80TH BIRTHDAY SPEECH

FOR

KANTILAL RANCHHOD

Hello everyone!! I want to thank all of you for being here. I for one am absolutely thrilled to be here…and of course, you know…. here’s the punchline… at my age; I’m thrilled to be **ANYWHERE**!!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Let’s face it… it’s taken me **EIGHTY** years to get all of you into one room with ME at the center of attention, so **NOW** is definitely the time to “try out my new material!!” (**Wait for the laugh**). In all sincerity though, having you all here with me to celebrate this amazing milestone means more than you will ever know. I know how blessed I am to have all of my faculties and wits about me… especially my keen sense of humor…. (**Wait for the laugh or the moan…),** and that makes this occasion that much more meaningful and fun. I may joke with you about this birthday, but the truth is that it is such a blessing to retain the ability to laugh and to appreciate all that is around. That is one of life’s great gifts and nothing is better than being able to share this joy. As a matter of fact, speaking of the passing of time, for those of you with iPhones, have you ever asked Siri to tell you a joke? I have…. “Past present and future walk into a bar… it was **TENSE**.” (**Wait for the laugh**)… AHA!! I knew it; finally I am funnier than something else!!! I didn’t think it was so funny either…. but today is a day to acknowledge the past, celebrate the present, and aim for the future.

Okay, back to this wonderful party…. I have spent the past eighty years of my life living, learning, listening and loving. This party humbles me and shows me what it means to boast a life well lived. I see friends and neighbors; people I have been blessed to know for most of my life (**Name 2 or 3 of your oldest and** **dearest friends present**). It is such an honor to look around this room and see \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who has been my friend for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_... we met in 19\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when we were just children… relatively speaking!! (**Wait for the laugh**). I see (**Pick someone you’ve known a** **long time** **but not as long as the first 2**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who’s one of the “newcomers”… we’ve only been friends for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years, but he knows me like a book!!

About “maturing,” I once heard someone say, “I’m not getting old, my kids are!!!” The greatest joy of my life is to have the privilege of watching those two wonderful men as they get older and older. To my sons, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, everything parents say about their children is true… and then there are the **NICE** things they say (**Wait for the laugh**). I have to note that I have never been prouder of the two of you than I am today. The both of you have kept me busy and you’ve kept me interested. Throughout the years you’ve kept me on my toes! You’ve challenged me to learn and grow, and when I watch each one of you, together and separately, I know how lucky I am to have such riches. Between the two of you I have been blessed with two beautiful daughters-in-law, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, eight magnificent and special grandchildren, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (**Name some things the grandchildren do that** **make you happy**) Nothing makes me happier than to hear about \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and her \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ while \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ loves to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I live for the stories and adventures that they share with me and with each fascinating tale of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I am reminded of what it means to see the world through a child’s eyes and a young person’s experiences. I thought I had it all and then….. the unfathomable blessing of a **great** grandchild was bestowed upon us in the form of our most precious \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Thanks to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ we have gotten to meet the future of the future!!! (**To the son and daughter-in-law who live next door**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, it is such a comfort to know you are so close to us both physically and emotionally and to (**Name the California son and daughter-in-law**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ although you’re halfway around the world and we miss you so much during the year, to be able to have a home away from home and the opportunity to spend the holidays in beautiful, sunny California… Now **THAT’s** a gift!! (**Wait for the laugh**)

Of course none of this joy could ever have been possible without the love, support, compassion and care given to me by my beautiful wife of **FIFTY** years, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Boy!!! That last 50 years was like a lap around the block, wasn’t it, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? Can you imagine? Time goes by so quickly, and in the blink of an eye, here we are. I want you to know that although we may not acknowledge it all of the time, you are my rock and I love you for everything you do. (**If it is appropriate and you want to make a joke you can say**)…. well…. maybe not **ALL** of that shopping (**or whatever she loves to do a little too much** **and wait for the laugh**) There’s a song from the Broadway musical “Fiddler On the Roof” called “Do You Love Me.” The lyrics go back and forth between husband and wife, and the wife says, “Do I love you? For twenty-five years I’ve washed you clothes, cooked your meals, cleaned your house, given you children, milked the cow. After twenty-five years why talk about love right now?” You know what\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? For us it’s been **TWICE** that and every day your devotion to our family and me is an inspiration. The way you have cared about and for me has also kept me young, so as the husband in the song replies, “Then you love me.” I suppose **I do**. And I suppose I love you too….

The French actress Jeanne Moreau has said, “Age does not protect you from love, but love, to some extent protects you from age.” Each one of you that surrounds me today provides a piece of a shield that cares for me and shows me that age really is just a number. A **BIG** number like this is wonderful!! It inspires people from all over to get together and celebrate and say such great things about me!! It brings us together and shows us just how intensely connected we are to each other and for this one day, I am proud to be the center of this force field of love.

I want to thank you all for your kind words and for your gifts of love and friendship. I am humbled by your acknowledgements. What a great dress rehearsal for the **NEXT** milestone celebration!! Thank you and I love you all!