WEDDING SPEECH

FOR

AMIR EREZ

Hello everyone!! Genna and I want to welcome all of you and thank you for sharing our joy. Today is a celebration… actually a continued celebration of our love and marriage. We deeply appreciate having all of you in our lives and we’re doubly blessed that we have been able to have this extended “World Tour of Love.” It’s been said that, “To love and to be loved is to feel the sun on both sides.” Genna and I are so grateful to have each other and so touched that you are here with us radiating warmth, love, and support. It is humbling for us to be bathed in the light coming from each one of you.

Four years ago I was invited to the home of dear friends, Ksir and Liz. It seems they had a “plan.” It sounded intriguing but I wasn’t sure if I was ready to be a “test subject” and then in walked a beautiful young woman wearing a jacket that said, “**I’m Hooked**.” Friends, there **ARE NO ACCIDENTS** in this world. It only took a short while and I was, indeed, **hooked**…. (**If you want to make a joke you can say**)… On the girl… not the jacket… (**And wait for the laugh**). (**Do you want to say this was bershert? If not just substitute “Meant to be,**”). In Yiddish there’s a word for destiny. It is ‘**Bashert**.” I knew that night, on the way home, that I had met my **bashert**… my **destiny,** and I knew that Genna would be my wife.

Here we are, four years later, more in love than ever, and sharing our joy with all of you on two continents! We have so much to be thankful for because all of you are a part of both of us.

Andy, Genna and I want to acknowledge you for your friendship, your generosity, and your amazing hospitality. Thank you for opening your doors to us and allowing us to celebrate in your beautiful home. (**Do you want to make a little joke and say…**) We promise we’ll clean up after… (**And wait for the laugh**).

To Ksir and Liz, all I can say is … **GOOD CALL**!!! Thank you for knowing me almost better than I knew myself back then, and thank you for the gentle nudge that led to more happiness than I could have imagined.

To all of our family and friends who made the journey from Israel to be here with us today, we love you and as I look at all of you I realize that love and family are what life is all about. To my parents, Zvi and Havassa, I don’t think there are words to express how much I love, respect, and honor the both of you. You have always showed me what unconditional love is, and the only thing I can think of that makes your devotion even more precious is Mom’s cooking!! (**Wait for the laugh**). You organized such a wonderful wedding and then that huge dinner after the wedding!! It was truly sharing your heart for each one of us that was blessed to be there to experience that beautiful and delicious celebration.

To Genna’s parents Greg and Elaine, I want to thank each one of you for raising such a beautiful and loving daughter and I want to acknowledge both of you and all of your family for traveling to Israel for our wedding. We both feel very, **very** loved.

To the women in Genna’s life, Mom Elaine, Aunt \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**Genna’s sister? I would just say her name if you feel comfortable doing that**) you’ve all done a wonderful job in coordinating this beautiful American reception. And Genna, you never cease to amaze me. I am always inspired by the level of commitment you bring to everything…. especially all that you did to make sure this reception was the embodiment of your vision. Your elegance shines through in everything you do.

Genna, I also want to tell you in front of all these people, how much I love and appreciate you and all that you do. You are supportive, encouraging, and the greatest person I know. I guess I should have known when I saw that jacket that you innately knew and continue to know what I need… before I even know myself. Not to get too “mushy,” but in a sort of “Jerry McGuire” way, you really **DO** complete me… and I couldn’t be happier.

I want to mention one other person Genna, and that is your grandmother Mary Ann. Although she is no longer with us, I know she is watching over all of us and I want to believe that she, too, is very happy. I also want to say that I realized something as she was in hospice in her last days. Your family surrounded your grandma with love and strength and presence until the end. The family never left her side. She was surrounded by some or all of you until her last breath and I found that held more meaning for me than I can even say. True family is there for everything… in celebrations like today we dance and express our joy, and in times of crisis and sorrow family closes ranks, pulls together, and shares the journey as far as they can go. That is the essence of life and true love and I can only hope that when it is my time…. preferably not for a long, **long** time, that I am surrounded with that much love as I close my eyes. I am proud and honored to be a part of this newly blended family. **(I didn’t understand what was meant with the comment “If you can add something about Sunday Brunch at Mary Ann and Geno’s home.” If I can reach Tolleson early enough I will ask her to clarify and will send an update. If I can’t we will skip this. This speech will already be a little more than 5 minutes…**)

Thank you all for being here, for honoring us, and for sharing our happiness. We are truly blessed. We love all of you! Let’s celebrate!