REHEARSAL DINNER SPEECH

FOR

RICK NESS

Hello everyone…. it’s so wonderful to be here tonight to celebrate Jake and Kim’s wedding. (**Are you hosting the rehearsal dinner? Do you want to mention your wife and other children? If so you can say**) On behalf of my wife, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and my other children (**Daughter? Son?**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we want to welcome you. We’re here at this rehearsal dinner to begin our **new** life together as a blended, extended family so I thought I would say a few words…. (**If you want you can add**)… Lucky **YOU**!! (**And wait for the laugh**). This room is filled with love and life and good wishes and it’s a real pleasure to have the opportunity to spend time with Kim’s family and friends as we all get to know each other and plan for our newly formed brood. This moment has been a long time in the making even though it feels like just yesterday that Jake was a little boy. So much has happened since then. We can all see that he has grown into such a fine and handsome young man but it wasn’t always like that. I will never forget the day he was born… I mean… what parent **could EVER** forget something **THAT** momentous… and not just because it was one of the highlights of the Ness family’s life… We had been anticipating the event for so long… and then it happened…. and I had one of those **life changing** thoughts…newborn babies are not always the most **stunning** creatures… in fact the nurse took one look at Jake and **slapped me**!! (**Wait for the laugh**). But baby… look at you now!!

So much has been said about the father/son relationship dynamic…. and I intend to add some more deep, **DEEP** thoughts on what it’s been like to have a son, what it’s been like to have a son like Jake, and what I know it will be like to witness Jake become a loving husband. There have been some really inspirational sentiments expressed throughout history and culture about the bond between two generations. Who can ever forget the spiritual awakening when **this** was said by someone… somewhere… “Sometimes I am amazed that my wife and I created human beings from scratch yet struggle to assemble the most basic of IKEA cabinets….” (**Wait for the laugh**). But you know what? This is food for thought and I can see the common thread required to do both successfully… As parents we must remember to be **patient** (**Maybe mention a time when Jake really tried your patience and you almost snapped**)… Jake, my son…why, this reminds me of the time when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_..... (**Make it funny and wait for the laugh**). As a father I’ve learned to **pay attention**… a virtue **DEFINITELY** required in the critical process of **any** IKEA assemblage… or child rearing for that matter… from both I have learned to not throw in the L- Wrench, or the towel, and that building something worthwhile takes time… it takes precision… it takes understanding… (**If you think it’s appropriate for the crowd you can add**) and in **neither** project building nor parenting would we want to have any screws loose!! (**Wait for the laugh**).

The great contemporary comedian Jon Stewart has his own point of view on the subject… “Fatherhood is great because you can ruin something from scratch!” (**Wait for the laugh**). Of course this is a great comment, **HOWEVER**, Jake sort of spoiled it for me… He was, is and always will be a wonderful son and my best friend. I may have tried my darnedest to “ruin” him **(You can add)** and as you can see by this speech I haven’t given up yet…but I have to confess, he is one of the masterpieces of my life…. (**Do you want to mention Jake’s siblings? You** **can do that here**) along with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. **Really**. And just when you all might have thought it seems I’m getting a bit nostalgic, allow me to remind you of the way in which father/son bonding might look from a different point of view…. Of course in this instance I want to invoke the pithy sentiments of Rodney Dangerfield who so touchingly reminisces… “Me and my dad used to play tag. **He drove**.” (**Wait for the laugh**). Boy… **THAT** could give a kid a complex… and a headache or three!!

(**If you want you can turn to Kim and say**)…. How are you doing Kim? (**Do you want to say**)… Did you know I was **THIS** funny? Did you ever even imagine you’d get this humor as a bonus for marrying Jake? … And **HOW** **far away** from us did you say you plan to move???? …Any second thoughts? (**Wait for the laugh**)

A man named Stewart Francis made a brave but poignant confession when he said, “Even though I am so proud of my father for inventing the rear view mirror, we’re not as close as we appear.” (**Wait for the laugh**). Unfortunately I didn’t invent the rear view mirror… think of the royalties I missed…. but fortunately this is not the case with Jake and me. When I glance back through our “rear view mirror” and I remember our past, I can think of so many great moments the two of us have shared (**Maybe start by mentioning something really classically funny or embarrassing that Jake has done**). Who will **EVER** forget the time when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? Or what about when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_? (**Name some other memories the two of you have shared… touching, funny, something that got you so mad but is funny now…**). How did we get so blessed to have a son as wonderful as you? … I’ll think of something…

Jake, we’re standing at the crossroads… From single young man to the beginning of your new life… as a husband with your own family, but don’t ever forget you will always be my son… a gift more than I could have ever imagined. I have been so proud of you throughout your life and I am humbled to witness the incredible, compassionate, caring, man you have become. I learn from you every day. Your integrity and values, your morals and appreciation for nature and life teach all of us what it means to be a worthwhile human being.

It’s no surprise that you found your mate in Kim. What is even more extraordinary is that when two such special people meet and join their lives, the goodness increases geometrically… even though one plus one, in the case of marriage, equals one, the joy and love that emanates from the two of you increases exponentially. I know I speak for all of us when I say that we are blessed to witness this kind of bond.

Someone once said, “A father is a man who expects his son to be as good a man as he meant to be.” I have to say Jake, you have far exceeded any pictures or plans or blueprints I might have envisioned for my own life. You live your life with finesse and rhythm… even when you’re **NOT** on the dance floor!! You make being you look easy… It’s no wonder why Kim fell in love with you!!

So in conclusion I would like to (**Do you want to make a toast? if not you can just say…. “Here’s to”)** invite you to raise a glass as I propose a toast to our bride and groom… “Here’s to Kim and Jake… may you have a lifetime filled with more than you might ever wish for… and we will all be happy celebrating your journey!” Congratulations… We love you!