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Summary of Commencement
Address, Hunter College
June 17, 1954

No objective is more important to any human being than to gain the training to meet effectively the problems of his own life. For the man or woman who is graduating from college today, no asset could be greater than the accurate perception of what life requires, and the personal orientation which makes it possible to meet those requirements.

What does life at the present time require of the man or woman who would deal successfully with the realities of our time? Past generations of students, even those who graduated from Hunter, faced very different requirements from those of today. My mother's college class went back to a world which was responsive, admiring, anxious to receive the gifts of cultivation and grace which the pioneer young intellectual brought back to his or her home and community. My own class, after the first World War, were pretty certain that we had the solution to all problems and pretty cocky about the effects of our education. The war had been fought to make the world safe for democracy, and we were sure that we could take an active part in advancing the Golden Age.

No such pleasant prospect faces the graduate of today. I need not describe the international picture which looms like a shadow over the life of every young person. You are fully aware of its complexities, but helpless to contribute to their solution.

Closer at hand, however, you are faced with problems which are less obvious but no less real, and in many cases no less dangerous. It is to the analysis of these that my words are directed today.

In the first place, you are going back into communities where the qualities of the student are desperately needed. Whether your town is small or large, you will be faced by the necessity of taking part in its life in a constructive way. In the past, college graduates have been content to settle into their own homes or jobs, with very little concern for what went on around them. You cannot accept this quiet role, because unless our educated young people take responsibility in their communities, our American way of life will be destroyed. Whether your work will be in the field of politics, welfare, or the arts, you will not dare to remain passive.

In the second place, those of you who expect to marry within the near future - and I suppose that all of you do - will be faced with a number of knotty problems to the solution of which you will be called. It is clear that family living in our country no longer exists naturally, with large families growing up "like Topsy", and husband-wife relationships as a stable, constructive force. It is difficult to bring up children in our modern, mechanized world, and the exacting requirements of a family will test your intelligence and character more than you now believe possible.

Into this area you will be required to bring your intelligence, your imagination, your humor, and all the qualities of character which your life has so far contributed to you. There are many unsolved problems for educated men and women at the present time. You must learn now to contribute the maximum amount to your job and your family picture through finding the best possible life for yourself. For some women this will mean keeping on with your jobs or finding part-time professional work; for others it will mean keeping alive your intellectual interests and talents and using your wits to develop as a person under the exacting circumstances of full-time family living. Most important of all, you must understand the importance of your role, and remember that for a married woman her family and husband come first.

For young men, the new relationship between husbands and wives, which has developed since the last war, makes a completely new life possible. You who have been educated at Hunter know that there is no greater happiness than friendship between the sexes which is based on common interests and ideals. By creating a partnership when you are married, and by sharing in the responsibilities of the home and of the children, you will have the richest possible rewards.

Finally and most important, your world will require of you an understanding of your own personality and abilities.

This is perhaps the most difficult task of all at the present time. A complex world offers many potential bypaths and temptations - temptations in the old fashioned sense of the word. Current differences in ethical beliefs, current lacks of strong conviction and faith, make the problem of individual adjustment a difficult one. You have an urgent responsibility to use all the resources of your time to make your peace with these problems and to establish an ethical conviction and a clarity of self-direction which will make you able to play your part effectively in the contemporary world.

There is a great deal of talk these days about the materialistic point of view of the younger generation, and their low moral standards. Actually the materialistic generation is mine, which fell for the new psychology and the new sex freedoms, which were rife after the first world war. It was our faint-heartedness and self-seeking that ruined the opportunity to build a lasting peace which may not come again for many years. We are responsible for the broken homes, the streamlined families, the "permissive" philosophy, the competitive world which have caused many of your problems.

This fact makes it essential for you to be tireless in the search for truth. Your education is inadequate unless it provides you with endless opportunities to explore, to discuss, and to find solutions for the problems some of which are universal for your age, but others of which you have inherited. You have both assets and liabilities on your search. You have few illusions or prejudices.

On the other hand, you have so many points of view and so much information at your disposal that it may be easy for you to end up with a relativist point of view which will be little comfort to you when you most need help, and will provide little direction for your life.

The source of your strength on all these counts is within yourself. The material for a real education in the deepest sense of the word lies around you; but the only person who can make that material come to life is the student. Don't take anything for granted, and don't postpone establishing the habits of mind and of heart that will make it possible for your education truly to prepare you for the business of living.