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## **For Lindsey. . .And All Other May Graduates**

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Congratulations!  
Today is your day.  
You're off to Great Places!  
You're off and away! --Dr. Seuss

In just a few short weeks, Lindsey, you and many other young adults will begin another chapter in life and may find some challenges that you never thought you would encounter. You are my niece and as you graduate from high school the end of this month, I will experience the same emotions as many adults who have had a hand in helping to raise a child, a mix of celebration and sadness. Life for you has never been easy, but you have been courageous thus far. You have made many difficult decisions in your life. You decided in the third grade to make a move and change schools, and again when you started high school. I realize that you are eighteen and see yourself as an adult ready to face the world, but when I think of you I see the small child who bravely carried on through your medical issues, tests and surgery. When I think of you I rarely see the eighteen year old about to embark on the world and her future.

High school has come to an end and your journey is truly about to begin. For many high school graduates this day may come with a mix of joy and uncertainty. As was so eloquently written in Dr. Seuss' book *Oh, The Places You'll Go*, "You'll be on your way up! You'll be seeing great sights! You'll join the high fliers who soar to high heights." Enjoy the opportunity to soar and try new things, but do not be afraid to take chances and risks even though it may not always work out.

And when you're in a Slump,  
you're not in for much fun.  
Un-slumping yourself  
is not easily done. --Dr. Seuss

There may be times when you are ready to give up and give in but persist through all the struggles, the frustrations and the disappointments. When you have questions or doubts, always remember that the answers that you search for can only be found inside yourself, however, do not be afraid to ask for help to make those decisions. You may not immediately find the answers or discover the person you thought you would become, but continue to search and reach for the

stars. Your strength of character, your curiosity, and your desire to grow will determine the road you will follow.

Do not compromise your values, withdraw from life, or lose yourself. Who you are is written in your heart and soul--not based on your accomplishments. Who you are is determined by your character and your willingness to persevere. You will make mistakes, but mistakes are okay, it is what you do with those mistakes that will define you as a person. Learn from those mistakes and allow them to help you conquer your hesitation to risk failure. Be strong and courageous and you will succeed. And remember, life is a journey not a destination!!!