

The Toast – Mr. Harper’s Script

Thank you ladies and gentlemen. Would you please be so kind as to put your glasses down? As the father of the bride I have waited years to have this uninterrupted moment to tell my daughter what she should do with her life and how she should run it, and I’m not letting that moment pass me by quickly.

So, to Kate and [The Very Brave Young Man To Be Named Later], I have a few words of advice to offer about what it is to have a successful marriage, and I’m hoping you’ll take them to heart. They’re not offerings that will make great demands of you, but I promise you if you *follow them* that everything you two share will be better off for it. Members of the audience? Kate and Chrissy have often accused me of having a “charmed” life, and I cannot argue that. What I may have lacked in material or monetary gifts, I have always been blessed by being surrounded by the most wonderful people – many of whom are looking back at me right now. Included in those marvelous people were the most loving of parents and the best of wives in Chrissy and Betsy. From them I have learned so much about what makes for a good marriage, and I’m hoping you’ll let me drone on for a few minutes here and let me give you, their teachings.

First, a simple thing: you do not have a maid. Both of you are too poor to afford one. Neither do you have a butler, gardener or handyman. Married life is full of countless things to be done around your house and someone has to do them. That someone is you. You are a team now – the team of Kate and The Very Brave Young Man to be Named Later. When something that could be done by you but doesn’t get done, it’s clearly you saying, “Let him do it” or “Let her do it”. You know – that person you love? And don’t kid yourself. Whatever excuse you

might make for something not getting done when you could have accomplished it, it means you were more than willing to stick it to that person you just pledged the rest of your life to today. If you were wise – and you married your buddy (as you should have) – you would never want to stick it to your buddy because you're too lazy. You are a team. Don't ever forget that. If something needs to be done – do it. And don't keep score of who did what. Whatever benefits the team, benefits both of you. There is no maid.

Teams also don't argue over money. The best ones always make sure that their buddy gets the memo on how finances are spent in your house. If one of you is a good *money manager* and better at paying bills on time, let them do it. Good *marriages* always play to the strengths of the team. There are always going to be things that each of you are good at and you should play to those strengths. Just make sure you show appreciation to your buddy for bringing that strength to your team. When it comes to being the money manager, always keep your partner in the loop about everything. *If you're the person who isn't* the money manager, don't ever say, "Can't we talk about that later?" There are things that always need to be talked about in a marriage and money is one of them. You want to see your marriage crumble fast? Go ahead and screw up on the money side. This is the part of your life you make a part of your routine. Your Mom and I handle the dreary job of finances every Sunday with a large mason jar of Prosecco - each. We've even come to enjoy it, because making plans for your future is what pulls you together; let's you dream together; brings you together. It binds your team into something stronger. Drink bubbly and make sure your team is financially stable. You might as well have fun with it.

Kate? I love you. You're my girl. The Very Brave Young Man to be Named Later? I will come to love you. I don't have a son. You're stuck. You're it. I hope we get to have some truly

marvelous times together, but did you catch that last bit – the “I love you” part? Did you hear how easy it was to say? *Remember it*, and don’t ever forget *the ease* of that or the importance of saying it. Those are words that should roll off your tongue to the person you love *every* chance you can say them. Come home saying them. Say them in stressful moments, supportive moments, joyful moments, sad moments, but SAY them. Life is too short not to. Most importantly? Say them whenever you leave each other. If those are the last words you hear from your buddy, they should be the best ones. As you always hear me say, Kate - “tomorrow is promised to no one.”

One last little piece of advice? You two are going to get some nice gifts here today – courtesy of the fine folk who are sitting here waiting for me to finish and stop babbling so they can guzzle their champagne and get this party started. You’re *also* two bright, hard-working people who are going to buy and earn some good stuff of your own. That’s nice. There’s nothing wrong with it. But *know* this. When it’s all said and done and one of you must part from the other, as all great love stories do, it is not the stuff you bought, the things you gained, the rewards you earned. In the end, when one of you will leave the other – because that’s just Life – it’s what you *did* together that will matter, the simple moments you shared - that’s what you’ll grieve over. That your buddy is no longer there to go through Life with you. Keep your eyes on *that* and not the stuff, and you will know the riches and the joy that I have known – and you too, will live a charmed life. If you do this right, the best thing you end up with is what you started with today – and that’s each other. Not stuff. Memories.

Ladies and gentlemen? This old man is done rambling. Please raise your glasses to the new team of Kate and The Very Brave Young Man to Be Named Later. Cheers.