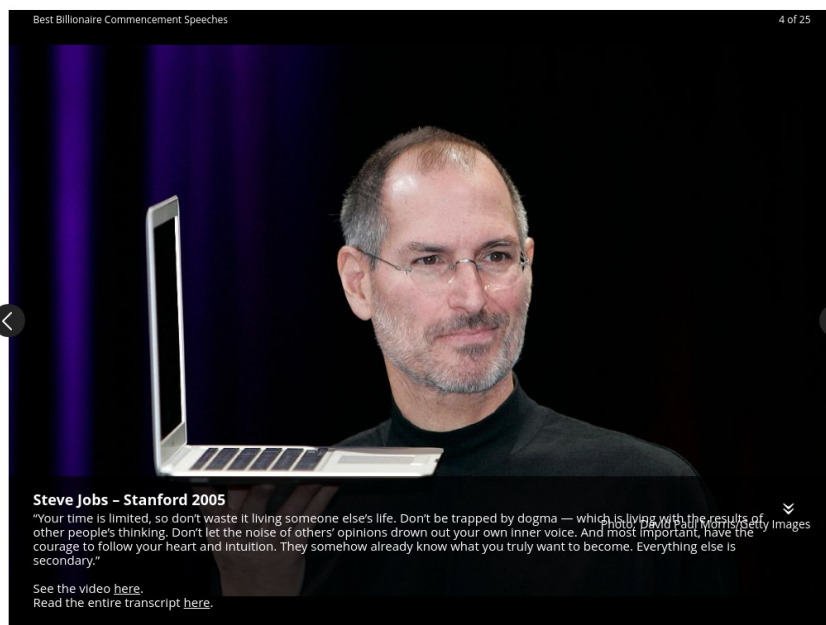


Author biography: **I cover refugees and immigrants. Formerly, I was deputy editor of the Forbes wealth team, responsible for the signature Forbes 400 and World Billionaires Lists. My stories have ranged from interviewing New York City DREAMers to debating President Donald Trump about his brand and profiling former arms dealer and current Hollywood mogul Arnon Milchan. I'm also an adjunct professor of journalism at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. I earned my BA from Tufts University with a focus on international relations and my MS from the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism. I was born in Brazil, bred in Texas and somehow made my way to Manhattan. Send me tips and ideas, I'll keep them confidential: kblankfeld@gmail.com. Follow me on Twitter at @kblankfeld.**

The online version of this article has a related gallery of billionaires and their commencement speeches (see example at right) with links to videos and speech transcripts. You don't need to read all these transcripts for next week, or view all the videos, but you could use the videos and transcripts for your reading diary.

Items for discussion:

1. Summarize the contents of this article in one or two sentences.
2. How is the content organized?
3. What are the roles or purposes of the links and gallery within the article? Are they helpful?
4. Of all the points made in the article, which will you remember the longest?
5. Do all of the commencement speakers agree with each other? Is any of the advice actually wrong?
6. Here in Russia, on similar occasions, would the speakers make similar points? Would they make different points than those made by the speakers in this *Forbes* article? Which pieces of advice in the article seem most typically American to you? Which seem universally valid to you?
7. The writer includes her e-mail address and Twitter handle in her biography. If you were to write to her, what would you say about this article? (What did she do well, and what could she have done to make her article better?)



Words and expressions:

words of wisdom

host, a host of

heart-wrenching

core, to one's very core

loss, to overcome a loss

to be defined by

standout (noun)

a whole lot

to impart

to revolve around

to oust, to be ousted

helm

the odds, to overcome the odds

time and time again

albeit

oftentimes

hand in hand, to go hand in hand

to drop out

to pursue

trial and error

to echo (transitive and intransitive)

to head up

to drop (intransitive)

thread

to give back

breathing space

to hazard (a prediction, a guess)

arguably

revelatory

to get crazy

drive (noun)