

## Quindon Tarver "Everybody's Free"

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Ladies and gentlemen of the class of 2007, wear  
sunscreen  
If I could offer you only one tip for the future,  
sunscreen would be it  
The long term benefits of sunscreen have been proved  
by scientists  
Whereas the rest of my advice has no basis more  
reliable  
Than my own meandering experience, I will dispense  
this advice now

Enjoy the power and beauty of your youth, oh, never  
mind  
You will never understand the power  
And the beauty of your youth until they've faded  
But trust me, in twenty years  
You will look back at photos of yourself

And recall in a way you can't grasp now  
How much possibility lay before you  
And how fabulous you really looked  
You are not as fat as you imagine

Don't worry about the future or worry that know that  
worrying  
Is as affective as trying to solve an algebra equation  
By chewing bubble gum  
The real troubles in your life are apt to be things  
That never crossed your worried mind  
The kind that blindsides you at 4 p.m. on some idle  
Tuesday

Do one thing every day that scares you, sing  
Don't be reckless with other peoples' hearts  
Don't put up with people who are reckless with yours,  
floss  
Don't waste your time on jealousy  
Sometimes you're ahead, sometimes you're behind  
The race is long and in the end, it's only with yourself

Remember compliments you receive, forget the insults  
If you succeed in doing this, tell me how

Keep your old love letters, throw away your old bank statements, stretch  
Don't feel guilty if you don't know what to do with your life

The most interesting people  
I know didn't know at 22 what they wanted to do with their lives  
Some of the most interesting 40-year-olds I know still don't  
Get plenty of calcium  
Be kind to knees, you'll miss them when they're gone

Maybe you'll marry, maybe you won't  
Maybe you'll have children, maybe you won't  
Maybe you'll divorce at 40, maybe you'll dance the "Funky Chicken"  
On your 75th wedding anniversary  
Whatever you do, don't congratulate yourself too much  
Or berate yourself either  
Your choices are half chance, so are everybody else's

Enjoy your body, use it every way you can  
Don't be afraid of it or what other people think of it  
It's the greatest instrument you'll ever own, dance  
Even if you have nowhere to do it but your own living room  
Read the directions even if you don't follow them  
Do not read beauty magazines, they will only make you feel ugly

Brother and sister together will make it through  
Someday a spirit will take you and guide you there  
I know you've been hurting, but I've been waiting to be there for you  
And I'll be there just helping you out, whenever I can

Get to know your parents, you never know when they'll be gone for good  
Be nice to your siblings, they are your best link to your past  
And the people most likely to stick with you in the future  
Understand that friends come and go  
But a precious few, who should hold on

Work hard to bridge the gaps in geography and lifestyle  
For as the older you get, the more you need the people you knew when you were young  
Live in New York City once, but leave before it makes you hard

Live in northern California once, but leave before it  
makes you soft

Travel, accept certain inalienable truths  
Prices will rise, politicians will philander, you too will get  
old  
And when you do, you'll fanaticise that when you were  
young  
Prices were reasonable, politicians were noble  
And children respected their elders

Respect your elders, don't expect anyone else to  
support you  
Maybe you have a trust fund, maybe you'll have a  
wealthy spouse  
But you'll never know when either one will run out  
Don't mess too much with your hair or by the time  
you're forty  
It will look eighty-five  
Be careful whose advice you buy, but be patient with  
those who supply it

Advice is a form of nostalgia, dispensing it is a way of  
Wishing the past from the disposal, wiping it off  
Painting over the ugly parts and recycling for more  
than it's worth  
But trust me on the sunscreen

Brother and sister together will make it through, oh  
yeah  
Someday a spirit will take you and guide you there  
I know you've been hurting, but I've been waiting to be  
there for you  
And I'll be there just helping you out, whenever I can

Everybody's free, oh yeah, everybody's free, oh yeah,  
oh, to feel good

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