BAT MITZVAH SPEECH

FOR

ITAI SHOSHANI

Hello everyone! I want to welcome all of you and thank you for sharing this wonderful moment with our family. For those of you that had to travel great distances to be here with us, we want to thank you for taking the time and making the effort to be here. For those of you who are near, we also want to thank all of **YOU** for being taking the time and making the effort to celebrate with us. We are all connected in so many ways throughout life and today we honor our special connection and unique relationship with our beautiful Bat Mitzvah girl, Talia.

Although I may be known as a man of few words, I want to say that I am also a man of many thoughts. Most of those thoughts center on my love for my family and my memories and observations of my children as I witness them becoming beautiful, poised, graceful and caring young women. The event of celebrating one’s Bat Mitzvah is an age-old rite of passage in the process of entering adulthood, but for those of you that really know Talia… and I’m going to say that would include **ALL** of you (**Wait for the laugh**), you’ve had the opportunity to see her demonstrate an elegance and self-possession way beyond her years. To paraphrase one of the popular weekly magazines… Good genes or good dance lessons? I would like to think a little of both is involved when it comes to Talia. Baryshnikov has said that every ballet and every dance that he has learned and performed has given him something important. I think the same is true of how dance has inspired and informed Talia’s life. It takes a special person to want to invest the time, discipline, and training in the practice of dance and I think that even though she is still only a young girl, Talia has taken that practice and used the best of the discipline to inspire the rest of her activities. Whether applying her focus in school or in studying for this day, Talia has shown us that she is beautiful, smart and elegant.

Today is a day to pause and reflect about what life with my daughter has been like for the past thirteen years and although those memories have been flashing through my head non-stop, I would have to say that even the simplest or most everyday events were as special as a moment like this. (**Turn to Talia and say**) Talia, can you remember back to the day when I surprised you and brought home Milky? Wow!! That was an occasion!! You two fell in love instantly and it is (**was?? Is Milky still alive?**) a great relationship that has withstood the test of time. Of course Milky has had her moments…. like when I so generously offered to feed her pasta… of course being the independent feline spirit that Milky is, she chose to bite my finger… Oh **REALLY?** Hasn’t that cat learned that one does **NOT** bite the hand that feeds it?? **LITERALLY**??? (**Wait for the laugh**).

Talia, there’s something else I have to mention when I think of memories and thoughts about you…. most people here may not realize this but you have another talent that I think is world class…. of course I may be biased, but frankly, I don’t know of **ANYONE** that has the capacity to give better hugs than you can!! Just check with Milky!! (**Or if Milky is no longer around you can omit this sentence**).

Talia, you really are the “whole package…” you have such wonderful qualities. You’re a great friend and a “Super” sister. Your enthusiasm for life is infectious… don’t ever lose that spirit… and now you’re ready to take the next steps on your own special life adventure. Be mindful of those around you. Remember to be considerate to others and to do all that you do with integrity. Remember that it’s been said that young girls with dreams become women with vision. Your mother and I have done our best to instill values and lessons that will serve you as you grow up and become an adult. Today you showed all of us a glimpse into what you will be like as an adult and your potential takes my breath away. As you go through life, remember to keep your heart, your mind and your eyes open to new ideas, be compassionate and caring, and know that learning and giving to others never ends. I once heard that “The future belongs to the curious- the ones who are not afraid to try, explore, or question.” I believe that you are THAT kind of person and I although I want you to be my little girl forever; I cannot wait to see how you blossom throughout your life. Mazel tov! (**Congratulations?**) We love you!