**[EZ Speech Writers No. 14912]**

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Remarks by Mary Alice Maichle on the occasion of her husband, Stephen’s retirement as Fire Chief of [provide service area].

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HELLO, EVERYBODY . . . IT’S WONDERFUL TO SEE SO MANY OF OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS HERE TONIGHT, AND I’M SO GRATEFUL THAT YOU ALL CAME OUT TO CELEBRATE WITH US. BUT, you know, WHEN I WAS TRYING TO THINK OF WHAT I SHOULD SAY ABOUT [STEVE/STEPHEN] HERE TONIGHT, I REALIZED THAT THERE’S NOTHING I COULD TELL YOU ABOUT HIM [— OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM, OF COURSE —] THAT JUST ABOUT EVERYBODY AT THIS BANQUET DOESN’T ALREADY KNOW.

SO JUST FOR THE HECK OF IT, IT occurred TO ME TO LOOK UP THE MEANING OF that STRANGE BIBLICAL word, *“lovingkindness.”* NOW, THE EXPERTS SAY THAT THIS TERM refers to acts of **kindness** THAT ARE motivated by **love**, BUT THESE SAME EXPERTS SAY THE WORD’S ALMOST ALWAYS USED ONLY ABOUT THE ACTS OF God, NOT than THE ACTS OF people.

BUT I CAN TELL YOU THIS, MY FRIENDS . . . :

IF EVER A MAN WALKED THIS EARTH WHOSE WHOLE ***LIFE*** WAS AN ACT OF KINDNESS, AND WHOSE WHOLE ATTITUDE TOWARDS OTHERS WAS ALWAYS AND EVER A HEARTFELT ATTITUDE OF LOVE, THEN THAT MAN IS SITTING RIGHT HERE NEXT TO ME TONIGHT . . . [RAISE A GLASS TO STEPHEN] . . . MY HUSBAND, STEPHEN [MAICHLE]. [ANTICIPATE POSSIBLE APPLAUSE.]

NOW I GUESS IT’S *POSSIBLE* THAT THERE’S SOMEONE OUT THERE SOMEWHERE WHO ASKED STEVE FOR HELP OR A FAVOR AND DIDN’T GET IT. BUT I SURE DON’T KNOW WHO THAT PERSON MIGHT BE. I, MYSELF, HAVE NEVER SEEN IT, BECAUSE THE WORD “NO” JUST ISN’T IN STEVE’S VOCABULARY.

[SLYLY/JOKINGLY:] WELL, OF COURSE, THERE *WAS* THAT ONE TIME MANY, MANY YEARS AGO WHEN I HAD MY EYE ON THIS ABSOLUTELY *GORGEOUS* FULL-LENGTH MINK COAT . . . BUT THAT’S A WHOLE NOTHER STORY.

IN HIS HEART, STEPHEN’S SIMPLY A “YES” PERSON. IF THERE’S ANY KIND OF HELP THAT STEVE CAN GIVE, HE GIVES IT. HE’LL STOP WHAT HE’S DOING TO HELP SOMEBODY ELSE. HE’LL GO OUT OF HIS WAY TO BE OF SERVICE TO SOMEBODY. HE’S GOT A FIREFIGHTER’S HEART, AND AS YOU ALL KNOW, A FIREFIGHTER’S HEART IS MADE UP IN EQUAL MEASURE OF COMMITMENT, COURAGE, AND COMPASSION.

I GUESS THAT MOST OF YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT STEVE’S MANY ACHIEVEMENTS AS A PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTER: 4O YEARS IN THE SERVICE, STARTING AS A PROBBIE AND ENDING UP AS A FIRE CHIEF. BUT HIS RANK DIDN’T EVER MATTER MUCH TO STEVE.

[OPTIONAL: IT MATTERED TO ME, ‘CAUSE WE REALLY NEEDED TO REDO THE UPSTAIRS BATHROOM. BUT THE MONEY WAS NEVER THAT IMPORTANT TO STEVE.]

HAS STEVE BEEN AN ABSOLUTELY WONDERFUL HUSBAND, FATHER, AND 15-TIME GRANDFATHER? YOU BET HE HAS. AND HIS FAMILY’S ALWAYS BEEN THE ANCHOR OF HIS LIFE.

BUT HIS SECOND MISTRESS WAS ALWAYS THE FIRE SERVICE. HE WAS AS DEDICATED AND CARING A PROFESSIONAL AS THIS SERVICE HAS PROBABLY EVER KNOWN, AND IT WAS THIS WORK THAT FULFILLED HIM EVERY BIT AS MUCH AS HIS FAMILY DID.

AS A FIREFIGHTER, STEVE’S ONLY GOAL WAS TO LEAVE BOTH HIS COMMUNITY AND HIS BELOVED FIRE SERVICE THE BETTER FOR HIS HAVING BEEN THERE. AND ON THE OCCASION OF HIS IMPENDING RETIREMENT . . . [HOLDING A GLASS UP AND MOTIONING FOR THE AUDIENCE TO RISE AND DO THE SAME] . . . I CAN HONESTLY SAY TO YOU, MY DEAR, DEAR, SWEET AND CHARMING HUSBAND: MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

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**SUGGESTIONS FOR SPEAKER/PRESENTERS**

1. ***Preparation.*** There are only five rules for presenting an effective speech, and the first three of them are: *Rehearse, Rehearse,* and *Rehearse*! Unless you really want to, you shouldn’t feel like you need to memorize your whole script, word for word; but your eyes (and, more importantly, your “inner ear”) should see/hear the words of the script ***at least five times*** before you actually give the speech. (You’ll be totally *amazed* at how effectively this “Five-Time Rule” prepares you to deliver your remarks easily, fluidly, and comfortably.

4. ***Personalization.*** The one thing EZ Speech Writers can’t provide is your heart and soul. Each script has various highlighted sections where you’ll need to fill in certain data, make certain choices about content, and so on, because we lacked this information on your Order Form. But however well our script for you might ultimately have captured the moment, the feeling, the sincerity, the emotion . . . in short, the heart and soul of the speech . . . must come from you.

5. ***Presentation.*** Don’t think of mentally it as “giving a speech” or “delivering remarks,” or anything formal at all. Just think of it (literally) as having a conversation with your friends or colleagues, at home in your living room or kitchen, in the company cafeteria, wherever. Just think of it as “talkin’,” not “speakin’!” (This comes naturally, incidentally, if you apply the “Five-Time Rule” for every speech or talk you give.)

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