly entertained me (which, even now, is most things). Over the years, as that letter has sat in waiting, the little girl who wrote it has been through a lot. Since then, her parents separated, she grew apart from some of her closest friends, she gave up her dog, and she lost her grandpa, but those were some of the events that made her stronger. She also sang in front of people for the first time and changed her life by vowing to do it every day, she discovered her love of helping people, she built meaningful relationships with her teachers, learned how to see the good in every single person no matter the circumstance, and those are the things that make her who she is.

You see, I didn't know who I was when I was in fifth grade. I didn't know who I would become when I barely even understood the concept of eight years. From our first day of school to now, we've all experienced countless events that have shaped us into who we are. I've always believed that the most interesting and enthralling stories contained the most intricate, captivating character development; the kind of character development that feeds the center of your soul and helps you understand yourself even better than you did before. Every single one of us has that kind of story. Though many of us will say goodbye to some of our characters, we will continue to write more chapters for the rest of our lives. I can confidently say that I am awestruck with the unfathomable concept of living and continuing to grow as a person until possibly eighty-years-old. Cars could fly, hover-boards might actually hover, and every sci-fi thriller out there might be just a little bit more true. I do know a few things for sure: I will still love helping people, I will

still love making music with the people around me, and I will always learn new things every single day.

In the weeks since I first wrote the words I've spoken to you today, I've had the pleasure of reading the letters I wrote to myself all those years ago. Though most of them talked about my crush and my very important fifth grade drama, I wrote something that has been on my mind since the moment I read it. I wrote, "Anyways, everyone is different, and that's what I like about the world. I like how I am unique in my own way and no one can change that or take it away from me. I can lick my elbow, and I think I am the only one in the school that can do it! Can you still lick your elbow? I am guessing yes but that could've changed. You never know what will happen until it happens!"

As our time in high school ends, all of us are beginning new chapters in our stories—new chapters full of excitement and contentment. No matter what occurs in the future, no one can change who we are. I am still the quirky little fifth grader I used to be, but after all these years, I have become so much more than that. So have all of you, and we have years ahead of us to keep writing our own history and discover new things about ourselves. Every page going forward is a new chance to let ourselves grow and develop into unique human beings that, when we tell our stories, everyone will come to listen. Thank you.