

### **'I Wish You Bad Luck.'**

Now around the country today at colleges, high schools, middle schools, commencement speakers are standing before impatient graduates. And they are almost always saying the same things. They will say that today is a commencement exercise. 'It is a beginning, not an end. You should look forward.' And I think that is true enough, however, I think if you're going to look forward to figure out where you're going, it's good to know where you've been and to look back as well. And I think if you look back to your first afternoon here at Cardigan, perhaps you will recall that you were lonely. Perhaps you will recall that you were a little scared, a little anxious. And now look at you. You are surrounded by friends that you call brothers, and you are confident in facing the next step in your education.

It is worth trying to think why that is so. And when you do, I think you may appreciate that it was because of the support of your classmates in the classroom, on the athletic field and in the dorms. And as far as the confidence goes, I think you will appreciate that it is not because you succeeded at everything you did, but because with the help of your friends, you were not afraid to fail. And if you did fail, you got up and tried again. And if you failed again, you got up and tried again. And if you failed again, it might be time to think about doing something else. But it was not just success, but not being afraid to fail that brought you to this point.

Now the commencement speakers will typically also wish you good luck and extend good wishes to you. I will not do that, and I'll tell you why. From time to time in the years to come, I hope you will be treated unfairly, so that you will come to know the value of justice. I hope that you will suffer betrayal because that will teach you the importance of loyalty. Sorry to say, but I hope you will be lonely from time to time so that you don't take friends for granted. I wish you bad luck, again, from time to time so that you will be conscious of the role of chance in life and understand that your success is not completely deserved and that the failure of others is not completely deserved either. And when you lose, as you will from time to time, I hope every now and then, your opponent will gloat over your failure. It is a way for you to understand the importance of sportsmanship. I hope you'll be ignored so you know the importance of listening to others, and I hope you will have just enough pain to learn compassion. Whether I wish these things or not, they're going to happen. And whether you benefit from them or not will depend upon your ability to see the message in your misfortunes.