

Michelle Obama commencement speech

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kAsYHCs_K4s

Who are you going to be?

WHO are you gon na BE

And if you'll notice I'm not asking,

AND if you'll NO tice I'm NOT ASK ing

what are you going to do,

WHAT are you gon na DO

but who are you be.

but WHO are you gonna BE

I'm asking you about

I'm AS king you about

how you plan to live your life every day.

HOW you PLAN to LIVE your LIFE Every DAY

How are you going to respond,

HOW are you gonna re SPOND

when you don't get that job

when you DON'T get that JOB

you had your heart set on?

you had your HEART set ON

For all of you who are going to be teachers,

For ALL of you who are gonna be TEACHERS

what are you going to do

WHAT are you gonna DO

if the students in your class next year

if the STUDENTS in your CLASS next year

just don't respond to your lessons?

JUST DON'T RESPOND to your LESSONS

For all of you going into business,

For ALL of you GOing into BUSINESS

how will you react when your boss

HOW will you reACT when your BOSS

gives you a goal that feels way too high?

gives you a GOAL that FEELS way too HIGH

See, these are the moments

see THESE are the MOMENTS

that define us,

that define US

not the day you get the promotion,

NOT the DAY you get the promotion

not the day you win teacher of the year.

NOT the DAY you win TEACHER of the YEAR

But the times that force you to

but the TIMES that FORCE you to

claw, and scratch and fight

CLAW and SCRATCH and FIGHT

just to get through the day.

JUST to GET through the DAY

The moments when you get knocked down,

the MOMENTS when you get KNOCKED DOWN

and you're wondering whether it's even worth it

and you're WONdering WHEther its Even WORTH it

to get back up.

to get BACK UP

See those are the times

see THOSE are the TIMES

when you've got to ask yourself

when you gotta ASK your SELF

who am I going to be.

WHO am I gon na BE

And I want to be clear

and I wanna be CLEAR

This isn't just some vague platitude

this ISN'T just some VAGUE PLAtitude

about building character.

about BUILDING CHARACTER

In recent years,

in recent YEARS

we've actually been seeing a growing body of research

we've actually been seeing a growing body of research

that shows that skills like resilience

that shows that SKILLS like resilience

and conscientiousness

and CONSCIENTIOUSNESS
(CONSCIENTIOUSNESS)

can be just as important to your success

can be JUST as important to your SUCCESS

as your test scores or even IQ.

as your TEST SCORES or even your IQ

For instance, West Point cadets

For instance, WEST POINT CADETS

who score high on things like grit

who scored HIGH on things like GRIT

I and determination

and de^{TER}min^{ATION}

were more likely to complete basic training

were MORE LIkely to com^{LETE} Basic TRAIN^{ing}

than those who ranked high

than THOSE who ranked HIGH

on things like class rank,

on THINGS like class RANK

SAT scores and physical fitness.

S.A.T. SCORES AND PHYSICAL FIT^{ness}

So what we are seeing is that,

so WHAT we are SEE^{ing} is that

if you're willing to dig deep,

IF you're WILL^{ing} to DIG DEE^{EP}

if you're willing to pick yourself up

IF you're WILL^{ing} to PICK your self UP

when you fall,

when you FALL

if you're willing to work and work

if your WILL ing to WORK and WORK

until your weaknesses become your strengths,

until your WEAK nesses be COME your STRENGTHS

then you'll develop a set of skills

THEN you'll devel op a SET of SKILLS

that you can mold

that you can MOLD

and apply to any situation you encounter.

and ap PLY to Any SIT u A tion you en coun ter

Any job you might have

Any JOB you might H AVE

any crisis you might confront.

Any CRI sis you might con FRON T

But you have got to make that choice.

BUT you GOT ta MAKE that CHOICE

Who are you going to be?

WHO are you GON na BE

So graduates,
think about how this will apply
to your own lives in the future
as you move on.
You're gonna come across all kinds of people
from different places and
faiths and walks of life.
and you can choose to pass them by
without a word
or you can choose to reach out to them.
No matter who they are
or where they come from
or what ideas they might have
Embracing the diversity of experience
and opinion
that surrounds us

everywhere we go.

So I encourage you

Seek It Out.

don't just spend time

with people your own age.

You'd be amazed at the wisdom

they have to offer.

If you're a Democrat

Spend some time talking to a Republican.

And if you're a Republican

have a chat with a Democrat.

maybe you'll find some common ground

maybe you won't

But if you honestly engage

with an open mind and an open heart

I guarantee

you will learn something.

And goodness knows

we need more of that.

Because we know what happens

when we talk to people

who think like we do.

We just get more stuck in our ways.

You all can

You can get past all that.

You've got the freedom

of an open mind.

And thanks to today's technology

you're connected to each other

and to the world

like never before.

So you

you can either choose

to use those opportunities

to continue fighting the fights

that we've been locked in for decades

or you can choose

to reject those old divisions.

and embrace folks

with a different point of view

And if you do that

the latter

who knows where it might take you.

And let me just share a little secret

before I end.

As someone who has hired and managed

hundreds of young people

over the course of my career

The answers to those questions

believe me

are far more important

than you can ever imagine.

Whether it was during my time as a lawyer

as an administrator

as a university, a non-profit manager

even now as first lady,

I have never once asked someone

I was interviewing

to explain a test score

or a grade in a class

Never.

I have never

once

made a hire

just because someone went to an ivy league school

instead of a state school.

Never.

What I have looked for

is what kind of person you are.

are you a hard worker?

are you reliable?

are you open to other viewpoints?

have you stepped outside of your own self-interest

to serve others?

Again and again, I have seen

that those are the qualities

that I want on my team.

because those are the qualities

that move our businesses and schools

and our entire country forward.

And just understand this

those are the qualities

that you already embody.

They're the values you learned from your parents

from the communities you grew up in

They're the skills you developed here

at EKV. (Eastern Kentucky University)

As you worked so hard

to make it to this day.

And today

more than ever before

that's what the world needs.

We need more people like you

So after you've come this far

after all the ups and downs

I hope that it is no longer a question

of whether or not

you can make it in this world

but how and where

you're going to make your mark.