To: Linda Goodman

From: EZ Speechwriters / Pete

Speech in black font

Notes to you in blue font.

Linda,

My name is Pete, and I am your speechwriter.

You’re speaking at one of the most cherished events of a lifetime, yours, Kirby’s, and most importantly, Shayna’s, (Shay’s). What a wonderful setting too, the Caribbean, and the venue. Tents perhaps, perhaps not. Either way the event will far overcome any rain.

You may be an accomplished speaker, or you may be new to speaking before a gathering. I will attempt to give you a few guidelines, with which you may already be familiar.

Whether you’re at a raised head table, or a table clustered within the guests, the rhythm is similar. You may be the first, middle, or last to speak.

If the location has provided a microphone: Do not lean into the microphone, rather bring the microphone to you, either the stand or the flexible top section. If the microphone is remote, great. But again, bring it up to you, don’t lean over. If there is static, or if the wind is making your speech echoey, or not understandable, then do not try and overcome that, as that will make for stress. Push the microphone aside gently and use just your voice. Project, but do not yell. Your voice will go to all if it is firm.

If you have notes, or even the entire speech on paper, great, as most folks do. The key here is to not bring the paper up in front of your face. Keep the paper or notes, on a surface in front of you, and look down when you need to, and do not bend over. Just look down. That may take a few minutes practice when you rehearse.

If you are nervous, don’t be. Speaking before folks can be daunting, but it does not have to be. Have a conversation with your audience, not a lecture. Talk as if you were around a big family holiday table.

Make eye contact around each table. Slow that contact and stay focused on specific individuals if you are talking about them. Family, grandparents, bridal party, and especially the bride and groom. As you’re speaking in general, relax and focus on an object somewhere behind the group. It could be a banquet table, a flag, or even distant boat. If you look just beyond your audience, just over the tops of the heads of the last group of tables, it will appear to all tables, that you are looking directly at them.

When it is time for your speech/talk, stand up. No glass clinking, just stand and look at everyone, raise one arm slightly, and smile. The conversations will become subdued, and the attention will turn to you.

And speak slowly. Most of us when before a group tend to speak rapid fire, just to get it over with. But not at this event, just take your time, and have a conversation with everyone.

I recommend you rehearse only three times. Rehearse as you will be speaking. In other words, if at a podium, then stand in front of a counter height surface. If you are at a dinner table, then stand in front of a sit-down table. Rehearse two times a day or two before. Then just one more time the morning of the wedding and reception. I believe this is coming up fast, so you decide the days. If you want someone there while you rehearse, fine. But you’ll be much more focused if you are alone.

Please feel free to make any additions or deletions, as you prefer. I am also available for any last-minute requests in the content.

Have Fun.

Begin:

“Hello EVERYONE, Welcome, Welcome, we are so VERY happy you are our guests this day.” (Pause briefly). “This day, this very special day. A day so many parents hope and wish for. That day is today for us. While this occasion represents so many feelings, the number one emotion is happiness for the bride and groom, and the love and care we all have for them both.

I want to first thank our hosts this afternoon/evening, here at the (name of the hotel/restaurant), for their care, attention to detail, and making us feel truly welcome. Everyone associated with, (name of hotel/restaurant), has been gracious and friendly, thank you all.

I also want to thank and acknowledge our two families, who are so very much a part of this event, this celebration, this wonderful unification of two people. To Kirby’s family and ours, my heart is full. And to you Kirby. We are so proud and happy to have you withing our family now, as Shay is within yours.

Pause.

I would like to tell you a story this afternoon/evening. A story of a journey, a journey of a child, and girl, and a woman. That journey is Shayna’s, Shay’s. There are times when the first child is one of the brood, and there are times when the first child is off and running from the very start. Shay came out of those staring blocks from day one and is still setting the pace. For Shay’s first eighteen months, I think she was quietly planning her next two decades from within her Snuggly. And I can not recall if I finally took the snuggly away, or she cast it off herself, but either way, she hasn’t stopped since. She was not a fan of baby strollers either, so her next sibling had a stroller that may have been a few years old, but it still had the tags, (mild laughter).

Each of us, every parent, will quietly, or not so quietly, describe their child in various adjectives, descriptive words. Words that could only come from that parent, that mother, me. Of all the hundreds of complimentary attributes that may fit my children, of all the dozens that have filtered through my emotions regarding Shay, several remain at the top, and have remained there for all these years. My daughter, my friend, Shay, is loyal, nurturing, creative, and very detailed. Loyal and nurturing to her siblings, her parents, her grandparents, her trusted friends, and especially to Kirby. Her creativity and planning have been evident her whole life, culminating in where we are this afternoon/evening. Shay and Kirby created and assembled this entire occasion, and that effort on Shay’s part comes with ease.

From the time the snuggly went away, Shay has been at the forefront of her life, her activities, and a leader. Kirby, I guess you have some indication of this by now, but if not, I might suggest some good track shoes to at least keep Shay in sight. (mild laughter). From Shay’s infancy, to childhood, to young womanhood, she has been a planner, an organizer, and a person who can truly accomplish goals. As a young girl she wanted a dog, as most kids do. Most kids put on a show of: ‘*Please, Please, mom and dad, I will take care of the puppy’.* But not Shay. Shay put on a cost analysis presentation for a Poodle puppy, as if she were talking to the board of directors of a Silicon Valley Stat-Up, complete with a visual, detailed, white board, outlining dog caregiving schedules for our whole family. It was like a family campaign spreadsheet, and she was just a kid!! And it didn’t end with the Poodle, as there were similar high school and college campaigns for cats!! Kirby,…………I suggest if you ever come home and there is a tri-pod with a whiteboard on it, just sit down and be prepared. (laughter).

This focus, this dedication continued in every part of Shay’s growing up. And I know our family, and especially Shay’s siblings will agree, Shay set a wonderful family pace for each of them to use as an example and follow in their own specific way.

Near and dear to Shay’s heart, is Track and Field. Certain events in this sport sometimes have a pace setter, called a rabbit if you will. That rabbit pulls the rest of the pack at a brisk pace to strive for the best times. In many instances this pacesetter will trail off as the race continues. But that isn’t the case if Shay can help it. In life as in her sports, she takes the lead, maintains the pace, and keeps that to the finish line.

Our home was full of sports, and Shay was a significant part of all those activities. We had rooms and closets full of uniforms and gear, such as balls, bats, gloves, martial arts belts, skates, sailing instruction manuals, rackets, climbing Belays, cleats for the diamond, and shoes for rockfaces, as well as the dance floor. All put to good and practical use. But when the dust settled, it was the track gear that got the most use. Shay’s passion was the long jump, and she set records in high school that remained for years to come even as she went on to college. Pause. So,………….Kirby again I caution. If you hear loud footsteps thundering down the hallway in your direction, don’t step out! (Laughter).

The world is a mysterious, wonderful, enchanting place. We send our children out prepared as best we believe we can. We plan, we prepare, we sometimes overthink. Will they be, OK? Will they be Safe? Will they find what they are seeking? I personally believe that Shay and Kirby are very prepared for what is before them, very prepared intellectually, emotionally, and prepared in life skills. To accomplish this I believe Kirby’s parents have prepared him, and I hope and believe we have done the same with Shay. Between the respective grandparents, the parents, and growing up with focus and direction, both Shay and Kirby are individuals ready to meet the challenges as well as the joys the world has to offer. I would like to remind them that life is to be lived, lived with care, with preparation, but to be enjoyed each and every day. Each day is not a dress rehearsal, each day is real time life.

The pride I have in my daughter fills me every day. She has accomplished so much in her life, while caring for people, caring for family, and now caring for Kirby. She has always been fair, done the right thing, and shown compassion for others.

Pause

*“I would like to offer this toast to Kirby and Shay. (Pause, raise your glass, and allow the audience to do the same. Continue: Kirby and Shay,….Stay true to your partner,…. loyalty of emotion is greater than any obstacle you will ever encounter. Keep your partner safe,….. keep your partner close. Keep your partner in love with you. Seek new horizons near and far. And understand and embrace the goodness that exists in all of us.”*

*……………..We love you both,……CHEERS!!*

If you, Linda, are not the last speaker, then look to the next speaker, defer to him/her, and return to your seat. If you are the last speaker, then finish as follows:

“Please everyone, thank you again for being part of this occasion, enjoy the rest of the afternoon/evening’s music, food, and beverages. If you’re traveling this afternoon/evening, take your time and arrive safely.”

GOOD DAY / GOOD NIGHT.”

End.