



Graduation Perspective All the World is a Stage

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I am really going to miss going to graduation this year. But obviously, it's not about me – it's about you all. Add it to the list of experiences you missed out on over the last couple of months. Don't let anyone tell you this isn't a big deal – it is. It sucks that you will miss it; if you're feeling that way, you should take some time to mourn.

I don't remember many details from my graduation – outside of being hooded and listening to the student address given by a good friend, I can't recall the details of the ceremony. What I do remember is how that day made me feel; kind of like a great movie, concert, or play. I know I can't go back and tell the 2001 Me something, but if I could, it might go something like this...with lyrics from musicals that make me feel like I did that day.

So much of me is made from what I've learned from you. You'll be with me like a handprint on my heart. –Wicked

Of course, you didn't do this alone, and you won't get through what's next alone. Remember the faces of your patients and teachers. Honor the sacrifices and love of your family and friends. And look to your left, look to your right – you have classmates who are now part of your family. Many of you will go your separate ways after today. You say you'll keep in touch, but there will never be enough time to do so in a day, a week, a month, years. You'll probably beat yourself up for missing out; you're doing a good enough job of that already. But it *will* be enough – when you need them, call, and they'll be there.

*Because of our traditions, we've kept our balance for many, many years.
–Fiddler on the Roof*

Whether it is in the reading of the Hippocratic Oath, hooding of graduates, or distributing the diplomas, the ceremony is steeped in tradition – like our profession. It's humbling to be welcomed into the company of those who came before us, honed our principles, and negotiated our contract with society. You've been studying and preparing for this your whole life. You've got this.

*It's alright, you want to fight, you've got a hunger. I was just like you
when I was younger. –Hamilton*

Despite all the tradition, things aren't perfect. Structural inequity, misaligned incentives, low-value care, moral injury – you feel that, right? Good. Don't forget how that makes you feel. When you witness mistreatment, microaggressions, or injustices – unfortunately they seem to be everywhere – it's your duty to speak up, brainstorm creative solutions, and identify opportunities to help patients and students. Find like-minded individuals, join teams whose goals align with yours, and help transform your local culture and our profession.

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