

Example #7

In thinking about the blessing your mother and I are giving to you today, we thought about who you are and what you've become. You are the son of a Catholic father and a Jewish mother. You are Lithuanian and Austrian, Polish and French. And, (at least one of us up here would say most importantly) Irish. You are the culmination of so many different histories, so many different experiences and so many truly inspirational stories. Look no further Brady, than at the family who has come to honor you today to find that inspiration.

Look at your Grandfather Poppy – a man who other than the love of his family began life with so little. Who through hard work and sheer force of will he came to build a significant legacy. And through it all he became the most generous and loving man I've ever met.

Look to your Grandmother Ga – the rock of the family, who faces life's blessings and challenges equally, with an amazing, unwavering, sense of style, grace and elegance.

Take inspiration from your Uncle Fred for his unquestionable generosity and sense of humor. And from your Uncle – my brother – Robert, for his deep sense of spirituality and his devotion and love of family.

Find inspiration in the calm and gentle spirit of your Uncle Nate, and the loyalty of Uncle Derek.

And through they are no longer with us you should remember and take inspiration from the kindness of your Uncle Phil. You should know that you and Ryan were the pure joy of my father. And when I see your quick wit and easy laugh, I can't help but think that my mother is in there somewhere.

Your Hebrew name is Carmel in honor of your great uncle Carl. It means vineyard – a giver of fruit and sustenance. A field full of life – I can't think of a better description for either of you.

Look at this family Brady, and to your wonderful friends, and know that they are your true blessings.

Your mother and my blessing to you, on your Bar Mitzvah, is this:

Brady, your Torah Portion teaches us about sacrifice.

May you know it is not a sacrifice, but rather an honor, to defend those who cannot defend themselves, to help those who cannot help themselves.

Your Bar Mitzvah comes at a time when the world's religions seem so polarized. Yet tonight you will share your Bar Mitzvah, and this Bimah, with family and dear friends who are not only Jews, but Christians and Muslims as well.

May you continue to live your life as an example to others that what matters most is not the color of your skin or religion you embrace, but the content of your heart.

May you know that the value of a person is not measured by wealth, or power, or fame, but by the simple fact that they are another human being.

At the end of this journey, when it's your time to leave this world, may you look back on your life and know that the blessings you gave were far, far greater than those who received.

As you get older may you find the love that your mother and I have been so lucky to know.

And may you always know that we love you unconditionally.

And Brady, no matter where this wonderful life takes you,

May you never, ever forget your way home.

We love you Brady.