To the Indigenous Graduates

To the Indigenous grade 12s. This is the point in our lives we always thought of. The idea of graduating seemed so distant, even at the beginning of the year. Graduation is an exciting time. It may also be overwhelming. There are many emotions involved with this change, but it’s a huge accomplishment.

The journey has been an eventful one. Most of us started in grade 10, 2018. Sicko mode and Bodak yellow playing on the radios of our parent’s cars, before anyone had a license. Back when the school days were devoured by full schedules. I didn’t have a clue who more than half the grade 10’s were. I knew that my school life would be different when I arrived to the Comp; with all the new people, teachers, opportunities, sports, clubs etc. It wasn’t what I was used to, but change can be good.

Grade 11 is when things changed very drastically. About halfway through the year the coronavirus spread across the world. Online school was the new normal, and social distancing was regulated. We had to adapt to a new way of life while also experiencing arguably the most challenging year of high school. We made it through and here we are grade 12.

Some people have it easier than others. They have a quiet workspace and supportive friends and families. Some have many unfortunate things that happen to them; bad influences, a tough home life, an internal battle of some kind. I hear opinions all the time, “high school is easy.” “It’s the bear minimum to pass.” Graduating after going through all the challenges that aren’t particularly school related takes a great extent of willpower and courage. Before judging someone, one should be respectful and ask themself, “what are they going through that I don’t know?” it ties into the seven teachings.

The seven teachings are love, respect, humility, courage, wisdom, honesty, and truth. In my opinion, living by the seven teachings is all anyone needs to follow if they want to be a good person. Having those virtues are essential in living a moral and honest lifestyle. World peace could possibly be achieved if all seven were prioritized by everyone. I believe that is one of the most valuable lesson from my culture.

Everyone I know and myself talk about how going to school is so stressful and such a burden at times. The comp has made getting my education somewhat challenging, but I can’t complain. I have an amazing friend group that makes school exciting to come to. My teachers are all kind and supportive people who establish a relationship with every student. The support for Indigenous students from Mr. Richard, Mr.Walterson, Ms. Bercier and Ms. Whiteside is also super helpful. I am thankful for all the healthy relationships and the guidance I have at the school. I wouldn’t be as successful as I am without the push from the people around me. They believe in me and that made me believe in myself.

I would like to end with saying goodbye. Farewell to the teachers and staff who made it possible for us to graduate, who taught us the lessons we need, the ones that wanted so bad to see each and every one of us succeed. Farewell to each other; as we part ways and live our best lives. Don’t be sad because we’re leaving school, be happy because of the memories that came from it. Farewell, thank you, meegwetch.

Sincerely, Dezarae Meade