FATHER’S BAS MITZVAH SPEECH

FOR

BRIAN SCHWARTZ

Hi everyone and thank you all for being with us to share this **very** happy occasion. Of course for those of you that **KNOW** Maddy, and that would be just about **EVERYONE**- of course, you know that she is one of the most positive and happy people we all will ever know, so let’s face it, let’s embrace it… and not that I want to be a corny dad, **BUT** in the words of Pharrell, “Sunshine, she’s here… you can take a break!!”

I can’t believe it’s been thirteen years since we first laid eyes on, and fell in love with the beautiful and **happy** Ms. Maddy Schwartz. From the very beginning, you were just like a ray of light; you were and are, our sunshine…. It’s no accident that your gmail account name is Maddy sunshine. (**Turn to Maddy and say**) Maddy, I don’t know if you know this, but there’s an old expression that goes, “Give me the child when he or she is 5 years old and I will show you the man or woman.” That’s a pretty bold statement meaning that who we are is formed at a very early age. Well!! The person that coined that phrase obviously hadn’t met you!! The truth is, absolutely- from the **minute** you were born you showed us the most natural and instinctive expression of your determination, optimism, and happiness. You know when babies are born, each one has to get a little whack on their bottom to help them to open their lungs and breathe? Well, with you, the doctor literally had to smack you a few times… you just **refused** to cry!! I’m not even joking about this!! It was a scene!! From that moment on, life has been very, very good to us thanks to your wonderful outlook on life-you’ve been the most positive and enthusiastic person I know…. even more than Mommy! And as for me, for someone that tends to be a bit on the “grumpy” side, I swear-I don’t know how I go this lucky!! But believe me, I count my blessings every day… and when no one is looking…. I allow myself to smile-almost as big as you do!

I have to say though, that when we picked you up at the airport this past August when you came home from camp, it was Mom and I who were smiling and quite surprised to see you as the sad and misty eyed one as you said good-bye to your camp friends. It’s been a long time since I was your age, but I can only imagine the emotions stirred up as all of you prepared to go your own ways. I mean, it MUST have been so huge to you at the time, and of course, in typical “Dad” manner… yes, this is what Dads do… I snuck up nearby and took a picture of you in the midst of your tearful farewells. The following Monday I showed the picture to my friend Rich Siegel and he looked very surprised. He remarked, “I’ve never seen Maddy, live or digitally captured, where she didn’t have a bright smile on her face.” The then sent me a picture (**of his child?)** and the caption said, “This is what Sarah usually looks like.” I think sometimes we really don’t realize our blessings. Rich’s observation allowed me to appreciate you even more, if that’s possible.

There are no accidents in this world-everything happens for a reason, and I am touched by the Torah portion that was selected for you to read. It was about the creation of the world, and amazingly enough was the same passage I got to read at my Bar Mitzvah. I really think it was so appropriate for you, and you did a beautiful job sharing it with us.

I don’t know if you know this, but wherever Mom and I go, when your name comes up, people comment and share how poised they think you are; how your eyes show such sincerity and interest. You have a special gift of allowing people to feel good about themselves. You are becoming a wonderful young woman and Mom and I could not be more proud of you. Today is a special passage in your life and it will be one of those landmarks that neither you, nor we will forget. Remember to stay true to your vision of life and always know that you have G-d given gifts that make you very, very unique. Trust me-we **KNOW** they’re G-d given…. because I’m pretty sure they didn’t come from me!!! (**You can make a** **joke and say**) The new iphone (**Or mention whatever latest “IT” thing she got**) **THAT** was a gift from me!!! This joy??? Let’s just say thanks!! (**And wait** **for the laugh**). We love you. We’re so proud of you! Mazel Tov!!