

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As father of the bride I have the pleasure of making the first speech.

I have been given lots and lots of advice on what to or what not to say such as keep it short, no smutty jokes, try and remember... names... etc.

However it is over 29 years since I was allowed to say anything without being disagreed with, laughed at or ignored so this is too good an opportunity to miss.

At the end of the day it is my speech and I can say what I like.

I would like to start by on behalf of the brides mother, myself and grooms parents giving a warm welcome to all the relatives and friends who have joined us to celebrate Paul & Jessica's wedding. I know that many of you have traveled long distances to be here. Thank you all for coming to help celebrate this very special day. As I look around the room I realize how many friends Paul and Jessica have and I hope that you all have a wonderful afternoon and evening.

Today I must admit that I am the proudest dad in the world to have accompanied Jessica today. I think that you will all agree that she looked stunning. This is where I am supposed to say a few embarrassing things about her when she was younger but as she worked with me for a time she probably knows more gossip about me than I know about her so I have called a truce. Suffice it to say that Maureen and I are both very proud of how she looks today and how she has grown up and are both delighted that she has found someone who she obviously loves and cares so much for.

There are two things which we as parents try to give our children, one is roots and the other is wings. Helena you have now grown your wings and fled the nest but you will still be loved all always still have roots within our family.

In Paul I believe that Jess has met her perfect partner. Although we have not known Paul long both Maureen and I think he is everything one could hope for in a son in law.

Mind you I knew we would get on when he took me out to the pub to ask for her hand in marriage. I remember thinking 'I hope he picks the hand which keeps dipping into my pocket'. We shall see. Seriously he has many good qualities, not least of which is an ability to appreciate the finer things in life. Well, after all, he did marry our daughter didn't he?

Now we get to the tricky part of the speech.

According to the internet's idiots guide to wedding speeches this is where I am supposed to give advice on the subject of marriage. Many would probably say that I am probably not the best person to do this. Perhaps the only thing I know about marriage is that it is the time when you stop painting the town and start painting walls and ceilings.

Anyway Paul and Jess do not need my advice. The only thing I would say is that you must choose the right partner for the right reason and I think that they both have done this.

I suppose that after 38 years of happy marriage I ought to be able to manage something a bit more constructive. Paul just remember these 3 words ...all, just and only. You will hear them time and again. Such as all you need to do is, its only costs so much & it will only take 5 minutes. These are all gross understatements but as a great philosopher or comedian said, women are to be loved and not understood. Mind you, helping around the house is not a bad idea. I know from the crime statistics that there has never been a case of a wife shooting her husband while he was doing the washing up.

After that I had better finish but before that I would like to offer one or two final thoughts. Marriage is the meeting of two minds, of two hearts and of two souls. It is clear that Paul and Jessica are a perfect example of this.

May they be blessed with happiness that grows and with love that lasts and a peaceful life together. I wish them enjoyment for today, the fulfillment of all their hopes and dreams for tomorrow and love and happiness always.