**Keith Johnson, Father of the bride, wedding speech.**

 **April 27th., 2019.**

 **Grace Barn**

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***Keith, there will be a lot of chatter as you stand to make your speech. It is a fun occasion, so lots of laughter and conversation will be taking place. Stand there with the microphone quietly, and smiling, until you have most of their attention,……then begin. Remember as best you can to make eye contact with everyone. If that is difficult for you, (it is for most of us), then pick a spot at the rear of the group/audience, such as an empty chair, a wall, a fence, a picture, and deliver your speech to that point. That will give the impression you are in fact looking at everyone individually.***

**Hello Everyone,…..thank you all for joining Cassidy and Matt in their marriage ceremony here today, celebrating their love and commitment to each other, along with their sons Nathan and Peyton. We are thrilled to commemorate this union, and everyone of us from the bottom of our hearts wish them a lifetime of happiness, health, and prosperity. I want to also acknowledge Matt’s family, *(first names),* as they truly make this wonderful event complete. I also want to welcome all our extended families and dear friends. As I look out here now I am so pleased to see the faces of those who have been with us for so many years, it is truly heartfelt. NOW!, as for the bridesmaids, groomsmen, and those Champaign glasses I hear clinking, *before* *you think you’re* *pulling something off we don’t see or* *hear*,………*trust me, been there, done that, so be forewarned, I have the microphone and I will tell. (laughter).***

**We are fortunate to have available to us this beautiful venue, Grace Barn for this occasion today, an amazing setting for an event such as this. From all of us, to all the staff here, thank you.**

 **2.**

 **When a father of the bride addresses a gathering such as this, he has several goals. First is to convey a message to all in attendance of his deep feelings for his daughter. Secondly, he wants to let the Groom know that he, Matt, is now a member of the family, and that I unloaded the shotgun a long time ago, *(laughter).* Thirdly is to impart to everyone listening, that I will keep it short enough that we don’t see empty seats or empty glasses. *(laughter).***

 **Cassidy and I have had several wonderful decades together. First as a toddler, then a grade-schooler, an adolescent, a teen, and now as an adult. We have shared many wonderful moments as father-daughter. We have laughed, we have cried, we have celebrated her accomplishments, and we have shared her challenges, all of which tightened our father/daughter bond.**

**And I have learned from Cassidy too, by her teaching me that once a lesson is understood, I should have the trust and confidence that she would do the right thing. Of course, as all parents know there will be disagreements. In most of our family discussions, I was totally convinced I was making the absolute right decision in her best interest. Cassidy on the other hand was sure my only reason for some of those decisions was to ruin her entire life, *(laughter*).**

**There is an old expression that we sometimes used around our home as she was growing up. When we were having an energized debate on something she wanted to do, and I didn’t want her to do, at the end I would mumble to whoever might listen: “I FINALLY GOT CASSIDY EXACTLY WHERE SHE WANTED ME.” (Laughter).**

 **3.**

**I cannot tell you how proud I am of the young woman she has become. And those sentiments carry over equally to the man she chose, Matt her husband. As *Trish Yearwood* aptly says*: SHE’S IN* LOVE WITH THAT BOY.” Well, Matt has long ago become a man, and together with Cassidy, I am even more proud of the loving family they have created, and the parents that they too have become.**

**As we older-folk have learned, the roads through life are what you and your partner make of them, through good judgement, good choices, and sometimes luck. Regardless of planning and preparation, challenges will occasionally washboard the pickup right into a ditch. So, in those instances, everyone needs to get the Ariats and Justins muddy together when winching the rig back onto the two-lane. That isn’t always easy or quick. What is does take is patience, understanding, and a unified response, before stepping out and getting the job done. Those traits sometimes can be taught, but mostly they are learned by example. I know Matt’s parents showed him the correct way to respond to such challenges, and I hope Cassidy’s mom and I have done the same.**

**As you both go forward Cassidy and Matt, there are so many ideas and thoughts that can be applied positively to your lives.**

**Let me share *two*.**

**As you make your family secure and prosperous, don’t leave behind or postpone the spirit of life. The world does not stop at the end of the block, the city limits, or the border. Make time, take time, to experience the excitement of new places, and meeting people from different regions or far away lands. And take the boys too, they will absorb not only what you see, but they will learn from you that acceptance of other people and other cultures shows a correct moral-compass. Those experiences will not only be exciting but will be an enrichment to your lives which you can then share with others.**

 **4.**

**Secondly, always strive to keep your enthusiasm for yourself, your spouse, and your family as energized as it is at this very moment. There is nothing better or more important in this world than family. Family is the hub of the wheel, the center of our individual universes, and what we should hold most dear.**

**Lastly, never forget for one moment what you say and do leaves a lasting imprint on your mate and your children. So as life proceeds, strive to maintain civility, and display integrity in your actions to each other.**

**Matt and Cassidy, as I look at you both, I can see the willingness and ability to create a long life of joy and happiness through commitment to each other and your family.**

**I hope you Cassidy,……and you Matt,…….have taken some inspiration from our words and good wishes here today. ……..I can assure you,…..I take inspiration from you both,……every day.**

 **Thank you Everyone, please enjoy the rest of our celebration.**