

# LIVE AN EXCITING LIFE!

A Commencement Speech

by  
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LIVE AN EXCITING LIFE!  
A Commencement Speech

John H. Moehle  
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From a Commencement speech at Boiceville, NY, June, 1962.

...My challenge to each of you in this class is simply, "Live an Exciting Life."

I do not mean, of course, an endless round of parties and entertainments. Neither do I mean living at such a pace you develop hypertension or risk a nervous breakdown. I mean a life that is the opposite of dull, monotonous routine. It's one of action, adventure, agitation, and emotion. To enjoy a really exciting life, however, you must lead a satisfying one. Thomas Huxley stated, "The secret of genius is to carry the spirit of childhood into maturity." Among these distinctive qualities of childhood are eagerness and wonder. No one could miss the opportunity for a satisfying life if he could only retain the rare ability of a child to be "everlastingly astonished."...

You members of this class have a flying start over many other graduates because you have been taught success is not automatic; that knowledge and performance are what count the most--not good intentions. The school system has tried to teach you to have backbone and standards. The school has tried to preach that firmness, fairness and consistency are better than indulgence or overindulgence....

What are some of the others like who are being graduated all over the country this week? Let me describe the worst type of blockhead. First, what does he look like? He's a sideburned, ducktailed, unwashed, leather jacketed jerk who travels with a group. At the same end of the scale, but in a higher income bracket--he's a well scrubbed, crew cutted smartly dressed, spineless creep who has spent the last weeks in College Admission offices with his dear mother, who cannot understand why George can't get into good old Haverstraw. Let's look at the academic competence of this composite personality.

First, he'll settle for a superficial familiarity with, and understanding of, most subject matter.

He has a limited capacity for fundamental thinking.

He lacks the ability to reach a viewpoint and then stick to it....

He has a terrifying lack of knowledge about the structure and history of his own government.

He has no idea our government is a republic--not a democracy.

He resents the discipline necessary to toe the line.

He has a compulsive tendency to defend blindly what he has been socially conditioned to believe.

He hasn't developed strong convictions. If he has some--he doesn't appear to have the guts to fight for them. He's too wrapped up in himself....

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---