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WISDOM  
ON THE TONGUE

BEST  
COMMENCEMENT  
SPEECHES  
OF US  
TOP UNIVERSITIES

舌尖上的  
智慧



——美国名校最佳毕业演说

《新东方英语》编辑部 编著 韩子满 译

“听、说、读、看”——全方位体验英语演讲  
学习地道英文，模仿演讲技巧，感悟成长故事，规划励志人生



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Track  
Video 01

# Change:

从你做起  
改变, It's Up to You

— President Obama Delivers the 2012 Commencement Address at Barnard College  
—— 奥巴马总统在巴纳德学院 2012 届毕业典礼上致辞

# Profile 名人

美国总统奥巴马 (Barack Hussein Obama)



2012年5月14日，奥巴马总统在纽约的巴纳德学院(Barnard College)2012届毕业典礼上发表了主题演讲。在此之前，与巴纳德学院一街之隔的哥伦比亚大学也曾邀请校友奥巴马总统在2012届毕业典礼上演讲，但却被谢绝。为此，哥大学生对奥巴马总统主动要求到巴纳德学院演讲而不是到哥大演讲既吃惊又不满，在学校的网站上发表了许多情绪化的评论。此事甚至惊动了传媒，连《纽约时报》也就此做了相关报道。据报道，巴纳德学院今年本来预计邀请《纽约时报》总编辑吉尔·艾布拉姆森(Jill Abramson)发表毕业演说，却因奥巴马总统临时“插队”而改变计划。

巴纳德学院是一所私立女子文理学院，创建于1889年，1900年正式隶属于哥伦比亚大学本科部，其校园与哥伦比亚大学隔着百老汇大街东西相望。巴纳德学院的学生可以到哥大上课，毕业证书由哥大颁发，证书上有巴纳德学院院长与哥大校长的共同签名。巴纳德学院与哥大的这种复杂关系使许多人弄不清楚究竟巴纳德学院是否是哥大的一部分。不过从哥大学生的角度看，许多人并不认可巴纳德学生是自己的校友，从这次奥巴马演讲风波中就可以看出这一点。媒体评论也将当日的演讲视作奥巴马选举工作的一部分，认为他想以此获得年轻人特别是年轻女性的选票。

巴纳德学院的毕业典礼此前三年的演讲嘉宾分别是国务卿希拉里·克林顿(Hillary Clinton)、好莱坞明星梅丽尔·斯特里普(Meryl Streep)以及Facebook首席运营官谢丽尔·桑德伯格(Sheryl Sandberg)。这三人都都是名闻遐迩的女强人，难怪奥巴马在演讲时开玩笑地说，在她们之后演讲对自己来说是件不容易的事。

# Speech 演讲



音频



视频

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you everybody. Please, please have a seat. Thank you.

Thank you, President Spar, trustees, President Bollinger. Hello, Class of 2012! Congratulations on reaching this day. Thank you for the honor of being able to be a part of it.

There are so many people who are proud of you—your parents, family, faculty, friends—all who share in this achievement. So please give them a big round of applause. To all the moms who are here today, you could not ask for a better Mother's Day gift than to see all of these folks graduate.

I have to say, though, whenever I come to these things, I start thinking about

非常感谢，谢谢。非常感谢，谢谢你们。谢谢大家，请坐。谢谢。

感谢斯帕院长、各位校董以及博林杰校长。2012届毕业生，你们好！祝贺你们走到了这一天。我很荣幸能参加今天的毕业典礼，谢谢你们。

有许多人为你们感到骄傲——你们的父母、家人、师长、朋友——你们顺利毕业，这其中有着他们的功劳。所以，请给他们以热烈的掌声！所有今天到场的母亲们，你们收到了最好的母亲节礼物，那就是见证这些学生毕业。

但是，我不得不说，每次遇到这类场合，我都会想到马利亚和萨莎毕业的情景，

Malia and Sasha graduating, and I start tearing up and it's terrible. I don't know how you guys are holding it together.

I will begin by telling a hard truth: I'm a Columbia college graduate. I know there can be a little bit of a sibling rivalry here. But I'm honored nevertheless to be your commencement speaker today—although I've got to say, you set a pretty high bar given the past three years. Hillary Clinton, Meryl Streep, Sheryl Sandberg—these are not easy acts to follow.

But I will point out Hillary is doing an extraordinary job as one of the finest Secretaries of State America has ever had. We gave Meryl the Presidential Medal of Arts and Humanities. Sheryl is not just a good friend; she's also one of our economic advisers. So it's like the old saying goes—keep your friends close, and your Barnard commencement speakers even closer. There's wisdom in that.

Now, the year I graduated—this area looks familiar—the year I graduated was 1983, the first year women were admitted to Columbia. Sally Ride was the first American woman in space. Music was all about Michael and the moonwalk. We had the walkman ... [The Audience: Do it!] No Moonwalking. No Moonwalking today. We had the walkman, not iPods. Some of the streets around here were not quite so inviting. Times Square was not a family destination. So I know this is all ancient history. Nothing worse than commencement speakers [droning<sup>1\)</sup>](#) on about bygone days. But for all the differences, the Class of 1983 actually had a lot in common with all of you. For we, too, were heading out into a world at a moment when our country was still recovering from a particularly severe economic recession. It was a time of change. It was a time of uncertainty. It was a time of passionate political debates.

You can relate to this because just as you were starting out finding your way around this campus, an economic crisis struck that would claim more than

便开始心烦意乱。这种感觉很糟糕。我真不知道你们大家是怎么把持得住的。

我首先要透露一个确凿的事实：我毕业于哥伦比亚大学。我知道哥大与巴纳德之间有点“兄弟”较劲的意思，但我还是很荣幸今天能在你们的毕业典礼上发言。不过我不得不说，在过去的三年里，你们在邀请演讲嘉宾方面树立了很高的标杆。希拉里·克林顿、梅丽尔·斯特里普、谢丽尔·桑德伯格——这些都不是可以轻易效仿的典范。

但我还是要指出，希拉里的的工作极为出色，她是美国历史上最为杰出的国务卿之一。我们向梅丽尔颁发了艺术与人文总统奖章。谢丽尔不仅是我的好朋友，她还是我们的经济顾问之一。所以，正如老话所说：亲近你的朋友，更要亲近巴纳德学院的毕业演讲嘉宾。这句话的确蕴含智慧。

各位，我毕业的那年——这部分看着好眼熟——我毕业的那年是1983年。那一年，哥伦比亚学院第一次招收女生，萨莉·赖德成为第一位进入太空的美国女性。那时候，迈克尔·杰克逊的音乐和他的太空步广为流行。那个时候，我们用随身听……（观众：表演一下[太空步]吧！）。算了，今天就不表演了。那个时候，我们用随身听，而不是 iPod。附近的几条街还不像现在这么有人气。时代广场也还不是美国家庭趋之若鹜之地。我知道这些都是老黄历了。没有什么比听毕业演讲嘉宾一味唠叨过去的事更糟糕的了。但是，尽管有以上种种不同，1983届的毕业生实际上与你们还是有许多共同点的。因为在我们进入社会时，我们的国家同样也处在一次极为严重的经济衰退的恢复期。那是一个充满变化、充满未知的时代。那也是一个充满激烈的政治辩论的时代。

你们应该能够领会这些，因为正当你们刚刚开始认识这座校园时，一场经济危机袭来，还没等你们大学一年级结束，就有500多万的工作岗位因为经济危机

5 million jobs before the end of your freshman year. Since then, some of you have probably seen parents put off retirement, friends struggle to find work. And you may be looking toward the future with that same sense of concern that my generation did when we were sitting where you are now.

Of course, as young women, you're also going to **grapple with**<sup>2)</sup> some unique challenges, like whether you'll be able to earn equal pay for equal work; whether you'll be able to balance the demands of your job and your family; whether you'll be able to fully control decisions about your own health.

And while opportunities for women have grown **exponentially**<sup>3)</sup> over the last 30 years, as young people, in many ways you have it even tougher than we did. This recession has been more brutal, the job losses steeper. Politics seems nastier. Congress more gridlocked than ever. Some folks in the financial world have not exactly been model corporate citizens.

No wonder that faith in our institutions has never been lower, particularly when good news doesn't get the same kind of ratings as bad news anymore. Every day you receive a steady stream of sensationalism and scandal and stories with a message that suggest change isn't possible; that you can't make a difference; that you won't be able to close that gap between life as it is and life as you want it to be.

My job today is to tell you don't believe it, because as tough as things have been, I am convinced you are tougher. I've seen your passion and I've seen your service. I've seen you engage and I've seen you turn out in record numbers. I've heard your voices amplified by creativity and a digital fluency that those of us in older generations can barely comprehend. I've seen a generation eager, impatient even, to step into the rushing waters of history and change its course.

And that defiant, **can-do**<sup>4)</sup> spirit is what runs through the veins of American

而消失。从那时起，你们当中的一些人可能发现父母推迟了退休，看到朋友艰难地寻找工作。而你们也许正忧心忡忡地看待未来，当我们那一代人处在你们现在的位置时，也怀着同样的心情。

当然，作为年轻的女性，你们还将应对一些独特的挑战，比如能否获得同工同酬的待遇；能否平衡工作与家庭的需求；能否对自己的健康有完全的决定权。

虽然女性面临的机会在过去的 30 年内成呈几何级数增长，但在许多方面，你们年轻人目前的处境比我们当时更加艰难。这次的经济衰退更严重，岗位削减更厉害。政治方面似乎更加不堪。国会的效率比以往任何时候都低。一些金融界人士严格来讲还称不上模范的企业公民。

这也难怪公众对于体制的信心降到了历史最低点，特别是在这个好消息不如坏消息引人注意的时代。你每天都会源源不断地接收到各种耸人听闻的消息、丑闻和报道，它们暗示的是这样一个信息：变革是不可能的；你的努力无济于事；你无法消除现实生活与理想生活之间的差距。

我今天的任务就是告诉你们：别信这一套。因为就算现实很残酷，我还是相信你们更坚忍。我看到了你们的热情，也看到了你们的奉献。我看到你们积极参与事务，也看到你们参与的人数空前。我听到了你们的声音，这声音变得如此强有力，靠的是创造力和我们这一代人几乎无法理解的对数字技术的熟稔。我看到你们这代人雄心勃勃，甚至是急不可耐地想要踏入历史的滚滚洪流，改变它前进的方向。

美国历史的脉络中流淌的正是这种藐视困难、充满干劲的精神，这是我们取

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2. grapple with: 努力解决(困难); 努力克服(困难)

3. exponentially [ˌɛkspəˈnɛnʃ(ə)li] adv. 急剧增长地, 呈几何级数倍增地

4. can-do: 有干劲的

history. It's the lifeblood of all our progress. And it is that spirit which we need your generation to embrace and rekindle right now.

See, the question is not whether things will get better—they always do. The question is not whether we've got the solutions to our challenges—we've had them within our grasp for quite some time. We know, for example, that this country would be better off if more Americans were able to get the kind of education that you've received here at Barnard, if more people could get the specific skills and training that employers are looking for today.

We know that we'd all be better off if we invest in science and technology that sparks new businesses and medical breakthroughs; if we developed more clean energy so we could use less foreign oil and reduce the carbon pollution that's threatening our planet.

We know that we're better off when there are rules that stop big banks from making bad bets with other people's money, when insurance companies aren't allowed to drop your coverage when you need it most or charge women differently from men. Indeed, we know we are better off when women are treated fairly and equally in every aspect of American life—whether it's the salary you earn or the health decisions you make.

We know these things to be true. We know that our challenges are eminently solvable. The question is whether together, we can muster<sup>5)</sup> the will—in our own lives, in our common institutions, in our politics—to bring about the changes we need. And I'm convinced your generation possesses that will. And I believe that the women of this generation—that all of you will help lead the way. Now, I recognize that's a cheap applause line when you're giving a commencement at Barnard. It's the easy thing to say. But it's true. It is—in part, it is simple math. Today, women are not just half this country; you're half its workforce. More and

得一切进步的根本。而你们这代人现在需要继承和发扬的正是这种精神。

注意，问题不在于事情能否得以好转——事情总归是会好转的。问题也不在于我们能否找到应对挑战的方法——我们早就掌握了解决方法。例如，我们都知道，如果更多的美国人能享受到你们在巴纳德学院受到的教育，或者更多的人获得现在雇主所期待的技能与训练，我们的国家就会变得更好。



我们知道，如果我们投资那些引发新商机和重大医学突破的科学技术，或者更多地开发清洁能源，以减少使用进口石油，降低危害地球的碳污染，我们所有人的状况都会改善。

我们知道，如果我们有法规阻止大型银行用别人的钱进行高风险投机，如果我们不允许保险公司在你最需要的时候取消保险项目或者向女性收取区别于男性的费用，我们的状况就会改善。毫无疑问，我们知道，如果女性能够在美国社会生活的各个方面得到公正、公平的对待——无论是工资还是针对自己健康所做的决定——我们的状况就会改善。

我们知道这些都是对的。我们也知道所面临的挑战是完全可以解决的。问题是我们能否共同下定决心——无论是在个人生活、公共机构还是政治活动方面——让我们所需要的变革发生。我确信你们这代人拥有这样的决心和意志。我也相信你们这一代女性——你们所有人都会起到示范作用。现在，我发现在巴纳德学院毕业典礼上演讲，这是一句很容易就赢得掌声的话。这话说起来挺容易。但这是

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5. muster ['mʌstə(r)] vt. 运足(力气); 集中(精力); 聚集(支持力量)

more women are out-earning their husbands. You're more than half of our college graduates, and master's graduates, and PhDs. So you've got us outnumbered.

After decades of slow, steady, extraordinary progress, you are now **poised**<sup>6)</sup> to make this the century where women shape not only their own destiny but the destiny of this nation and of this world.

But how far your leadership takes this country, how far it takes this world—well, that will be up to you. You've got to want it. It will not be handed to you. And as someone who wants that future—that better future—for you, and for Malia and Sasha, as somebody who's had the good fortune of being the husband and the father and the son of some strong, remarkable women, allow me to offer just a few pieces of advice. That's obligatory. Bear with me.

My first piece of advice is this: Don't just get involved. Fight for your seat at the table. Better yet, fight for a seat at the head of the table.

It's been said that the most important role in our democracy is the role of citizen. And indeed, it was 225 years ago today that the Constitutional Convention opened in Philadelphia, and our founders, citizens all, began crafting an extraordinary document. Yes, it had its flaws—flaws that this nation has strived to **protect**<sup>7)</sup> [perfect] over time. Questions of race and gender were unresolved. No woman's signature graced the original document—although we can assume that there were founding mothers whispering smarter things in the ears of the founding fathers. I mean, that's almost certain.

What made this document special was that it provided the space—the possibility—for those who had been left out of our charter to fight their way in. It provided people the language to appeal to principles and ideals that broadened democracy's reach. It allowed for protest, and movements, and the

真的。这是——从某种程度上说，这不过是简单的算术。今天，女性不仅占全国人口的一半，还占劳动力的一半。越来越多女性的收入超过了她们的丈夫。大学毕业生、硕士毕业生和博士毕业生当中超过一半是女性。所以，你们在数量上超过了我们男性。

经过几十年缓慢、持续而非凡的进步，你们现在已做好准备，让本世纪的女性不仅能够改变自己的命运，还能改变这个国家和这个世界的命运。

但你们能够带领这个国家走多远，带领这个世界走多远——这将取决于你们。你们必须有这种意愿。男性是不会把领导权送到你们手上的。作为那个希望你们——还有马利亚和萨莎——拥有更好的未来的人，作为那个有幸成为坚强而杰出的女性的丈夫、父亲与儿子的人，请允许我给你们提几条建议。这是必须要做的。忍着点吧。

我的第一条建议是：不要仅仅满足于参与。要在决策层争取一席之地，最好是争取到领导者的岗位。

有人说，我们的民主体制当中最重要的角色是公民的角色。的确，正是在 225 年前的今天，制宪会议在费城召开，我国的开国元勋们——他们每个人都是公民的一员——开始策划一份伟大的文件。诚然，这份文件是有缺陷的——我们一直在努力改正这些缺陷。其时种族与性别问题尚未解决。没有女性在原始文件上签名，为其增添光彩——虽然我们能想象到“国母”们私下里一定向“国父”们提出了更高明的意见。我是说，这一点几乎是可以肯定的。

这一文件的特别之处在于，它为那些遗漏在宪章之外的人设法进入宪章、争取权力提供了空间，或者说可能性。公众可以根据其中的条款诉诸那些拓宽民主

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6. poised [ˈpɔɪzd] *adj.* 随时准备行动的

7. 此处有口误，应为perfect(改正)。



[dissemination](#)<sup>8)</sup> of new ideas that would repeatedly, decade after decade, change the world—a constant forward movement that continues to this day.

Our founders understood that America does not stand still. We are dynamic, not static. We look forward, not back. And now that new doors have been opened for you, you've got an obligation to seize those opportunities.

You need to do this not just for yourself but for those who don't yet enjoy the choices that you've had, the choices you will have. And one reason many workplaces still have outdated policies is because women only account for 3 percent of the CEOs at Fortune 500 companies. One reason we're actually refighting long-settled battles over women's rights is because women occupy fewer than one in five seats in Congress.

Now, I'm not saying that the only way to achieve success is by climbing to the top of the corporate ladder or running for office—although, let's face it, Congress would get a lot more done if you did. That I think we're sure about. But if you decide not to sit yourself at the table, at the very least you've got to make sure you have a say in who does. It matters.

Before women like [Barbara Mikulski](#)<sup>9)</sup> and [Olympia Snowe](#)<sup>10)</sup> and others got to Congress, just to take one example, much of federally-funded research on diseases focused solely on their effects on men. It wasn't until women like [Patsy Mink](#)<sup>11)</sup> and [Edith Green](#)<sup>12)</sup> got to Congress and passed [Title IX](#)<sup>13)</sup>, 40 years ago this year, that we declared women, too, should be allowed to compete and win

范围的原则与理想。它允许抗议、运动和新思想的传播，这些新思想会在以后的岁岁年年中一次又一次地改变世界。这一不断向前的运动一直持续到了今天。

我们的开国元勋深知美国不会停滞不前。我们充满活力，而非死气沉沉。我们着眼于未来，而非沉湎于过去。既然你们的面前打开了全新的大门，你们就有义务抓住这些机会。

你们要做这些，并非仅仅为了你们自己，而是为了那些未能享受到你们所拥有以及将会拥有的选择权利的人。许多工作单位之所以仍然沿用过时的政策，其中一个原因是在世界 500 强企业的首席执行官中，女性只占 3%。我们实际上是重新开始了早已平息的夺取女权的斗争，这其中的一个原因是国会中女性议员的数量不到五分之一。

当然，我并不是说登上企业阶梯的顶层或者竞选公职是获得成功的唯一途径——虽然我得说，面对现实吧，如果你们这么做，国会将变得更加高效。我想关于这一点我们确信无疑。但是如果你决定不进入决策层，你至少也要确保你有权参与决定谁能进入。这很重要。

在芭芭拉·米库尔斯基、奥林匹娅·斯诺和其他女性进入国会之前，许多联邦政府资助的疾病研究项目只关注疾病对于男性的影响——这只是其中一个例子。直到 40 年前帕齐·明克和伊迪丝·格林这些女性进入国会并通过“教育法修正案

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8. dissemination [ˌdɪˌsemɪˈneɪʃ(ə)n] *n.* 散布; 传播

9. Barbara Mikulski: 芭芭拉·米库斯基(1917~2006), 美国参议员, 政府科学顾问

10. Olympia Snowe: 奥林匹娅·斯诺(1947~), 美国参议员, 参议院小商业与小企业委员会首席成员

11. Patsy Mink: 帕齐·明克(1927~2002), 第一位当选美国国会议员的亚裔女性, 也是下文提到的“教育法修正案第九条”(Title IX)的起草者。

12. Edith Green: 伊迪丝·格林(1910~1987), 美国国会议员、教育家

13. Title IX: 美国的“教育法修正案第九条”, 其规定“在美国, 任何人都不得因其性别被排除在接受联邦资助的任何教育或活动计划之外, 被剥夺此类计划或活动应有的待遇, 或受到歧视”。



on America's playing fields. Until a woman named [Lilly Ledbetter<sup>14\)</sup>](#) showed up at her office and had the courage to step up and say, you know what, this isn't right, women weren't being treated fairly—we lacked some of the tools we needed to uphold the basic principle of equal pay for equal work.

So don't accept somebody else's construction of the way things ought to be. It's up to you to right wrongs. It's up to you to point out injustice. It's up to you to hold the system accountable and sometimes upend it entirely. It's up to you to stand up and to be heard, to write and to lobby, to march, to organize, to vote. Don't be content to just sit back and watch.

Those who oppose change, those who benefit from an unjust [status quo<sup>15\)</sup>](#), have always bet on the public's cynicism or the public's complacency. Throughout American history, though, they have lost that bet, and I believe they will this time as well. But ultimately, Class of 2012, that will depend on you. Don't wait for the person next to you to be the first to speak up for what's right, because maybe, just maybe, they're waiting on you.

Which brings me to my second piece of advice: Never underestimate the power of your example. The very fact that you are graduating, let alone that more women now graduate from college than men, is only possible because earlier generations of women—your mothers, your grandmothers, your aunts—shattered the myth that you couldn't or shouldn't be where you are.