*Background Info:*

*"Advice, like youth, probably just wasted on the young", commonly known by the title "Wear Sunscreen", is an essay written as a hypothetical commencement speech by columnist Mary Schmich, originally published in June 1997 in the Chicago Tribune.*

Inside every adult lurks a graduation speaker dying to get out, some world-weary pundit eager to pontificate on life to young people who'd rather be Rollerblading. Most of us, alas, will never be invited to sow our words of wisdom among an audience of caps and gowns, but there's no reason we can't entertain ourselves by composing a Guide to Life for Graduates.

I encourage anyone over 26 to try this and thank you for indulging my attempt. Ladies and gentlemen of the class of '97:

Wear sunscreen.

If I could offer you only one tip for the future, sunscreen would be it. The long-term benefits of sunscreen have been proved by scientists, whereas the rest of my advice has no basis more reliable than my own meandering experience. I will dispense this advice now.

Enjoy the power and beauty of your youth. Oh, never mind. You will not understand the power and beauty of your youth until they've faded. But trust me, in 20 years, you'll look back at photos of yourself and recall in a way you can't grasp now how much possibility lay before you and how fabulous you really looked. You are not as fat as you imagine.

Don't worry about the future. Or worry, but know that worrying is as effective as trying to solve an algebra equation by chewing bubble gum. The real troubles in your life are apt to be things that never crossed your worried mind, the kind that blindside you at 4 p.m. on some idle Tuesday.

Do one thing every day that scares you.

Sing.

Don't be reckless with other people's hearts. Don't put up with people who are reckless with yours.

Floss.

Don't waste your time on jealousy. Sometimes you're ahead, sometimes you're behind. The race is long and, in the end, it's only with yourself.

Remember compliments you receive. Forget the insults. If you succeed in doing this, tell me how.

Keep your old love letters. Throw away your old bank statements.

Stretch.

Don't feel guilty if you don't know what you want to do with your life. The most interesting people I know didn't know at 22 what they wanted to do with their lives. Some of the most interesting 40-year-olds I know still don't.

Get plenty of calcium. Be kind to your knees. You'll miss them when they're gone.

Maybe you'll marry, maybe you won't. Maybe you'll have children, maybe you won't. Maybe you'll divorce at 40, maybe you'll dance the funky chicken on your 75th wedding anniversary. Whatever you do, don't congratulate yourself too much, or berate yourself either. Your choices are half chance. So are everybody else's.

Enjoy your body. Use it every way you can. Don't be afraid of it or of what other people think of it. It's the greatest instrument you'll ever own.

Dance, even if you have nowhere to do it but your living room.

Read the directions, even if you don't follow them.

Do not read beauty magazines. They will only make you feel ugly.

Get to know your parents. You never know when they'll be gone for good. Be nice to your siblings. They're your best link to your past and the people most likely to stick with you in the future.

Understand that friends come and go, but with a precious few you should hold on. Work hard to bridge the gaps in geography and lifestyle, because the older you get, the more you need the people who knew you when you were young.

Live in New York City once, but leave before it makes you hard. Live in Northern California once, but leave before it makes you soft.

Travel.

Accept certain inalienable truths: Prices will rise. Politicians will philander. You, too, will get old. And when you do, you'll fantasize that when you were young, prices were reasonable, politicians were noble and children respected their elders.

Respect your elders.

Don't expect anyone else to support you.

Maybe you have a trust fund. Maybe you'll have a wealthy spouse. But you never know when either one might run out.

Don't mess too much with your hair or by the time you're 40 it will look 85.

Be careful whose advice you buy, but be patient with those who supply it. Advice is a form of nostalgia. Dispensing it is a way of fishing the past from the disposal, wiping it off, painting over the ugly parts and recycling it for more than it's worth.

But trust me on the sunscreen.

**Excerpt from ALL I REALLY NEED TO KNOW I LEARNED IN KINDERGARTEN by Robert Fulgham**

All I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sand pile at school.

These are the things I learned:

* Share everything.
* Play fair.
* Don't hit people.
* Put things back where you found them.
* Clean up your own mess.
* Don't take things that aren't yours.
* Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.
* Wash your hands before you eat.
* Flush.
* Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.
* Live a balanced life - learn some **and** think some **and** draw **and** paint **and** sing **and** dance **and** play **and** work every day some.
* Take a nap every afternoon.
* When you go out in the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together.
* Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: the roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.
* Goldfish **and** hamsters **and** white mice **and** even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup - they all die. So do we.
* And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned - the biggest word of all - LOOK.

Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and equality and sane living.

Take any one of those items and extrapolate it into sophisticated adult terms and apply it to your family life or your work or government or your world and it holds true and clear and firm. Think what a better world it would be if we all - the whole world - had cookies and milk at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon and then lay down with our blankies for a nap. Or if all governments had as a basic policy to always put things back where they found them and to clean up their own mess.

And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out in the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

**Assignment:** Read the two credos (list of beliefs about life), “Wear Sunscreen” and “All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten.” Then, using both as a model, generate your own life credo.

Your credo should reflect what you believe and what you have learned about life and how to live life. This credo will be placed in your writing folder so that your senior self can look back and reflect on how much you have changed, or how much you remained the same, during your time here at Walton High School.

Your credo should contain the following:

1. A brief introductory paragraph (underlined)
2. A minimum of TEN lessons/sayings/ideas.
3. TWO examples of juxtaposition of long and short sentences for emphasis (highlighted yellow)
4. TWO examples of parallelism (highlighted green)
5. ONE statement with a deeper meaning (highlighted blue)
6. ONE example of polysyndeton (repetition of conjunctions) (bolded)

Each of the elements are highlighted and coded within the samples so that you can ensure that you know what that device looks like as it is being used.

Please ensure that BEFORE TURING YOUR COMPLETED CREDO IN, YOU HIGHLIGHT AND FORMAT THE ELEMENTS. IF YOU DO NOT HIGHLIGHT, I WILL GRADE AS IF THAT ELEMENT IS NOT PRESENT.

Below is the rubric I will be using to grade your credo.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ A brief introductory paragraph (underlined) (10 points)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ A minimum of TEN lessons/sayings/ideas (20 points)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ TWO examples of juxtaposition of long and short sentences for emphasis (highlighted yellow) (20 points)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ TWO examples of parallelism (highlighted green) (20 points)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ONE statement with a deeper meaning (highlighted blue) (10 points)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ONE example of polysyndeton (repetition of conjunctions) (bolded) (10 points)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Cleanliness, organization, typing, formatting, highlighting (10 points)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Total (100)