**One Step at a Time**

**Hello, everyone. As you might know, I’m ASB President. You might also know that this has not always been the case. What you might not know is that for a long time the very idea of me even running for this position would fill me with absolute dread, as well as the idea of me telling that fact to the whole school during chapel. The fact that I’m standing here and that the dread I’m feeling is manageable and not stopping me is, to a great degree, the result of my Priory experience. During my time here I’ve learned many lessons. The biggest one and, not incidentally, the one I’m going to talk about is: Go one step at a time.**

 **This will not come as a shock to many of you, But I’m from Russia [PAUSE if laughter]; which means that Priory was a completely new experience. It was not the first time I had to speak only English. It was also my first time in a very different school system. In Russia, I wasn’t expected to ask questions, so I didn’t. These factors didn’t make me feel confident in my first year at Priory, and I didn’t really connect with many other students. Still, small steps at a time, I got more accustomed to Priory and more confident.**

 **Still, I was unsure about what I should do next. Then came Fiddler on the Roof, a musical. I really liked it, but I was unsure whether I could do it. I hadn’t done any plays since kindergarten, which is not a good qualification, but I had done poetry recitals. It was in Russian, true, but did it make trying out for “Fiddler on the Roof” a small step instead of a big jump? I wasn’t sure. Sometimes I thought it would be a great learning experience, sometimes that I would just fail.**

**So, on comes my sophomore year. I started doing choir and discovered that yes, choir is extremely hard if you don’t have prior experience or musical talent. Still, I continued to do it. Luckily, there came an opportunity that I was more prepared to face. In my English class our teacher, the esteemed Mr. Georgules, gave us an assignment to perform an Othello monologue, which is just one step away from my prior experience. That, however, didn’t make it feel easy. Before the start of class, my palms were sweating and I decided to do it as soon as possible to get it over with and to not let other performances of monologues make me more nervous and uncertain. So I went second and did it, And Mr. Georgules said I did well and asked whether I was planning to audition for the play. So, he thought that it was a small step from what I had just done to acting in a play, and believed I had potential to succeed, which gave me a push to audition for “American Clock” and it worked out great.**

**My junior year I’m continuing choir, which is still hard, but often even enjoyable, and planning to do the play again, which should cause less anxiety, but it’s a musical, and that means song and dance. However, I’m somewhat better at choir, so it’s, again, one step into a new experience. So I made it and I did fine, if you ignore being having water spitted on me, in one scene, fifteen times.**

**When does ASB come into this? I was interested in doing it some time, as I wanted to serve the community that has, as you’ve seen throughout the speech, helped me enormously to become a better person, but it’s also terrifying to think about. It’s not just a speech, it’s a tremendous responsibility. It doesn’t seem like a step, it~~’s~~ feels like a huge jump. So, I tried to fit it into the whole” one step at a time” paradigm by assuming I would fail and then asking: How bad will things go if I fail? At least realistically speaking, excluding death from being hit by falling stage lights and the like. Well, if I fail, then I just make a speech and leave. And I’ve done that before. This thinking, despite sounding really pessimistic, helped me calm down and focus more on the ASB, namely, on the goals and plans. Still, the whole process wasn’t easy. I had to prepare all the way up to the speeches, partially because the wind was constantly tearing down the posters. And, when the time came to go into the PAC and wait for my turn, I still didn’t feel ready. I didn’t know what would happen and now I couldn’t try to get it over with faster, as the order was already determined. But, I was already there, all the work I’ve done was about to pay off, one way or another, and my speech was just one small, if very important step. So, I did it.**

**Why am I telling you all this? Truth be told, one step doesn’t win the race, if you allow me to further extend the mileage of my metaphor. And, to be frank, I still have a lot of distance to cover with these small steps, but without them I would have never even started my journey. It’s by the small steps that we improve and become more prepared for the future and for our dreams.**

**So, if you are unsure whether to make such a step, do it, and if you see someone thinking about that, encourage them, because that encouragement can be a step for both of you.**