

# The Best Advice From 2018's Commencement Speakers

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## Matt Czuchry, College of Charleston

You might've seen Matt Czuchry as Logan on *Gilmore Girls* or Cary on *The Good Wife*, but he showed up at his alma mater, the College of Charleston, as a *Hamilton* character, belting "My Shot" for the class of 2018. He also told the grads about his decision to become an actor and what he learned from taking a chance. "I became fearless and focused in the present moment, focused on the pursuit rather than the unknown," he said. "We have to accept the unknown challenges in our lives because they are the reality of our lives. Hardships are guaranteed for all of us. But they are not guaranteed to define us."

## Amal Clooney, Vanderbilt

All over the world, college students are leaving the campuses where they've spent some of their lives' most formative years and entering the real world — but not before getting some (hopefully) top-notch advice from their schools' graduation speakers. If they're lucky, they're even hearing some celebs' words of wisdom on preparing for life after college.

This year, plenty of notable public figures graced college campuses for commencement speeches, from actors to activists to business executives. And, thanks to Youtube, the rest of us can catch their speeches, too. Here are some of the most memorable pieces of advice given to new grads this year.

Human rights lawyer Amal Clooney called on Vanderbilt grads to make their mark on the world by standing up for what's right. "At a time when women all over the world face physical abuse, restrictions on their ability to work, own property, travel, and even having custody over their children, we need courage," she said. "At a time when the LGBT community and every continent struggles for equal rights, freedom from imprisonment and even death, we need courage. At a time when more journalists are in prison around the world than at any time in the last three decades, and even here at home the media is under attack from the White House, we need courage. And at a time when our politicians try to conflate the terms refugee and terrorist and make us fear one another, we need courage."

## Chadwick Boseman, Howard University

The *Black Panther* star visited his alma mater to encourage students to follow their passions and push through the tough times. "The struggles along the way are only meant to shape you for your purpose," he said. "Press on with pride and press on with purpose." He concluded by giving students the Wakanda salute, proclaiming "Howard Forever!"

## Oprah Winfrey, University of Southern California

You can always count on Oprah to deliver inspiring words. But first, she got real with the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism class. "Everything around us, including and in particular, the internet and social media, are now being used to erode trust in our institutions, interfere in our elections and wreak havoc on our infrastructure," she said. But then, in a remark that's much-needed amid Donald Trump's "fake news" rants, she added, "There really is a solution. Because you will become the new editorial gatekeepers to strike out deceit. You all are the ones who will keep those people in check."

## Tim Cook, Duke University

Apple's CEO returned to the place where he got his MBA to inspire the class of 2018. "Every individual has the tools, potential, and reach to build a better world. That makes this the best time to be alive," he said. "The world-class education you've received...gives you opportunities that few people have. You are uniquely qualified, and therefore uniquely responsible, to build a better way forward. That won't be easy. It will require great courage. But that courage will not only help you live your life to the fullest, it will empower you to transform the lives of others."