Good morning, everyone. Students, faculty, administration and parents, it’s an absolute honor to be standing up here marking the beginning of yet another year in Sage Hill’s short, but mighty history. Today I’m going to be talking a little about passion and purpose. But before that, I know most of you new faces didn’t expect to see a 5 foot tall little Indian girl named Cha Cha leading such a large and strong student body, but that’s where Sage differs from most other schools. Our school is not built from top to bottom with a head controlling all motions of the body, but constructed rather like an airplane. Those who are normally considered at the top simply form the cockpit, and we the students make up the main body and, most importantly, the engine. Sage Hill School is uniquely a student run organization; you are in control of your own life here. This sense of self-management results in fearlessness to do the unconventional and take risks because you are your own teacher and what better practice worksheet is there to do than life? And here at Sage, failure is nothing but more of a reason for us to accept you and help you lift off once again.

Speaking of Sage culture, often the topic of many speeches done from this podium and even the punch line of many a joke, the word “sageyness“ has approached all of us at least once or twice in our lives here. And we are so often left with a feeling of 80 percent understanding, 15 percent confusion and 5 percent certainty that we’re surrounded by radical hippies. But we must not forget, the hippie movement was one of the first modern campaigns breaking away from passively accepting society, and actively re-instilling purpose back into the people.

On a flight back home a couple of weeks ago I was thinking about this speech. So on the back of a ratty old airplane napkin I began to jot down my thoughts. And of course, the first thing that came to me was this indefinable word “sageyness.” And what, if words can’t define it, do we do as a community to define it? And so here’s my go at putting words to it in order to make it just a little easier for the freshmen and transfers and honestly, even the veterans, to understand. Each Sage student, member of faculty and administration possesses passion. And simply put, that’s what makes a person interesting. Sage Hill fosters a community that encourages any passion whether it is passionate disagreement, your passion for seemingly random hobbies, or simply just passionate people. And this passion naturally results in personal purpose.

Our purpose is the words that we want written on our gravestone. Purpose is the person that you want to be not the accomplishments you want to make. Purpose is the difference between simple success and lasting significance. We cannot let the expectations of society define our personal purpose because you know your own purpose better than anyone else does. So if I have one final message for all of you, my fellow students, it’s you do you because you do you better than anyone else does you. Embrace the person that you are and let your passions guide your purpose. Thank you very much, and here’s to an exciting new year!