**WEDDING SPEECH**

**FOR**

**WALTER FINNINGER**

Hello everyone!!! For those of you that may not know, I’m Walter and I am the very proud father of Devon, Cassie’s handsome, accomplished, kind and determined groom. It’s a real pleasure to see so many of you here, celebrating with us tonight. (**Do you want to acknowledge Cassandra’s parents? If so, do that here, and if you’re married, do you want to include your wife? Please modify as needed**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I would like to congratulate Cassie’s parents, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I am sure we can all agree that both Cassie and Devon are exceptional young people and become even more dynamic... even more special... with the love and support they give and receive from each other.

I think that for those of you here tonight that are parents, you have already figured out that when you become a new parent, the baby definitely **DOES NOT** come with a manual.... and as those kids get older, another revelation wakes you up... those kids also don’t come with a with a crash course in public speaking!!! Fortunately, I’m blessed with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ kids so I’ve had a chance to practice!! (**Wait for the laugh**)... so here goes...

Jon Stewart, the comedian, has said, “Fatherhood is great because you can **ruin** someone from **scratch**...”. **Oh WHERE Oh WHERE** did I go **WRONG**??? (**Wait for the laugh**). Devon, you’re terrific and I can’t imagine being any more proud of you than I already am. **RUIN** you?? You **SPOILED ME**!! (**Wait for the laugh**)

Having Devon as my son has always been a great blessing. When he was born, and as he grew up, it was obvious he possessed character and determination and a clarity about life that showed he was bright, curious, and insightful beyond his years, and that has only been enhanced as he has gotten older. He always knew what he wanted to be, and he followed his path, and now he’s a senior engineer at Tesla. As a kid, he knew how much I liked to hear him play his guitar and sing, and there were many nights, out on our patio, when he would serenade me. His honesty and integrity stand out to me (**Can you give a small example of his honesty?**) I’ll never forget the time when he was \_\_\_\_\_\_ years old and he \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. His patience, even when tested, never betrayed him.... he was such a champ, never complaining to me in the least, about having to drive that conversion van to high school.... Let’s face it.... all teenagers want wheels... but a **CONVERSION VAN**??? He accepted his lot in life... at the time... and truly “**rolled with it**.” Growing up he never really expressed any interest in sports, but he always tried..(**Do you want to make a small joke and say**) Devon, I don’t know if I have ever acknowledged this before, but I want to thank you, from the **bottom of my heart**, for **sparing** me.... for **saving** me... from the **purgatory** usually known as “**Little League**” (**or mention another kids sports activity he didn’t do and wait for the laugh**). Oh, Heaven knows he tried... he even joined his high school swim team. The bottom line about my son is that **he never gives up**... his determination is something to behold... and he always thinks of others first... before himself... before his comforts...before his own personal convenience.

With that kind of determination established, when I was introduced to Cassie, I knew, deep down, that this was the person with whom Devon wanted to share his life.... and here we are... Cassie, in so many ways, you both complement each other. You bring out the best and it’s clear that there’s a deep, loving, magical connection between the two of you... and even if engineers may not technically believe in Magic, we, your friends, family, and loved ones can feel that deep connection. I’d like to welcome you to the Finninger family as my “newest” daughter and I look forward to sharing many memorable moments with you and Devon and our growing, extended family.

It seems only fitting to take a moment to quote Nikola Tesla... for obvious reasons... among the many thought provoking statements he gave the world is this, “Though free to think and act, we are held together like stars in the firmament, with ties inseparable. **These ties cannot be seen, but we can feel them.”** Devon, Cassie, as I said earlier, the bond you two share is palpable. We may not physically see the molecules doing a “happy dance” around you, but it’s clear that the two of you share an invisible, incandescent connection, and it’s wonderful, and gratifying, and completely inspiring to witness.

With that, I would like to invite all of you to raise a glass as I propose a toast:

To Cassandra and Devon, here’s to a lifetime filled with love and family, friends and success, health, happiness, endless conversation, and chemistry... lots and **LOTS** of chemistry. Congratulations!! We love you!!