

**Leslie Roberts**  
**Algonquin College Address 2005**

2005 Grads, family and friends, faculty and staff of Algonquin, ladies and gentleman. It is truly a pleasure to be here and take a few minutes to remind all who have gathered here how much the students in front of us have achieved and it goes beyond academics.

To the Grads, I don't have to tell you how hard you have worked, in fact that's obvious to all of us here.

But being a few years older than you; just a few years older! I have had a few years to think about how much we develop in these all important College years. Not only have you learned a lot, hopefully you have developed that critical eye.. Which will become a tool you will use everyday, at work, in personal relationships, even in the search for your eventual life partner. Academia calls it "Critical Eye" and "I call it you gut feeling".

Never under estimate what your instinct telling you. As far as I am concerned your gut will never let you down. It's easy to take away what you learned and spew it out verbatim. But now it is the time when you take the knowledge and make it your own. Applying it to your career choice is what you set out to do. But just as important is the evolution of your psyche. Along with retaining key knowledge that you've applied on papers and exams, the mind's eye has been busy collecting life experience, knowledge shapes you, even school work that you have studied and applied to getting credits reveals itself in life choices. Armed with knowledge you can do anything.

If you allow me a few personal thoughts. I remember when I was in my mid thirties; I had just come out of my marriage and said to my father at 32, I'm finally beginning to get to it. TO GET, what life is all about.

And my father being older and sometimes wiser looked at me. And I'll never forget what he said "I'm glad you get it— because I am over 60 and I am still trying to figure it all out." Of course his message was, life is a work in progress and graduating from College or University is part of that progress.

I am so envious of what you all have in front of you. The excitement of career choice, typing those C-V's, the interview process, the butterflies that fill your stomachs as you begin your first real job.

Okay so it doesn't sound so exciting right now, but I want you to embrace it all, face your nerves, and aim high, truly believe in your abilities, and someone else will too.

I remember when I was the News Director at Global in Montreal, and I had stacks of tapes on my desk from reporters who wanted to work there, I would go through them and see good ones, accompanied by some impressive C-V's-- But when I

would meet them I'd be disappointed. There would be no passion, and passion is what life is all about,

I want you to remember this though. Face adversity and it becomes a challenge, and through challenge comes growth, though growth comes success, and ultimately that's what we're here for - To do the best we can.

Never settle because you have doubts. See doubt as your gut needing a challenge. Embrace those fears and they become a success, maybe not the first time but eventually you won't be afraid.

And you can apply this same theory to your life choices. Friends are only good friends when they add something to your life and vice versa. Chances are you will add and subtract from your group of friends for many years to come. That is normal and very healthy.

Same thing in the search for the perfect partner; If you settle in a relationship it will catch up to you. Everyone may tell you, you are perfect for each other: But only you know what your gut says. Listen to it!

And when faced with a challenge, take the ego out of it. You know if a fight, you are wrong, but pride and ego makes you stubborn. By admitting you are wrong you are being true to yourself, and no one can fault you for it.

Same thing applies when you don't know something, admit it, don't bluff your way through it. Those who know, will see right through you. They will have a lot more respect for you. Admit the truth. No one has the ability to know everything.

And finally, don't take anything for granted. You have been given an incredible opportunity to study at one of this countries finest Institutions. Don't waste what you have achieved.

I have to be honest; the real hard work is only beginning. But hard work is what life is all about. Don't wait for someone to come to you and say. OH you graduated, here's a job that pays one hundred thousand dollars. That will never happen. But you have the power to turn that degree into a much larger pay cheque if you go out and at get it. It may take a few attempts, but believe me; it will pay off, literally.

About 7 years ago I met with the former news director and global Toronto who took a look at my tape, and said I didn't have what it took to be a reporter in Canada's largest market. I can tell you 4 years later, under the next News Director they were calling me for a job: To anchor no less. But had I not taken the initial rejection as a challenge, I probably wouldn't be where I am today.

So Grads, The hard work begins now. You are allowed the occasional party, don't worry, but don't mess up this incredible opportunity this degree offers you, by not exploiting it. If you do, there will be a plenty of years ahead to enjoy the benefits, and share your success, and failures, as your parents are doing today.

In the shorter term, enjoy all the accolades today, you deserve them.

Congratulations, you should be very proud. Every one of us here today is very proud of all of you.

THANK YOU.