

Hello everyone,

I hope you're all doing well on this gorgeous day.

If I could preface this by asking that we all silence our phones, put away all devices, and keep them tucked away for the duration of the ceremony. We have an excellent team of photographers here with us who will be capturing the magic so that we all get to fully absorb this moment.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is [REDACTED], I've known [REDACTED] as long as I've known his brothers [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] so, whew, more than fifteen years now. I've officiated once before, almost a year ago to the day. And I mention it because it was my sister's wedding so it feels like poetic symmetry that my second officiant gig would be for someone I'd consider a brother and of course his amazing bride who I have been lucky to call a true friend for many years. Today the ceremony, like me, is going to be short and sweet.

On behalf of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], we would like to sincerely thank you all for taking the time to be here today to witness the beginning of what is sure to be an exciting and fulfilling new chapter in this couple's story. Theirs is a story that is difficult to capture in words. It has laughter, tears, and an abundance of love. It is a story that has already spanned nearly a third of their lives. Think about that for a moment- a third of your lives you've spent together. It's incredible to consider just how much you have shaped each other, how deep your roots run together, and how much you've already laid a groundwork for your relationship on which to build your future together.

But I'm getting ahead of myself because I want to focus on those first two thirds of your lives. I want to take it back to the beginning to see how we've gotten to this sacred moment today. I want to talk about how I've had the immense privilege of witnessing both of these people grow from kids and teenagers into the fine adults that stand before us today. I'd like to talk about their growth as individuals and as a couple.

Now, I know [REDACTED] hates this, but sort of a running joke in our group of friends is that we actually call [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] "the kids" in reference to the six to eight year age gap between most of us and them. It doesn't matter if, as The Kids like to remind us, they're 25 years old. It's never been to diminish their growth into adulthood, which they've accomplished so seamlessly,

but instead as a show of affection. Because they're always going to be the kids- the kids we look out for, the kids we take care of, the kids we love.

Speaking of kids, some of you might not know but [REDACTED] was a bit of a wild child growing up. I'd known him for less than a week before it was like he became a lovably annoying little brother to me- randomly hitting me or throwing things at me. Coming up with the most hilariously absurd questions and comments. He kept me on my toes and always laughing. As he moved into his teens he of course matured, but always kept that sort of potential energy tucked inside him. The potential to make you laugh, think, or maybe even roll your eyes. But somehow it's always able to bring the room together. Everyone feels comfortable when he's around, he's got that ability to make you feel at ease. When [REDACTED] was in his teens he had a lot of ideas about who he wanted to be and what he wanted to do. There was a pro basketball stage, a short-lived passion for parkour, his weight lifting and his eventual overall dedication to health and fitness. But from what I've seen, his view came into focus the moment he laid eyes on [REDACTED]. He went from jumping off things as a hobby to a realized passion for physical health. He's ambitious, he's driven, he's ready and able to succeed. I've been honored and humbled to watch this scrappy little kid grow into the man he is today and I sincerely don't think he'd be the same man we see before us without [REDACTED] there keeping him on the right track and helping him achieve his goals.

I'd also never seen someone able to keep the young [REDACTED] in line like [REDACTED] was able to, though I'm sure we all know [REDACTED] is more than comfortable keeping foolishness in check; there's a firmness built on caring that she exudes at all times. She wants the best for those she loves and you can feel the warmth of her protection anytime that she is around. When I met [REDACTED] she was a sassy teenager with a "mess around and find out" attitude. She was a tough kid and I've always admired that about her. Now that she's older I see that toughness even more for the strength that it is. She's strong and passionate, willing to voice her opinion and stand up for what she believes in. She stands up for the little guy. She's selfless, dedicating her time to helping adults with disabilities. Maybe she gets it from the heroes and heroines of the books she loves to devour, but from where I'm standing she seems pretty fearless. She's also talented in so many fields- cooking, baking, art. With talents and passions as diverse as hers I know that she is going to wonderful places in this world and has the potential to do anything.

Now as we gather for this beautiful event, surrounded by friends and family, I want to take a moment to emphasize the immense presence of love and support that is around you both today. We have all chosen to be here and in doing so we have

made a promise. A promise to care for, respect, and honor you both as individuals and as the new family that you are creating today. I want you to remember that at any given moment you have at minimum fifteen to twenty of us ready to be there for whatever you need. The crew, your family, your friends will always be around as long as you need us. You have our unwavering support.

I am so glad that [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]'s stories have intersected, creating boundless new roads for them to follow together. I already know that theirs is a story of romance, adventure, and most importantly friendship. Because when I see them together, that's what I see: best friends. Ready to take on whatever challenges life throws at them.

Today we bear witness to the formal union of these two people. [REDACTED]...[REDACTED] and [REDACTED], as you stand before us, about to take this leap into your future, remember that today is a celebration of love, of commitment, of friendship, and of family. It's also a celebration of the journey ahead - of your plans, your dreams, and all the adventures that await you together.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED] have chosen to exchange their personal vows privately, but it is our honor to be a part of this moment where they publicly affirm their commitment to one another. I'm sure that their personal exchange is still ringing in their ears and pounding in their hearts, but I'll attempt to have them exchange something now for us to witness their union.

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED], please hold hands.

[REDACTED], please present [REDACTED] with [REDACTED]'s ring.

[REDACTED], as you place the ring on your bride's finger, please repeat after me, "I, [REDACTED], stand before you, [REDACTED], ready to take the first step on an endless path together. I vow to respect you, to protect you, to never stop making you laugh, and to love you always. With this ring, I thee wed."

[REDACTED], please present [REDACTED] with [REDACTED]'s ring.

[REDACTED], as your place the ring on your groom's finger, please repeat after me, "I, [REDACTED], stand before you, [REDACTED], ready to both begin, and continue, a beautiful life with you. I vow to cherish you, to believe in you, to always fight for our love, and to love you always. With this ring, I thee wed."

With the authority vested in me, and the exchange of these vows as well as these rings, it is my immense honor to pronounce you husband and wife. You may seal your vows with a kiss.

****step aside for the photographer**** (if they don't wait long enough to kiss make it a laughable moment- "woah now, I wanted to be out of the way for your first kiss photo but you beat me to the punch kiddos. Photographer could we do one more with me completely out of frame. Should I maybe hit the parking lot?)

[REDACTED] and [REDACTED], I truly believe that your passions for one another will always be ignited. That you will find peace, prosperity, and love at every corner. And that you will live a life together that you are both proud of. I've talked about just a glimpse of your lives as individuals and as a couple and tried to capture it as honestly as I've seen it unfold before me. If I could give you any words of affirmation beyond the love that I have for each of you, it would be this. Yours is a beautiful story. Continue to make it one worth telling.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to announce for the first time Mr. and Mrs. [REDACTED]!

Please join me in congratulating the newlyweds as they exit so gracefully, ushering in the next chapter of their life.