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- Congratulations graduates and thank you for allowing me to be part of your celebration today. Earning a degree is a huge accomplishment at any time, that's especially true given the year we've just experienced. So, I really hope you take time to enjoy the day and take in all those congratulations from your friends and your family, because today, today is yours.

Now there are two things I would like to share with you today, and both are about the journey that you've already started. A few years ago, I attended convocation at Acadia as a very proud parent. In fact, two of my children are Acadia grads. It was here that they gained the knowledge, the skills and the friendships that set them on a lifelong path to success. But they're both on paths today that I'm sure they could never have imagined on that convocation day.

My community development grad is off to law school in the fall. And my history major grad is pursuing agricultural business. Who would have thought? Well, certainly not them and that brings me to my first point.

Not every step along the way can be planned. The future will come with twists and turns and the plans you make today can easily be derailed. We've certainly learned that in this past year. So be ready for that. Be ready to seize those new opportunities even if they don't fit in your original plan. And remember that every time you say yes to something new or something different, you're on your way.

You might end up in a place you didn't expect. And that just might be the place where you belong. As you take those brave steps forward, I also hope you'll remember my second point, to never forget the important lessons you learned here at Acadia.

I'm not talking about the ones that found their way into your lecture notes. I'm talking about the ones that found their way into your heart. I'm talking about the importance of giving, of finding creating community, of making a difference when and where you can.

I'm here today because I spent a great part of my life doing those things. But let's be clear, the work that I've done including giving back to communities like the one here at Acadia, hasn't been fueled entirely by altruism. The simple fact is when I've committed myself to serving communities I care about, I've always gained so much more than I've given.

So, every time you thank someone for their help, every time you share your wins, no matter how small, every time you shut down that inner voice that tries to tell you you're too young, you're too inexperienced. Every time you act with kindness and intention, the world takes notice. Opportunities appear, and you, you're on your way to making the world a better place.

So, graduates, thank you again for the opportunity to join you today. Congratulations again, enjoy your day. Enjoy your journey.