WEDDING SPEECH

FOR

JILL BALMUTH

Hello everyone! It is really great to be here and to have the opportunity to speak at Victoria and Jenn’s wedding. Actually, I had heard a rumor that the **MAN** himself, President Obama, was supposed to be here to share a few thoughts with this crowd, but I heard that since he made his **BiG STATEMENT** last week (**Please adjust this if the wedding is not next week**), he’s been in pretty high demand on the talk circuit!! And no, I am not referring to his “to do” list for Congress…. you all know **exactly** what I mean!!! I guess he heard about Victoria and Jenn and finally realized that allowing people who love each other and want to commit their lives to each other under G-d and the law makes perfect and common sense-for **every person**. **Period**. President Obama-it’s **ABOUT TIME** and **THANK YOU**!!! (**Say this with enthusiasm and wait for the applause and cheering**). To Victoria and Jenn, the both of you look beautiful and trust me; the love that is radiating from the 2 of you fills this room and the entire building!

Today we’re here to celebrate love, marriage, commitment and partnership, and I am honored to have a part in this momentous occasion as we speak to all of you about all of those good things from our perspective. I want to welcome both of you to this “institution.” Of course, now that you’re married, we have the opportunity to “look at love from both sides now..” The 2 sides being the altruistic, optimistic thoughts that dreams are made of, and then of course, the one liners-Jenn and Victoria, welcome to the club! Some people say, “Marriage is like the army. Everybody complains, but you’d be surprised how many re-enlist.” Or there are those who say, “The formula for a happy marriage? It’s the same as the one for living in California: when you find a fault, don’t dwell on it.” … And Mae West said, (**You can vamp this up a little if you want to**) “Marriage is a great institution, but I’m not ready for an institution!” Well, Mae… you can worry about pistols in pockets. Thank goodness for this institution and I for one, am happily **committed for life**!!!

(**Your notes did not state that the 2 of you are married, so I am referring to your “other half” as “partner.” Please change this if necessary)** I stand before you as a proud and happily committed woman, one who has been in love with the same woman for 33 years. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I have 2 beautiful children, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and one magnificent 11-year-old grandson named, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Victoria and Jenn, you are both witnesses and participants in **making history**. Sooner or later …. And I am sure we all intend for the complete transformation to be **sooner** … this will be a world in which **everyone** will be free to marry whomever he or she chooses. It is every human being’s inalienable civil right to partake in the institution of marriage-for better or for worse!

As I said, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I are bound and committed for life and beyond, and no one can take that away from us. What’s our secret to a long, happy and fulfilled relationship? The foundation of any healthy marriage or partnership is love-a deep and abiding love that is really demonstrated in focus and commitment-**no matter what**. No matter how crappy the day was, no matter how tired we are, no matter how angry we got at the telephone company or mistakes that were made or fights that we had, we go back to look into each other’s eyes to re-establish the focus on having built a life that is really much bigger and more important that the “petty pace” of our every day lives. When we face challenges in our life together, we hold on to each other and get ready to jump-to go through whatever it is that may stand in the way of the happiness of our family. Believe me, I am sure you can imagine that over the years, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I have faced plenty of challenges and adversity, but knowing neither one of us faced it alone has been one of the great comforts of my life.

From there, the other elements get layered in. And so the layers start with respect. We may not always agree, but I respect \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s opinion, and heaven knows, she is always welcome to mine! (**Wait for the laugh**). To paraphrase an ancient Persian proverb, “**She** who wants a rose must respect the thorn.” None of us are perfect. Every day does not contain the adrenalin and emotional euphoria inspired by a wedding, like today. Most days are blissfully ordinary, and one of life’s true benefits is to find the little gifts that are right in front of us each day, usually in the most ordinary situations, and remembering to maintain mutual respect allows us to really experience the gifts of having our soul mates so close to us. Victoria and Jenn, remember to take at least a few minutes each day to look into each other’s eyes, connect with each other’s souls and fell the love and respect-**no matter what**.

There are times when we can get really angry at each other, and it can get really heated, but we both know that, once again, **no matter what**, we have a safe space to say what’s on our minds and we work through those disagreements constructively. We do our best to empathize-to stand in the other’s shoes and try to imagine the conflict from the other’s point of view. Sometimes reconciliation takes a little longer, but with commitment, trust and respect, we figure out the resolution.

We know that our lives are sometimes impossibly busy. Between kids, grandkids, jobs, and commitments, it’s easy to forget who makes my life possible and worthwhile. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I make it a habit to spend at least a few moments each day purely for each other. We also know that life is short and family is precious. Instead of stressing out to **chronicle** the events in our lives, we do whatever we can to **live** them. We do what we can to be conscious and “in the moment” as much as possible. We listen, we observe, we make mental notes. Of course we document both special occasions and every day events, but we know the sweetest memories will be those that the both of us remember we have shared and that strengthens our connection and family. I mean, for heaven’s sake, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**grandson**) is 11 years old already!! Time really does seem to evaporate. Cherish each other and the life you’re building together.

(**If there are any other tips or points you want to include to describe how you maintain a successful relationship, add them here**). \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I also believe in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

In order to try and discover the secrets of a successful marriage, two young men traveled 12,000 miles around the US interviewing couples that have been married for more than 40 years, and basically they came up with the same criteria I have mentioned here. In the article I found about their research, Matthew Boggs and Jason Miller shared the words of one of their interviewees who has been married for 65 years. These are powerful words and all of us should heed this advice-married or not. The man said, “You are the master of your words until they are spoken. Then they become the master of you… so choose your words **carefully**.”

Your life and your marriage will be a reflection of what you invest, and of what you make real in this world. Focus on the positive and pay attention to the person that stands beside you every day. Speak your mind when something really bothers you, but remember-it is most definitely NOT all about YOU. It takes two to make a relationship work, and if each one finds the balance between caring for the other while giving space, success will be achieved. The two of you already love each other very much. Try to find some way to maintain that feeling for each other, even for a few moments every day.

 You two are a beautiful example of the sanctity of marriage and one day all of our brothers and sisters and everyone who chooses, will be able to exercise his and her right to be married. As I said earlier, the two of you are part of history, and some day, and I intend for it to happen in our lifetime, the distinction will be blurred beyond recognition and **all** people will have the right to marry whomever he or she chooses.

Victoria and Jenn, people are inspired by the love and commitment you so proudly have for each other. Thank you for demonstrating your passion and pride. Congratulations and we wish you all of the happiness in the world!