

I AM VERY GLAD TO BE HERE TO SHARE WITH YOU THIS HAPPY OCCASION. AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE TEACHERS OF NEW YORK CITY, AS PRESIDENT OF THE UFT, I WANT TO ASSURE YOU THAT WE TEACHERS ARE VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN THE EDUCATION AND THE WELFARE OF EVERY PUPIL, AND THIS INCLUDES EVERY ONE OF YOU BOYS AND GIRLS SITTING HERE IN FRONT OF ME.

WE TEACHERS PUT UP A HARD CAMPAIGN TO GET MORE MONEY FROM THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE BETTER SCHOOLS. AND WE WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT THE TEACHERS DO THIS EXTRA WORK FOR YOU AS WELL AS FOR THEMSELVES. WE WANT SMALLER CLASSES, FOR YOUR BENEFIT AS WELL AS FOR OURS. WE WANT BETTER TEXTBOOKS, SO THAT WE CAN DO A BETTER JOB OF TEACHING YOU. WE WANT BETTER SCHOOL BUILDINGS - NEW, CLEAN, AND BEAUTIFUL - SO THAT YOU AND WE CAN ENJOY WORKING IN THEM.

IT IS AN EXTRA PLEASURE FOR ME TO BE HERE AS YOUR GRADUATION SPEAKER BECAUSE IT GIVES ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO PAY MY DEEP RESPECT TO YOUR PRINCIPAL, DR. GOTTLIEB, A DEAR FRIEND OF MINE FOR MANY YEARS, AND TO YOUR FINE, DEVOTED TEACHERS, MANY OF WHOM I KNOW PERSONALLY.

I WAS WALKING DOWN THE STREET THE OTHER DAY, AND I OVERHEARD A CONVERSATION -- A BOY WAS SAYING TO HIS FRIEND, "WELL, I'M GLAD I FINALLY GOT OUT OF SCHOOL -- EDUCATION IS A WASTE OF TIME, IT'S FOR THE BIRDS." WHAT HE DIDN'T REALIZE WAS THAT AT THAT VERY MOMENT, WHILE HE WAS TALKING AGAINST EDUCATION, HE WAS BEING EDUCATED IN A WAY.

THIS YOUNG MAN, JAMES DAVIS, WAS GETTING INTO THE HABIT OF STANDING AROUND ON THE STREET CORNER DOING NOTHING; HE WAS LEARNING THE HABIT OF LAZINESS. WHAT DO YOU THINK WAS GOING TO HAPPEN TO HIM WHEN HE GREW UP AND WAS OLD ENOUGH TO BE MARRIED AND HAVE A FAMILY?

NOW LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT ANOTHER CHAP, SAM BROWN, WHO HAD TO QUIT SCHOOL AT AN EARLY AGE BECAUSE HE HAD TO HELP SUPPORT HIS FAMILY. HE GOT A JOB AS A MESSENGER BOY, AND AFTER WORKING HOURS HE ATTENDED A TRADE SCHOOL WHERE HE LEARNED HOW TO REPAIR AUTOS; HE WAS PLANNING TO BECOME AN AUTO MECHANIC. SAM WAS GETTING AN EDUCATION QUITE DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF JAMES.

HE WAS LEARNING HABITS OF INDUSTRIOUSNESS AND EFFORT, AT THE SAME TIME THAT HE WAS LEARNING HIS TRADE. YOU CAN BE SURE THAT HE IS GOING TO BE A RELIABLE HUSBAND AND FATHER WHEN HE GROWS UP.

SO LET'S GET THIS CLEAR: EDUCATION IS NOT ONLY WHAT TAKES PLACE WHILE YOU'RE SITTING IN A SOCIAL STUDIES CLASS OR A LANGUAGE ARTS CLASS; IT IS ALSO WHAT TAKES PLACE WHEN YOU LEARN TO USE YOUR HANDS AND BECOME SKILLED IN THE USE OF A HAMMER, A SAW OR SOME OTHER TOOL OR MACHINE, ^{IT IS} WHAT TAKES PLACE IN THE GYM, WHEN YOU DEVELOP YOUR BODY, AND WHEN YOU LEARN TEAM WORK AND COOPERATION WITH YOUR PALS.

EDUCATION IS WHAT TAKES PLACE IN YOUR HOME AT THE DINNER TABLE, WHEN YOUR FATHER MAKES A REMARK ABOUT HOW HE ACTED IN THE GROCERY STORE THAT HE OWNS; WHEN HE CORRECTED THE WRONG CHANGE THAT HE HAD GIVEN A CUSTOMER BY MISTAKE---AND YOU LEARN FROM HIM THAT IT IS GOOD TO BE HONEST AND TRUST-WORTHY. IT IS WHAT YOU LEARN IN CHURCH OR SYNAGOGUE WHEN THE PRIEST, OR MINISTER, OR RABBI PREACHES A SERMON THAT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER INSIDE OF YOU AND MAKES A BETTER PERSON OUT OF YOU.

OF COURSE, DURING THE NEXT FEW YEARS MOST OF YOUR EDUCATION WILL TAKE PLACE IN SCHOOL. IN THIS WORLD OF OURS IT IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE DIFFICULT FOR A MAN TO GET A GOOD JOB WITHOUT THE PROPER EDUCATION. I WAS JUST TALKING TO ONE OF MY FORMER STUDENTS THE OTHER DAY AND HE SAID TO ME: "MR. COGEN, I HAVE JUST SIGNED UP FOR THE AIR CORPS. YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE TEST THEY GAVE ME. I SURE COULD HAVE USED MATH AND ENGLISH. YOU KNOW, THE JOB I GET DEPENDS ON THE MARK I GET."

SO I URGE YOU TO STICK TO IT AS LONG AS YOU CAN. DO THE BEST YOU CAN IN YOUR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, AND THEN IN ACADEMIC OR VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL. IF YOU ARE ABLE, LOOK AHEAD TO COLLEGE; THERE ARE FREE COLLEGES,

AND THERE ARE ALSO MANY SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE TO YOUNG MEN AND GIRLS WHO ARE WILLING TO TRY HARD ENOUGH.

WHAT PART OF YOU IS AFFECTED BY ALL OF THIS BUSINESS OF EDUCATION? THE ANSWER IS, EVERY PART OF YOU. FOR EDUCATION TAKES PLACE NOT ONLY IN YOUR HEAD, AS WHEN YOU READ A BOOK; NOT ONLY IN YOUR HANDS, AS WHEN YOU WORK WITH A HAMMER OR A PAINT BRUSH. IT TAKES PLACE, SO TO SPEAK, ALSO IN YOUR HEART, WHEN YOU DEVELOP THAT ATTITUDE OF HONESTY THAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT, OR COURTESY, OR COOPERATION, OR COURAGE.

EDUCATION CAN MAKE A MAN OF COURAGE OUT OF YOU. USUALLY WE THINK OF A PERSON AS BEING BRAVE WHEN HE FACES SOME PHYSICAL DANGER, LIKE AN ATTACK BY A BULLY, WITHOUT FLINCHING. BUT THERE IS ALSO MORAL COURAGE. IN THIS SCHOOL I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT YOU HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED TO EXPRESS YOUR PERSONAL OPINIONS HONESTLY AND UNAFRAID, AND AS YOU GROW UP YOU WILL NEED TO MAKE USE OF THIS MORAL COURAGE AS WHEN A MAN STANDS UP FOR HIS RIGHTS AS A CITIZEN, AS FOR EXAMPLE, HIS RIGHT TO GET A JOB OR AN APARTMENT WITHOUT BEING ASKED HIS RACE (NEGRO OR WHITE); HIS RELIGION (CATHOLIC, JEWISH OR PROTESTANT), OR THE COUNTRY THAT HE CAME FROM.

WHAT IS THE BEST TIME IN YOUR LIFE FOR YOU TO BE INTERESTED IN EDUCATION?

THIS REMINDS ME OF THE WOMAN WHO ASKED A TEACHER, "HOW EARLY IN HIS LIFE SHOULD I BEGIN THE EDUCATION OF MY CHILD?" THE TEACHER SAID, "WHEN WILL YOUR CHILD BE BORN?" "BORN?" GASPED THE WOMAN. "WHY, HE IS ALREADY FIVE YEARS OLD!" "MY GOODNESS, WOMAN," CRIED THE TEACHER, "DON'T STAND HERE TALKING TO ME--HURRY HOME; ALREADY YOU HAVE LOST THE FIVE BEST YEARS." SO YOU SEE, IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY TO START, AND YOU NEVER STOP!

IT IS CLEAR, THEREFORE, THAT SINCE YOU ARE BEING EDUCATED ALL THE TIME, EVERYWHERE, IN SO MANY DIFFERENT WAYS, IT IS UP TO YOU TO CHOOSE CAREFULLY AND TO MAKE USE OF THOSE WAYS OF LEARNING THAT ARE BEST FOR YOU. AS

A RESULT, YOU WILL DEVELOP THE BEST THAT IS IN YOU; YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR
TEACHERS WILL BE PROUD OF YOU; AND YOU WILL BE A GOOD CITIZEN WHO WILL
HELP TO MAKE THIS GREAT COUNTRY OF OURS EVEN BETTER THAN IT IS TODAY.

GOOD LUCK TO YOU ON THIS GRADUATIONNDAY!.

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6/19/62