

Prepare your ears to constantly hear the word choice, sorry in advance.

The concept and wonders of choice, is a topic that has been stuck to my mind since 2020 for a multitude of reasons. Maybe it's because of some of the choices we witnessed at home, or the choice that put us at home in the first place. Maybe it was my personal choice to dig deeper in my faith and my recurring choice to sleep during virtual learning because class of 2023, let's be honest with ourselves the vast majority didn't take that year seriously. We made the choice to take it seriously enough that we could get the A, but not serious enough to be a hundred percent honest on those at home tests. Now teachers, that's a choice you made and can't be mad about because some students still made the choice to cheat on an in person test, that's a choice that cannot be avoided at any time. But those are the bigger choices we have made currently in our life and we still have a life to live. If the average person is expected to live 80 years we have barely made 20 percent of our choices in life. And most of those choices are the exact same between me, you and your neighbor. The choice to go to bed regardless of the time that's your own personal choice, that fearful realization that you initially stayed up until about 12 scrolling on whatever app or playing whatever game, fill in the blank it's your choice. Then making the choice to accept that your body has dismissed auto-pilot and you need to make the choice of whether you get out of bed or throw your phone at the wall in hopes it gets the message to never go off again and the other choice of the way you get out of bed. If I were to take a guess at the amount of choices we make simply within the first hour of taking our first morning breath I would say it's in the thousands. Because a simple mindless task that we label as routine is simply our mind's collection of choices that it has conditioned itself to get used to. Well, dear class of 2023 get ready for new choices because depending on what choice you have made for post cap throw, it will drastically alter your current choices. Congratulations, new choices have been unlocked.

Listen friends, the choices we made in high school, depending on what they were, may or may not follow us for the rest of our lives. But know that the simple fact that all your decisions up until now have led to such a success, imagine the other choices you can make that can break boundaries and form new beginnings. Even if you didn't start making great choices in high school you can make them now. I have witnessed some of my peers make the choice to start their own business selling bonnets and display their wildly creative mind through the form of art. I have seen my peers form connections with each other through the choice of creating a union with this mass ocean of phenomenal success stories. And to brag a little my most proud choice beside examining and furthering my faith was to publish my first book, and then make the choice to publish another one this coming december because those choices are what matter to me. Those are the choices people will remember you for. Don't allow your pick of friends and chosen lifestyle over shadow that if you really want for yourself, because with the talent of the class of 2023, you could easily invest in whatever your vision of success entails, pay the right people and still end up with more than you think you lost.

Our choices are independent and the steps that other people decide to take whether they harm us or stay in our memory, don't define us. We all had our share of fear. Many times I didn't want to enter school because my biggest fear was an empty hallway, and I began to fear hearing the

intercom because I just expected something to happen. Other times, as I'm sure everyone felt this past year was simply not wanting to put in the effort because school simply felt burdensome. If you're like me we didn't choose to have those fears but the choice of others left its footprint. Just as you are more than the steps of the other person, you are far beyond your failed attempts. Winning means you started last and drove yourself to the edge of breaking to get to that dream, that passion, that purpose. But I'm here to tell you that making the choice to be persistent and annoying will sometimes get you a little bit more than number one. Make the choice to live for your own purpose, agree to disagree and be willing to rub a couple people the wrong way because I tell you life's more fun when you enjoy feeling uncomfortable. Feeling okay with not being okay and visiting just how crazy your mind will go because the greatest painters were never sane that's why people like their work. Its depth and essence of abnormality is what makes it worth looking at.

So remember this. We, The class of 2023 haven't even done 20 percent of our choices yet, so let's promise to never regret our next 80.

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