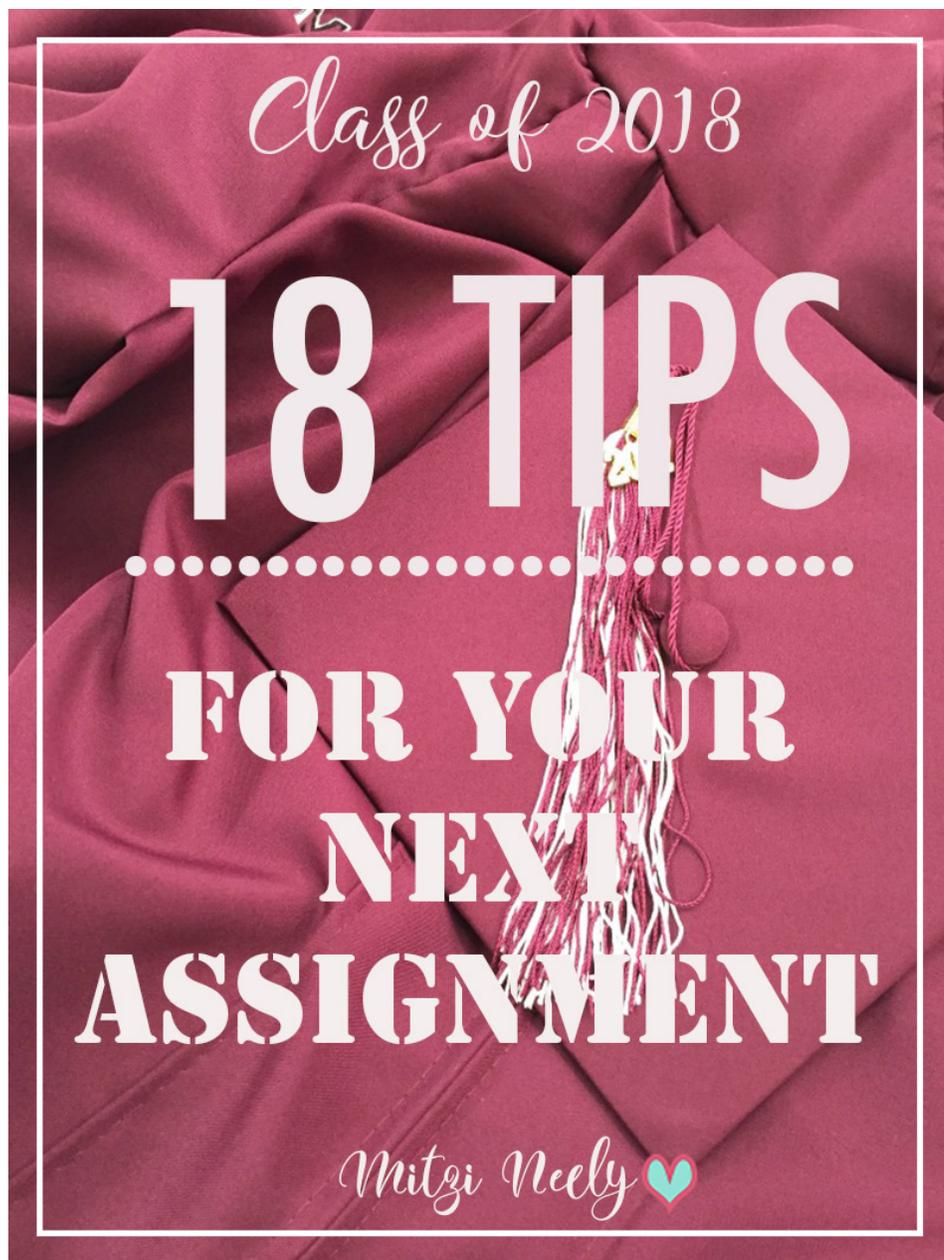

Go Make Your Mark on the World

The following 18 tips have been written for you, the Class of 2018, to guide and transition you through the next step of your journey.



1. STEP OUT OF THE BOX

Be ready to stretch your wings as you start this new journey. Live life. Take risks. Expect failure. Experience is the best teacher. It is okay to think about what once was, but keep your eye on the ball so you don't miss what is in front of you.

2. PUSH YOURSELF

Challenge yourself to learn something new every day. Build a short list of goals and document what you learn and accomplish along the way. Don't let someone's different views/ideas be a threat, but an opportunity to learn and grow. Challenges can build you, but you must do the work.

3. GET INVOLVED

The years ahead of you should be used to their fullest extent. Join community based organizations or sports leagues, or college clubs, organizations or teams. Wake up early occasionally and discover the world around you. Stay up late occasionally and have an intentional conversation with a new friend. Be active. Be present in work and in life. Don't miss the opportunity to be a servant leader.

4. CREATE A BUCKET LIST

Think about the experiences you want to be a part of. Make a list of the things you would like to do while on this new journey. This is not your life long list, but a list for this time and place.

5. MAKE NEW FRIENDS

Make lots of new friends and connections. It pays to learn as much as you can about other people so you can appreciate the differences and recognize the commonalities you share. There may be a time or place you need one another.

6. KEEP AN EYE ON THE FUTURE

Brainstorm a list of options for the future, but be open to the opportunities that may 'fall in your lap.' Remember, the world you live in today will not be the world you live in four years down the road.

7. NEVER QUIT

When you stumble, get back up. Realize that what happened yesterday does not have to impact today. If you experience a setback, try again and again. Don't let someone or a set of circumstances determine your future. Victory will come.

8. ASK QUESTIONS

Lots of them. So what if one is labeled as a dumb question? Ask it any way. Who cares if someone else gets embarrassed because you took a chance to get clarification? If you don't ask, you won't know.

9. BRING YOUR 'A' GAME

Bring your best to every single event you participate in. Be the best you can be. This is not about perfection. It's about being prepared. It's about character, integrity and work ethic.

10. GOD'S GOT YOUR BACK

Remember He is there for you. None of us is perfect. We all make mistakes and He knows that. How reassuring to know that God loves you unconditionally and has the perfect plan for your life and your best interest at heart.

11. REMEMBER THE GOLDEN RULE

Be compassionate and treat people with respect and kindness. But never let your kind heart be mistaken for weakness. When necessary give people the 'big-eyed' look when you are serious. Life is about boundaries and the golden rule—treat others the way you want to be treated. Relationships are important and people really do matter.

12. BE SAFE & MAKE GOOD DECISIONS

Think before you act. Be thoughtful about your safety and the dangers that come with faulty thinking. You are not super woman or super man and you are not invincible. Know that every decision has a consequence. Many of them will be life-changing.

13. BE HAPPY

Find something that brings joy to your life. Regardless of your circumstances your attitude can be the sunshine that lights your path and the path for others to follow. Spread your joy. Happy is, as happy does.

14. BE DISCERNING

You will have people in your life who you consider 'favorites.' Make sure they've earned that status for the right reasons. Hopefully those individuals have given a part of themselves to you. Did they challenge you, encourage you, support you, and cheer for you? It's not about money. It's about the gift of time, love and encouragement. Your favorite people should never be those who let you off the hook, excuse poor decisions and bad judgments, or model laziness or inappropriate behavior.

15. THINK ABOUT THE GOOD STUFF, FORGET THE BAD

Lots of things have taken place over the years. You'll remember a large part of it fondly. The rest....you decide what you're going to do with it. Throw the bad stuff out and be done with it. Don't dwell on what you can't change. Learn from your experiences and move forward.

16. THERE'S NO TIME LIKE THE PRESENT

The world is your stage and you have planned and prepared for such a time as this. What are you waiting for? Pursue your goals and dreams with passion. Reach for the stars. Show others the skills and attributes you can bring to the table. Don't let small minds stomp on your BIG dreams. Go get 'em.

17. TAKE RISKS AND GO FOR WHAT YOU WANT

If there's something you want to try, do it. Now's the time to explore the possibilities and see what's a good fit and what isn't. Set your sights on things you want to achieve. If doesn't work out, no worries--you've got experience on your side. According to Jim Rohn, "If you're not willing to risk the unusual, you will have to settle for the ordinary."

18. GIVE THANKS & SAY YOUR PRAYERS

Be grateful and thankful to your family, friends, teachers, and others who have played a significant part in helping you get where you are today. Pray day and night. Lay your cares and concerns at His feet. He has you covered. And remember, Father knows best.

Congratulations Class of 2018 and best wishes for the future. I'll be praying for you.

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