

TEXT 2

Taylor Swift (born 1989) is an American singer-songwriter, who moved to Nashville. Having sold over 200 million records worldwide, Swift is one of the best-selling musicians of all time.

In May 2022 Taylor Swift gave the commencement speech to New York University's Spring 2022 graduates at Yankee Stadium. On this occasion she was awarded an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree from the university.

Taylor Swift

New York University Commencement Speech



Transcript:

Hi, I'm Taylor.

Last time I was in a stadium this size, I was dancing in heels and wearing a glittery leotard¹. This outfit² is much more comfortable. [...] I am elated to be here with you today as we celebrate and graduate New York University's Class of 2022.

- 5 Not a single one of us here today has done it alone. We are each a patchwork quilt of those who have loved us, those who have believed in our futures, those who showed us empathy and kindness or told us the truth even when it wasn't easy to hear. Those who told us we could do it when there was absolutely no proof of that. Someone read stories to you and taught you to dream and offered up some moral code of right and wrong for you to try and live by. Someone tried their best to explain every concept in this insanely
- 10 complex world to the child that was you, as you asked a bazillion³ questions like, 'how does the moon work' and 'why can we eat salad but not grass.' And maybe they didn't do it perfectly. No one ever can. [...]

¹ tætsiddende dragt

² (her) æresdoktorkappe

³ utal

15 I know that words are supposed to be my “thing,” but I will never be able to find the words to thank my mom and my dad, and my brother, Austin, for the sacrifices they made every day so that I could go from singing in coffee houses to standing up here with you all today because no words would ever be enough. [...]

20 I never got to have the normal college experience, *per se*⁴. I went to public high school until tenth grade and finished my education doing homeschool work on the floors of airport terminals. Then I went out on the road on a radio tour, which sounds incredibly glamorous but in reality it consisted of a rental car, motels, and my mom and I pretending to have loud mother-daughter fights with each other during boarding so no one would want the empty seat between us on Southwest⁵. [...]

So as a rule, I try not to give anyone unsolicited⁶ advice unless they ask for it. [...]

So I won't tell you what to do because no one likes that. I will, however, give you some life hacks⁷ I wish I knew when I was starting out my dreams of a career, and navigating life, love, pressure, choices, shame, hope and friendship.

25 The first of which is... life can be heavy, especially if you try to carry it all at once. Part of growing up and moving into new chapters of your life is about catch and release⁸. What I mean by that is, knowing what things to keep, and what things to release. You can't carry all things, all grudges⁹, all updates on your ex [...]. Decide what is yours to hold and let the rest go. [...]

30 Secondly, learn to live alongside cringe¹⁰. No matter how hard you try to avoid being cringe, you will look back on your life and cringe retrospectively. Cringe is unavoidable over a lifetime. Even the term “cringe” might someday be deemed “cringe.” [...]

Trends and phases are fun. Looking back and laughing is fun. [...]

I started writing songs when I was 12 and since then, it's been the compass guiding my life, and in turn, my life guided my writing. [...]

35 I said to you earlier that I don't ever offer advice unless someone asks me for it, and now I'll tell you why: As a person who started my very public career at the age of 15, it came with a price. And that price was years of unsolicited advice. Being the youngest person in every room for over a decade meant that I was constantly being issued warnings from older members of the music industry, the media, interviewers, executives. This advice often presented itself as thinly veiled¹¹ warnings. See, I was a teenager in the public eye at a time when our society was absolutely obsessed with the idea of having perfect young female role models. [...]

⁴ *per se*: som sådan

⁵ amerikansk flyselskab

⁶ uopfordret

⁷ *life hacks*: brugbare tips

⁸ *catch and release*: fange en fisk og sætte den ud igen

⁹ ting, der nager

¹⁰ pinlighed

¹¹ skjulte

The times I was told no or wasn't included, wasn't chosen, didn't win, didn't make the cut¹²... looking back, it really feels like those moments were as important, if not more crucial, than the moments I was told "yes."

45 Not being invited to the parties and sleepovers in my hometown made me feel hopelessly lonely, but because I felt alone, I would sit in my room and write the songs that would get me a ticket somewhere else. Having label executives¹³ in Nashville¹⁴ tell me that only 35-year-old housewives listen to country music and there was no place for a 13-year-old on their roster¹⁵ made me cry in the car on the way home.

50 But then I'd post my songs on my MySpace¹⁶ – yes, MySpace – and would message with other teenagers like me who loved country music, but just didn't have anyone singing from their perspective. [...]

I know I sound like a consummate¹⁷ optimist, but I'm really not. I lose perspective all the time. Sometimes everything just feels completely pointless. I know the pressure of living your life through the lens of perfectionism. [...]

55 Now you leave the structure and framework of school and chart¹⁸ your own path. Every choice you make leads to the next choice which leads to the next, and I know it's hard to know sometimes which path to take. There will be times in life when you need to stand up for yourself. Times when the right thing is to back down and apologize. Times when the right thing is to fight, times when the right thing is to turn and run. Times to hold on with all you have and times to let go with grace¹⁹. (...). How will you know what the right choice is in these crucial moments? You won't.

60 How do I give advice to this many people about their life choices? I won't.

Scary news is: you're on your own now.

Cool news is: You're on your own now.

65 I leave you with this: We are led by our gut instincts, our intuition, our desires and fears, our scars and our dreams. And you will screw it up sometimes. So will I. And when I do, you will most likely read about on the internet. Anyway... hard things will happen to us. We will recover. We will learn from it. We will grow more resilient²⁰ because of it.

As long as we are fortunate enough to be breathing, we will breathe in, breathe through, breathe deep, breathe out. And I'm a doctor now, so I know how breathing works.

70 I hope you know how proud I am to share this day with you. We're doing this together. So let's just keep dancing like we're...²¹

(2022)

¹² *didn't make the cut*: blev afvist

¹³ *label executives*: pladeselskabsfolk

¹⁴ by kendt for sit countrymusik-miljø,

¹⁵ lønningsliste

¹⁶ online socialt netværk til deling af musik, oprettet i 2003

¹⁷ (her) total

¹⁸ planlægger

¹⁹ værdighed

²⁰ modstandsdygtige

²¹ reference til Taylor Swift-hittet "We just keep dancing like we're 22"