

Yuqi Feng

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Graduation Speech of 2022

Good morning, fellow students, teachers, and members of the Clairbourn family. My name is Yuqi Feng and I have been at Clairbourn for three years now. I was assigned to work on this graduation speech a few weeks ago about persistence. The first thing I did was search up the definition on Google. I learned it meant: constant, determined, continuing in a course of action. With further research I found a great video on youtube by Professor Angela Lee Duckworth and her explanation of perseverance; she called it “Grit”. I agree with her idea that grit is an important element for a successful life, academically and personally.

What is Grit? Grit is never giving up and working towards a long-term goal. My long-term academic goal is to get into a good university and I believe my peers feel the same. Setting goals is easy, but it is challenging to do. Whenever I would fail a test or get a low grade on an assignment, I started to feel depressed. Which makes me more stressed So how can we push through these obstacles or failures that happen in our lives when we are trying to reach those goals? From the video, I learned another theory called “ Growth Mindset”. It's a belief that the ability to learn can be changed by effort and failure helps us learn. Thinking this way, made me realize that it's OK to fail and it's OK to stress because if we view failure as just part of learning we can keep

trying. Then it's easy to persevere through hardship and challenges on our way to reaching our goal.

I have had to overcome challenges in my life by persevering. I had a personal challenge at the beginning of the pandemic. Since it was online learning and my father was ill, my family chose to go back to China. Unfortunately, there is a 16-hour time difference between China and the US. Still, I had to attend online classes in California time just like my classmates. This was the biggest problem I've ever faced. I was exhausted during class because the morning in the USA was the middle of the night in China. During the first month of online classes, it was difficult to stay awake and I would doze off frequently. I felt very frustrated when I missed my class. I felt lucky my teachers understood and supported me. I also faced problems like not getting my school supplies from my teachers in time. I felt stressed out when I was staring at the screen while my classmates were reading their books. I had no choice but to watch my classmates working their labs while my supplies were on the way to me. Many times I thought about dropping out of school.

Then I realized that this current situation would not last forever and that I could learn from this experience. I learned to take one thing at a time and planned my schedule well. With this experience, my brain can adapt if I have to stay up late to study in the future. I realize that when I believe in myself I can lower my stress level. I can just get each day's work done, persevering through the challenge, and with that, I am a stronger person.

Another time in my life when I had to overcome a challenge was when I had to work on a research paper outside of school. I didn't believe that I could finish it because

I had never written such a long paper. I had a hard time just figuring out what question I should research and organizing the facts was also a problem. I still remember the time when I reread the entire chapter to look for a fact. I wanted to give up but I was encouraged to believe in myself and that I can overcome the obstacles I was facing. I finally finished the research paper about giant pandas. Moving forward, I learned that this is an important ability. After conquering the obstacles, I gained courage and know that I can persevere and not give up. So, when I have a research assignment, I am not afraid anymore.

As a graduate, all my experience at Clairbourn is a package I will bring with me for the rest of my life. My package includes the friendship, skills, and memories I gathered in my three years here. The memories of attending morning assembly in sixth grade. The memories of distance learning in seventh grade. The memories of my teachers and friends supporting me in eighth grade. I want to say thank you to all my teachers for being so supportive and caring. Thank you to all my friends and classmates for helping me in times of need. Last but not least, thank you to my mom and dad for all their unconditional love and support. Congratulations to the Class of 2022! I know you will all persevere and use your grit to tackle the challenges ahead! Thank you.