

The Headmaster has given me the opportunity to speak about anything on my mind, which is extremely trusting of him. My brothers might suggest he is being foolishly trusting. I am very thankful to Kerry for the opportunity.

I want to start by thanking my former student and soccer captain Jim Quagliaroli and his wife, Kim, for an extraordinary act of generosity. You boys may not yet recognize that the manner in which they have made this gift to the school is quite unusual.

Many years ago, at a year-end retreat organized by our former Head Tony Jarvis, I was treated to lunch with a wonderful congregational minister in Hartford. He said something that struck me as extremely wise: “There are two things you can do with your money, fall in love with it or give it away.” I am extremely grateful to and proud of Jim for giving his money away in such a wonderful way. I know there are colleagues past and present who deserve this honor more than I do, and I hope Jim will inspire similar acts of generosity among his fellow alums.

I need to offer thanks to my dear wife and daughters who have been an inspiration to me and have tolerated and supported the odd rhythms of my commitments to this great school.

I also want to offer thanks to some people who have recently died or whose health challenges prevent them from joining us today. First to Tony Jarvis for taking a chance on a clueless 23-year-old and giving me the opportunity to join this special community. Also to Steve Ward, who has always been my most influential mentor. Lastly, to Joe Kerner and Bill Chauncey, two great men who by their actions helped me to understand the essential values of RL over many years. I could easily fill the entire morning expressing my thanks to all of the colleagues who have made my experience special for almost 40 years.

If I thought this award was only about me, I think Kerry knows he wouldn't have succeeded in getting me up here this morning. I remember quite well the feeling I had when other beloved colleagues were similarly honored – a sense of joy that one of my colleagues was being thanked for the work we all do collectively as a faculty.

Many years ago, when I was still in my twenties, one of my closest college friends, himself a Bostonian, said to me somewhat randomly: “Do you know you aren't normal?” I certainly know I'm not normal, but I was slightly puzzled.

He explained that my job isn't normal – that liking and respecting all of your colleagues isn't a normal job setting. In the moments when I am able to step back from the pace of RL life and reflect, I am always enormously grateful for the good fortune I have had for decades working with the best group of colleagues I can imagine. I honestly believe there is no better group of co-workers anywhere, in any profession. This honor superficially has my name on it, but more profoundly, it honors the collective work that the amazing community of adults at RL does each and every day.

I recently heard a report on the radio regarding a study done in the UK on male happiness and the origins of that happiness. I've subsequently looked it up. This study found a focus specifically on the importance of the work experience in an evaluation of happiness for the great

majority of men. Among the important ingredients of a gratifying work environment were a sense of working with colleagues toward a goal that elicited pride; of having a diverse set of perspectives among colleagues; and having opportunities to communicate with those colleagues regularly. Of particular importance was being inspired by the work of colleagues.

For the older boys in the front of Hall who will be considering professional paths, I believe there is no better model of the type of work environment that will make you happy, and the type of colleagues who will make you proud of your work, than the men and women of Roxbury Latin and the work they do on your behalf.

Lastly, I want to channel the important message from a couple of recent speakers at this podium whose messages resonated in particularly profound ways with me.

Our graduation speaker last year was Ron Liebowitz, President of Brandeis University. His primary message was one of open-mindedness, empathy, and respect, noting his own experiences and the extent to which those qualities are being lost on college campuses. Given the cultural upheavals of the past several years, I've had many conversations with alums about their experience here relative to their experiences in college. A very common theme in their observations was that their college student bodies were far more segregated and siloed than the student body at RL. You boys are all expected to be leaders. One way in which you can affect an important change in the current American landscape is to avoid the Balkanization of our society that exists in too many corners of this nation. I hope that you will recognize our need for an American society that is less divided and model the values of respect, and openness to alternate views, on the populations you join beyond these walls.

One related thought, and a quote I love from Mark Twain: "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime."

Roxbury Latin has provided you with many travel opportunities, which I hope you will take advantage of fully. Relevant to the benefits of travel, I want to send a shout-out to three recent RL grads who hopped in a car for a month during the summer before beginning college and drove across the country. I believe this is an experience that will teach you lessons that can't be learned by reading books or sitting in classrooms. I hope that the natural curiosity that lives in RL boys will encourage a desire to know your country more deeply and intimately.

The second speaker I want to mention is the Stanford Freshman Dean, Julie Lythcott-Haims whose talk in September was among the best I can remember from this podium. Her experiences with struggling undergrads were important for RL boys to hear.

The details of her speech recalled many conversations I've had with RL boys over the years, but one of those conversations stands out. During the '90s, the list of my long-time advisees included a boy who was the acclaimed "most talented boy in the class." He followed great successes, both academic and athletic, to a certain college on the banks of the Charles coveted by many RL boys. While in college, he created a path to medical school. I remember vividly, when he was heading

to medical residency, a conversation that startled me. He was genuinely wracked by a surprising level of insecurity – especially surprising for a boy who had made certain types of success seem effortless to his peers.

His concern was what he perceived as a proscribed path that he was expected to follow. That his academic experiences paved the way to an inevitable career at a big, prestigious downtown hospital. His problem – what he saw as a real problem and a source of potential disappointment among his peers and teachers – was that he didn't want that path.

I remember feeling a sense of sadness that this old student – who had been a terrific boy and has become a wonderful man – felt he would be viewed as some sort of failure if he didn't follow a particular career path.

I have come to believe that nearly every RL boy feels this burden in some form. I sincerely hope that none of you will fall victim to a perceived set of external expectations. I hope you will have the strength of conviction to pursue a path that will allow you to live a life of purpose, fulfillment, and joy.

Before I finish, I need to admit that this honor creates in me a strange, full circle feeling that takes me back to my youth. When I was the age of the RL Sixties and Fifties, my friends and I were part of a particularly annoying, ill-behaved group of middle schoolers that was the bane of our teachers' existence. Moving to high school on the brink of 9th grade meant moving to my father's school. My father was the Vice Principal of our high school and was one of the most well-respected people in our small town. My brothers and I never quite lived up to his exceptional standard of character, and I certainly recognized that I could not be an embarrassment to him in his own school. It took all of my will power and discipline as an adolescent to keep my nose clean through high school. I'm pretty sure some of my friends thought my body had been occupied by some type of alien presence.

For a number of years, I have thought it risky, even unwise for a school to name anything – even a bench on the school grounds – for someone still working at the school. I promise that I will be on my best behavior during my final years at RL so I don't embarrass the people of our school, whom I see as beloved family members.

Thank you all for listening, and, more importantly, for making RL the source of so much joy for nearly 40 years.