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Remember the excitement of holding a new box of crayons on the first day of school? You would fold back the cardboard flap and see rows of sharp, shiny crayons nestled neatly in that box. And you knew that was the most special box of crayons ever; because within that tiny green-and-yellow box laid all the infinite possibilities of the universe. With those crayons you could draw anything.

In a few months, it will once again be the first day of school. We'll all be taking boxes of crayons with us on our next excursion in life. However, this time they'll be more metaphorical than physical – but that depends on your major. No, the crayons that we'll have with us this time will be experiences, lessons, and our own spunk. When we first arrive, it'll seem almost like starting high school again – or maybe kindergarten. We'll probably show up wide-eyed and a little shy and stick to people we know or who seem like they're friendly. We may wish for our moms or dads. Chances are that everyone else will be just as nervous, even those who try to act tough. Just ignore them. They're really scared, too.

As we go on with our school careers and into the rest of our lives, one of the most important things to always remember is to do what you love. Happiness is far more important than good grades or a high-paying job. Following your heart sounds nothing short of corny in this day and age. A severe recession is plaguing the economy and the world is filled with problems. But honestly, if you look back at the end of your life and see nothing but empty hours and fruitless days spent trying to make a buck, instead spending time with family and friends exploring the fabulous world we live in, what kind of satisfaction will that bring you? Not much.

You'll never hear small children say that they're fed up with all the garbage they have to deal with. They word everything simply. There are no euphemisms. No bitterness, just exasperation. Chances are good that if you ask them what they were mad about an hour ago they will have forgotten the incident.

Go into a kindergarten or preschool class and ask, "How many of you can draw?" Every hand will immediately go up. Ask a class of high school students the same thing, and a couple of people will raise their hands after furtively looking around at their classmates to see if it's acceptable. If you asked those kindergarteners what they could draw, they'd tell you, "Flowers and puppies and rainbows and everything!" Ask the high school kids the same thing and they'd say, "Oh, well, I just doodle mostly. I don't really know what I'm doing." Where did that self confidence and enthusiasm go?

Life is to be lived. I have seen few people grasp this better than small children. If little kids want to go play outside, then that is exactly what they want. It doesn't matter if it's pouring; they go running outside to jump in the puddles and laugh at the sky. Their passion for life is astounding.

During my first week at U-High, my art teacher, Mr. Henning, told the class a story about when he was in grade school. Everybody had to draw a turkey for Thanksgiving using their handprint. He worked really hard on that little turkey and when he was done, thought that it was the best turkey anyone had ever made... until he looked at the turkey made by the little girl next to him. He decided then and there that he wasn't an artist, and that he couldn't be one because someone would always be better than him. Much later in life, he decided that he could be an artist if he wanted to and made up his mind to do so. I am so grateful he did; he has been the best art teacher I've ever had.

I'd like to thank all the teachers and coaches I've had who love what they do. Their enthusiasm for their subjects and for teaching has been inspirational. Their lessons gave me a better appreciation for subjects I already enjoyed. Other times, their sheer enthusiasm made class fun, even if the subjects weren't my favorites. They are doing what they love and it's making a difference.

Find what you love and do it. The world needs veterinarians, landscapers, construction workers, performers, business people, engineers, government leaders, and journalists. The point is, if you do what you love, it will help you to get through rough times. You will feel that you are making a difference. Keep that in mind as we begin our college careers.

When we first started kindergarten, crayons taught us how to share. They also taught many of us how to make friends. Sharing was something we had to do – if we didn't want to sit in the "naughty corner." Trading with the shyest girl in class so she didn't only have to use grays and browns because she was too quiet to ask for another color, was when we really started to learn about friends. That also taught us something else – it takes all colors to make a picture. We're all different; and the world needs all of us. No box of crayons is complete without both grey and lime green.

I guess that's about it, Class of 2009.

Remember, your box is new and the possibilities are endless.

So grab those crayons and color your world.