

## Last Words to Graduates

I'm sure that at this stage I am merely preaching to the converted. What I'm about to say will be meaningless to those who still insist on cheating to get better grades or to those who are hard-working but who nevertheless perceive school as just a hurdle.

I am interested in reaching those who will one day feel sorry for those parents who pick up their children from private schools in seventy thousand dollar cars. You will never become one of them--- not because you will not be successful, but because you will see through the phoney veneer of elite schools and luxury cars.

I am interested in reaching those of you who will agree with my definition of happiness. Happiness today was being able to meet two responsibilities simultaneously. My son's school gave me a mini- ultimatum. Either I accompanied my volatile autistic son during their lunch time outing to a restaurant, or he was to stay home. If he stayed home, he would miss out on something enjoyable. He likes to walk, and he loves restaurants. Besides, we could not get a baby sitter, and if I stayed home with him, I would never have been able to correct your chemistry tests. Why the rush? Taking too long to mark tests just prolongs the anxiety, and also, since I expect you to complete work promptly, I expect the same of myself. After marking yesterday afternoon, I woke up at 3:35

AM, and with breakfast and the ride to work in between, I finished correcting them at about 11 o'clock. Then I got permission to take an extended lunch, walked with my son and his class to Nickel's, ate with them, and I came back to school to let some of you know how you did on your exam. He behaved beautifully, better than any of his classmates.

Happiness, of course, was also spotting pineapple weed on the way to Nickel's. Amazing ester molecules translate out of the buds of these relatives of the chamomile, and I also noticed some black



medic, whose symbiotic bacteria can almost magically transform useless diatomic nitrogen into important nitrates. I have faith that although you may some day forget how to fill out ICE charts, you will never forget that chemistry is always at your toes.