BEST MAN SPEECH

FOR

CHRIS VELIS

Hi everyone!!! It is so great to be here…. so many of us wondered if this day would ever arrive! I think some of us might have been even more anxious than Lauren (**Turn to Lauren and say**) but Lauren… our boy Dan came through in the endgame so it’s time to celebrate!! …Let’s just say that those of you who really KNOW Dan know what I mean. We can put it this way… I take my responsibilities as Best Man seriously. I prepped. I planned. I researched… and of course I consulted my most revered source of reliable stats about today’s favorite subject, love and marriage, and I discovered that the average length of courtship before marriage is 2.8 years. Our groom, Dan, also known as Danoz Direct, Tu Hoa, and thanks to his mastery and distinction of being the person to take the longest time **EVER** to court and hatch a proposal, **Tu Slowa**, …. Lauren, your patience is an inspiration… (**Wait for the laugh**), hemmed and hawed and hatched and **marinated** for…. ladies and gentlemen, **TEN WHOLE YEARS**, probably earning the award for “Most Cautious Potential Bridegroom,” so in honor of that caution and thirst for just the right timing (some may call it procrastination)…. I plan to switch things up a bit and propose **THREE** toasts this evening… one for each 2.8 years of our favorite couple’s courtship… By the way, this serves two purposes…. It brings to light the length and breadth of this very special relationship and…. by the time I’m done, you’ll think I’m the funniest person ever and will be **CRACKING UP** from my wit (hopefully) by the end of this speech…

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to invite you to raise a glass as I propose a toast to Danoz and Lozza,,,, There is an expression in Vietnamese culture that teaches us, **"Cây lành sinh trái ngǫt.”** Someone said it means, “Good tree produces fruit.” Let’s hope I’m pronouncing it right!!! I think the Tu-Hoa and Rogge family trees produced **REALLY** good fruit in these two great people… Bottoms up!!

I really must take a moment and compliment the bridal party. All of the bridesmaids and maid of honor look absolutely stunning and Lauren, if Dan even had an inkling of just how gorgeous and radiant you look today, this best man speech would have had far less prep time!! I also want to acknowledge that our groom and all of my fellow groomsmen are to be applauded for giving it their all to be in tip top career shape before being measured for the suits they all wear today…of course most of that hard work and Spartan training kind of went down the ole drain in Vegas just a couple of weeks ago… but I have to say… well done, boys… (**If you want to make a joke you can** **say)** Glad to see everyone was able to make bail…. Only kidding!! (**And wait for the laugh**).

I am proud to say that I have known Dan since we were kids in high school. I’ve seen him learn. I’ve seen him grow. And I’ve seen him wheel and deal. Yes even as a kid he was clever and swift. He may not even remember this but I’d like to share my very first memory of interacting with him…. It was back in year 7, during the heyday of trading basketball cards. I think it’s safe to say that at the height of his powers, Dan had pretty much locked down the sector and monopolized his market. I remember I was in a heated search for cards representing the elusive and obscure David Robinson. He was not on the radar and I wasn’t expecting much knowing that no one else was interested in collecting him, but I will never forget **THAT** moment… Just as I walked up to Dan to see IF he might have anything to offer, it was as though he had been waiting intuitively, like Captain Ahab as he prepared to hook his catch of the day…I don’t think I had to say a word and out came pages and pages of David Robinson cards meticulously catalogued and preserved in neatly organized plastic sleeves. Before I could blink he opened a line of credit for me and I committed to spending over three months worth of my pocket money on cards I **didn’t even know** I NEEDED…. How did I manage to LIVE before I knew this kid?? (**Wait for the** **laugh**). What I eventually learned to really love and appreciate about Dan was right in front of me that day…Dan is a born salesman with an unbridled passion for life … and whatever he happens to be into at the time.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to invite you all to raise your glasses as I propose another toast… There’s a Chinese expression that teaches us self-sufficiency… Just for tonight I would like to paraphrase it in honor of your friend and mine, Dan….”Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to collect basketball cards and you feed him for a lifetime!!!” Bottoms up!!

Yes, Dan has an infectious passion for life and his powers of persuasion and his creativity in any situation can inspire…. wellll…. A LOT. Who will ever forget when he convinced that young boy to swim across a canal in Amsterdam in the middle of winter? Or what about the time he did his best Tracy Chapman rendition of “Gimme One Reason” in a pub filled with drunk Irish patrons who couldn’t comprehend why Tana Umaga was playing acoustic guitar on stage…. yes this was during Dan’s dreadlock phase… he tried to sell **ALL** of us on **THAT** look… (**Wait for the laugh**). Then there was the series of “**Happy snaps**”... taken all over the world… you can all use your imaginations on THAT one… let’s just say that too many cohorts joined in… and of course the paragliding phase launched off mountain tops in between jobs until I showed him enough YouTube videos of “paragliding gone wrong” to convince him that probably wasn’t his best idea for fun…but of then probably his most harebrained idea of a hobby was when he got into Krav Maga, a martial art so special that we haven’t even **heard** of it, one requiring such skill that the Israeli Defense Force explains it as “the art of going home **ALIVE**.” … Something about groin strikes, head butts and choking are not only considered acceptable moves but are highly recommended. ‘Nuff said about **THAT** one!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

All things considered, we all should feel lucky we have a groom here at all, but that’s also a testimony to how much he loves Lauren and what a great couple they are. Dan has really grabbed life by the “horns” and he lives it like he means it. He’s incredibly smart, well traveled, and as you can see completely passionate about life (**Note: I didn’t list details because of time constraints-I didn’t want to ramble too much-if you want to add his education and experience you can do that here)** and he also tends to be a little (**HA!**) on the competitive side, But guess what!?!? He met his match in Lauren….

I’ve know Lauren since high school as well and let me tell you… bright, beautiful, resourceful **AND** able to compete doesn’t even **BEGIN** to describe our bride…. I remember when they first met, Dan came up with the idea to hold a competition to determine who wins “Employee of the Month,” … you know… who contributes more to the relationship. He set up a point system to help gauge who is the better boyfriend or girlfriend. Dan, all I can say is, “What were you THINKING?” Did you really even IMAGINE you’d beat Lauren at this one? Krav Maga… dangerous yes, stupid maybe…but “employee of the month” in a relationship with a girl like Lauren? You’re toast even **WITH** the collages of happy couple pictures and the love poems! !! Man up fella!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

Lauren, for the past ten years I’ve been so sure of the two of you getting to this day that I even saved you in my phone as “Mrs. Tu-Hoa” even from the get go. Of course back then… all those YEARS ago I couldn’t imagine it would have taken **THIS** long…. and as the listing moved from (**Name some of your ancient** **mobile phones**) the first tin cans I used to call Dan from across the yard to that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and then \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and as Dan used every single minute of every single day of the past ten years to earn that nickname, Tu-Slowa, I never gave up hope that the two of you would be together. I know…. you and me **BOTH** (**Wait for the laugh**). First in Kingsford, where he lived with his family and I enjoyed countless bowls of authentic mego-reng and phu, and then in Surry Hills, where Dan would be showing off the culinary skills he gained from cooking class on Sunday nights which he named “Sing for your Supper” .. And then, that Magical night, after about a dozen beers at a birthday party, when he was asked to leave… okay **THROWN OUT** after he tried to pull some dance moves using a speaker as a dance partner, Lauren, being the sympathetic and understanding friend went outside to keep him company… I did too until I realized SOMEONE was in salesman mode and working his magic… I remember him commenting how “hot it was” at that moment … until he realized he was sitting on the hood of a freshly parked car, but at that point I got the intuitive “Three’s a crowd memo” and made like a tree so I could leave… and the rest is HISTORY…

I could go on and on and on, but what I want both of you to know is that as many funny moments as there have been, there have also been times when we really needed to be there for each other and we were and are… and I mean all three of us. Dan, you’ve also been there for so many friends and family as well and I cherish every day of the past twenty years that we have had this bond. It’s been a privilege to have you as my close friend and I look forward to the future with you and Lauren. Through business, in friendship and in life, I wish you and Lauren only the very best. Having your friendship is a blessing. I mean let’s face it…how many people do we know who couch surfed around the world, created a class called “A bad dancer’s guide to the dance floor” AND plays the ukulele?!?!.... Tu- Slowa you’re a keeper!!

I’d like to invite all of you to raise a glass as I propose the third and ultimate toast…. Charles Darwin said, “A man’s friendships are the best measure of his worth.” To Dan and Lauren, who, by that definition, have made me very rich indeed, I wish you a lifetime of love, health, happiness, prosperity, all that you wish for, and most of all true friendship.

Thank you all!