

Mr. Stedron's 2007 Commencement Speech

What a classic spring we've had this year: April showers, May flowers... rampant dress code violations.

And, sadly, what seems to have become a *new* rite of the season: School Lockdowns.

Littleton High School had its own lockdown on April 19th, and it was a necessary response, given the specific threat, and given the world we live in today. In the still-churning wake of [Virginia Tech](#), some students and staff were understandably anxious, even scared.

In short: *it was no fire drill.*

And while a host of thoughts raced through my mind that morning, one powerful concern drowned out all the others:

Just how long could I get stuck in here with these sophomores?

All we have for rations is a half-bottle of Turquoise PowerAde and two bags of Cool Ranch Doritos.

They're beginning to form alliances...

...And we're reading *Lord of the Flies*.

Class of [2020, [soon you will reach] the end of your own four-year "Lockdown." In mere [moments] you'll be free of the "fascist tyranny" of LHS; in a few months, your parental "reign of terror" will finally come to an end.

And there you'll stand, finally free to do whatever it is you want to do for the rest of your lives!!!

Unless you get locked down *again*, by something new:

Unless Bad Choices derail your dreams, like the 1.2 million high school graduates who *will* contract an STD this year. Or the 17,000 who will need treatment for drug or alcohol abuse. Or the 11,000 who will spend the rest of their lives in prison.

Unless Single-Mindedness *narrows* your perspective, like the estimated 30 million Americans who get all of their news from a *single* source. Or the 11% who say they never read. *Or the 4% who report having no contact with a member of a different race.*

Unless your own fears trap you within the most powerful Lockdown of all—those of our own creation:

I'm not good enough.

That's impossible.

Things like that don't happen to me.

Because it's this very same fear that the threatening caller used to lock us all down back in April—a fear intended to literally confine us within a defined space.

Never let your own fears confine, and thus, *define* you. Never get too comfortable within your *own* Lockdowns.

Because that's what happened in my classroom that day. After our usual productive, lively, bell-to-bell, state-standard-aligned class period ended... the students relaxed, texting friends, playing Hangman, watching videos.

It was *almost* as if there *weren't* any armed police officers searching for bombs right outside our classroom window.

Our prison--had somehow--become our palace.

Never get too comfortable in your own prisons.

Fortunately, it was all a hoax, and no one was hurt. Pray for those, in other places, who weren't so fortunate. And pray that the caller who threatened *us* in April someday escapes from his own, surely *hellish*, Lockdown.

As for you [2020, soon] *your* lockdown officially ends. Thanks to a hotly contested combination of genetic material, life experiences, dedicated teachers, parental influence, standardized tests, and the liberal media—you stand here today on the brink of one of American life's great moments of *pure liberation*.

The doors are about to swing wide open for you.

Go out and make a world where no one is locked down.

Curt Stedron
Littleton High School Graduation
May, 2007