HAPPY BIRTHDAY SPEECH

FOR

MANU PARIKH

Hello everyone!! It’s such a pleasure to be here to celebrate this milestone birthday for our dear friend and neighbor, Girish…actually, at **OUR** age, it’s great to be **anywhere**!! (**Wait for the laugh**)…. come to think of it, are we **REALLY** old enough to say that? Didn’t I hear that 60 is the new 30? Or were “they” referring to how long it takes us to wake up in the morning and get ready to go **anywhere** these days? (**Wait for the laugh**). The great American comedienne, Lucille Ball once said, “The secret to staying young is to live honestly, eat slowly, and…. **lie about your age**.” Girish, your problem is that everyone knows you and loves you, and now we all know how old you are, so…. too late for **THAT** one!! (**Wait for the laugh**). I was thinking that it seems like it was only yesterday when we were young and full of mischief, and then I was reminded that, “Time flies like an arrow, but **fruit flies** like a banana”…. (**Wait for the laugh**)…. Yes folks, I’ve got even **MORE** jokes!! This is a wonderful gathering and a beautiful party, and as someone once said about a similar celebration, “You know you’re at a 60th birthday party when the festivities **don’t** disturb the neighbors!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Well folks, with all due respect, even though most of you know that I can tend to be a little shy and reserved, since this is such a special occasion, I have to say that I think we’re all still young enough to shake things up a bit and get a little-just a little- noisy in honor of Girish’s big day!! What do you say? Let’s hear it for Girish!!! (**Lead them in applause and cheering**).

(**Turn to Girish and say**) Girish, I know that as you get “older,” you may get a little sensitive about hearing age jokes, and believe me, I understand, but guess what? I’m just getting started!! Only kidding. (**Say this with a lot of sincerity**) Girish, tonight you will see many familiar faces, and this room is filled with people who love, admire and respect you. I have to say that I am probably one of your biggest “fans.” I am proud to call you my best friend and you inspire me in so many ways, in fact, tonight I am doing my best to show just **how** you inspire me. I love your sense of humor, your spontaneity, your ability to tell a story, and I am sure everyone will agree that your laugh is infectious. Your quick wit and way with a word keeps a conversation lively and I love being a part of that dialogue. You know that I tend to be more quiet-I’m not one to enjoy attention or to be in the limelight, but this is such a special day for you, I wanted to get up, share some thoughts about you, let everyone know how great it is to be your good friend, and give back to you a little of the joy you bring to so many others all around you, so…. back to the jokes!!! (**Wait for the laugh**)

Girish, you set a wonderful example for people to admire and to follow. There is and expression that teaches us, “I am part of all that I have met.” I think it is quite clear to everyone in this room, and even to some who could not be here with us tonight in this beautiful location, that it is a privilege to be in your life and I know that I am proud to have met and to be such a close friend to you. Knowing that we can share a joke, discuss more serious issues, band together to give advice, and of course play some intense games of cards, is a constant source of joy. Sharing special occasions-like this, vacations, events, and even just every day life makes everything else more special, and I know I am not alone in having that thought. Thomas Jefferson was a very wise man and statesman. Of friendship, he said, “… But friendship is precious; not only in the shade, but in the sunshine of life, and thanks to a benevolent arrangement the greater part of life is sunshine.” You have brought a lot of sunshine to our lives.

Now that “the first half” of your life has been lived, we can all see that you have done some wonderful and generous things, and you should be very proud-I know I am very proud of you. (**Name 3 things that Girish has done for the community and for friends that demonstrate his generosity**) You have been a driving force for your community and those in it. Your charitable work with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is really inspirational and so many people’s live have been transformed thanks to your kindness and big-hearted nature. You have done some wonderful work with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and who will ever forget how you helped \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. This world is a much better place thanks to you, Girish \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**last name**).

The French author, Marcel Proust, once said, “Let us be grateful to people who make us happy, they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.” Girish, you can see all of the souls that have blossomed thanks to your kindness, sense of humor and generosity. They are here tonight. This room is a garden filled with flowers made up of smiling faces and warmed hearts that are here to honor **YOU**. (**If Girish has a wife and children, and grandchildren, mention them here**) In particular, we would like to acknowledge your wonderful wife \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and your beautiful children, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Your grandchildren, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, are precious and I am sure they are all quite aware of how blessed they are to have such a wonderful father and grandfather like you. (**If you have a cute story about either one of Girish’s children or grandchildren, tell it here.**) I remember the time that Girish told me about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. We all thought it was really adorable. The next generations of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s (**Girish’s last name**) are a wonderful reflection of the best characteristics in you and it is heartwarming to know that they carry your wisdom, humor and generosity into the future. And when they grow up, may each one be as good a card player as you are!!

I think that for a person who usually likes to keep quiet, I’ve said quite a lot. I hope each one of you gets a really clear idea of just how much Girish’s friendship means to me, as I am sure it means so much to each one of you, and if I’m very, very lucky, he’ll still be speaking to me after this speech!!!

I would like to invite all of you to raise a glass as I propose a special toast to our dear friend Girish on the occasion of his 60th birthday. This may sound a little like an adaptation of another expression, but when I found it, I thought it was an appropriate way for all of us to look at the “maturity and wisdom” process we are all experiencing:

Girish, “God grant you the **senility** to **forget** the people you **never liked**, the good fortune to run into the people you do, and the **eyesight to tell the difference**. Happy 60th Birthday!!!” (**Wait for the laugh**)

Girish, have a happy healthy, birthday, and may wisdom, prosperity, friendship and sunshine stay with you each day of your life. The “first half” has left an indelible and inspirational mark on all of us here and on this planet, and we are all much happier, stronger and wiser people for knowing you.

Happy birthday!!

Thank you!!