



By Margaret Evans, Editor

My family's on vacation, so to lighten my load, I'd planned to rerun a column I wrote this time last year called "A Graduation Address Of Sorts." I read it over, and it seemed relevant enough, but I couldn't help wondering if I'd gained any additional insight since I wrote it. Had I soaked up any Life Lessons in the past year that might be worth sharing with our fresh-faced graduates?

To find out, I decided to review my Facebook Timeline, where no thought goes unspoken - from the profound to the absurd. Turns out I've written tens of thousands of words on FB since last spring - Ack! I could have been writing a book! - and while none of it has real "graduation" potential, some of it struck me as having a certain . . . *je ne sais quoi*? If you sift carefully, you might find the occasional nugget of wisdom befitting a cheap coffee mug, but mostly, these are just the passing fancies and off-the-cuff observations of a middle-aged social media socialite.

* The problem, as I see it, is that we don't all think alike. (Duh.) We don't frame our arguments in the same way, and increasingly, we don't even share the same philosophical foundations. So how can we possibly "get" each other? I saw a tee-shirt recently that read: "I can explain it to you, but I can't understand it for you." I thought it perfectly summed up our situation. I have no idea what to do about it.

* Things would be very different in this country if The Carol Burnett Show still came on every week. [# MakeAmericaGreatAgain](#) [# FeelTheBurnett](#)

* There comes a day when you finally realize those five pounds that have always stood between you and perfect happiness are not going anywhere, ever, no matter how much (or how little) you weigh.

* In the midst of this latest Facebook "discussion," I was reminded of two important truths: #1) We are all the product of very different life experiences. Something that seems totally obvious to me might not be remotely obvious to somebody else, because of the different experiences, influences, circumstances, etc, that made us who we are. #2) No matter how good an argument you think you've got, if you hurt a friend's feelings while making it, you lose. Being a friend is more important than being right. I'm sincerely sorry for all the times I've failed to live by that truth.

* The best things in life truly are free. Which is fortunate, since the crappy things in life are often quite expensive. #medicalprocedures [# taxes](#) [# bathingsuits](#)

* Sometimes I wish I'd never started thinking about things. I'd really like to just roll with it. Like that cardinal couple that keeps hitting the bird feeder in my backyard. They're my favorite people these days.

* Pat Conroy once told me he didn't believe in Happy Families. He thought anybody who said they grew up in one was lying - maybe even to themselves. I have struggled with this idea for almost 25 years - Pat was my friend and my mentor and, in many ways, my hero - but I have finally concluded he was wrong. Though no family is perfect, and it may not even be the norm, some of us really do come from fairly happy families. Those of us who do are very lucky, but we're also very naive about the ways of the world. We expect goodness where it doesn't necessarily exist. I have been coming to terms with that lately.

* Two things: I don't like it when people mock what others hold sacred. (Mock your own sacred stuff; that's cool. Somebody else's sacred stuff? That seems cruel to me.) Also, I am biased against people who think they have no biases.

* If ever I learn to be quiet enough, steady enough, and invisible enough to take a decent picture of one of the neighborhood cardinals that delight me every morning on my walk, I will have made some real progress. And not just as a photographer. 'Til then, Lord help me just

enjoy them. Can't let the perfect be the enemy of the good, right?

* These things they call "ugly tomatoes" at Publix are beautifully delicious. Yes, my favorite tomatoes are ugly. A life lesson.

* The older I get, the happier I am that I grew up in the South. It taught me to love the flawed and the frail and the freakish. In other words . . . humanity. I'm not sure other places teach that lesson quite so thoroughly.

* Sometimes, I drop my daughter off in the high school parking lot and watch her merge into that sea of kids, with her enormous backpack and her feigned nonchalance, and for a split second it damn near kills me that I can't suffer the insecurities and indignities of youth for her.

* About diversity. I have always found it pretty easy to accept - and even like - people who don't look like me. The real challenge, I think, is accepting - even liking - people who don't *see* like me. It's a skill I work on every day - by reading widely, asking hard questions, truly listening, and extending grace. Until you're willing to work on that skill, please don't talk to me about how much you value diversity. I won't believe you.

* I'm planning to get rich by inventing a substitute for brown sugar - something that doesn't have to be stabbed repeatedly with an ice pick when you pull it out of the cabinet every few months. # [OatmealWoes](#) # [KitchenPsycho](#)

* I'm on hold, trying to order new contact lenses over the phone. The recording keeps telling me to stay on the line, and the next available "vision ambassador" will be with me shortly. Vision Ambassador. Wow. I'm a little intimidated.

* To all y'all who don't know me from Adam except on Facebook, but got hugged by me anyway that time I saw you at Publix . . . Sorry for the awkward moment. # [KneeJerkHugger](#)
[WantonlyAffectionate](#)

* All my life, people have been trying to make me choose between the artists and the economists. The feelers and the thinkers. The caring collectivists and the rugged individualists. I honestly believe we need all of the above. I'm a Libra and I crave balance. I'm a Margaret, and I'm obsessed with balance. This new administration seems off-balance to me, but so did the last one. The pendulum is swinging hard. I am holding on for dear life.

* I think we're approaching "peak Facebook." Or maybe that's just me? # [DiminishingReturns](#)

* Do "ideology" and "idolatry" come from the same root word? They should.

* You get to choose what to feed your head. Don't go with junk food. # [EmptyCalories](#)

* The rise of "fake news" has driven me right over the edge into obsessive fact-checker mode. I can't bear even the most benign fudging, exaggerating or spinning anymore. If you are spreading fibs or half-truths on my newsfeed - even in the service of "good" - I will probably be correcting you. 'Cause I just can't take it anymore. Consider yourselves warned. (And feel free to correct me back. Together, we can make America honest again. Ha!)

* He who agrees with me is smart. He who disagrees with me is a smarty-pants.

* My husband just texted me to say that Daniel Craig will be back as James Bond one last time because Tom Hiddleston is "too smug and not tough enough for the role." This is the kinda stuff that keeps a marriage solid. We bond over Bond.

* Half my FB friends think the other half are "barbarians," and vice versa. Good times.

* If the world makes me bitter, I will never make the world better. It's my energy. I get to choose how I use it.

* Scrolling through my newsfeed, it occurs to me that a posture of perpetual criticism hurts the critic more than the criticized. Find something to love, then shout about it from the rooftops! Think of it as an emotional palate cleanser. You'll feel better, *and* your enemies will let their guard down.

* There are few things you can count on in this unpredictable journey called Life, but one of them is this: I will always bug my server for a doggy bag, then forget to take it home.

* There are certain lies that I will tell myself over and over, despite all historical evidence to the contrary. My current favorite is: "It's okay that I only got two hours of sleep last night. I'll just take a nap sometime today."

* Caution: There's a fine line between fighting bullies and becoming one yourself.

* Hope and Despair had a love child. They named it Humor.