



Excerpts from a contemporary ethical will

On the topic of marriage:

One of the biggest choices you make in life is the person you choose to share your life with beyond this family. That is a journey that each individual has to go through, and over time, you will experience the difference between attraction and deep love.

Our hope for each of you that you will find someone who is good to you, and who will take care of you. You deserve to be with someone who adores you, and who will respect you and value you and who will treat you like a true equal partner. We do believe strongly in the formal commitment of marriage. If, as life evolved, one of you chose a same sex partner, it would be important for you to know that we would accept it as long as we knew it was one based on happiness, with the same level of commitment made.

It takes a lot of work to maintain a relationship, and what we saw in each other was something we hadn't experienced in our previous relationships: a commitment to a true partnership, each willing to go 110% to making it work. There are challenges in every relationship every day, of hard times of misunderstanding, of communication breakdowns, and of seeing the world differently. It is important to find a partner who is willing to go all the way with you, who is committed to seeing it through the inevitable difficulties.

Mom: I am still touched deeply when I remember the night we told Grammy and Grampy that we were planning to be married:

"We took them out to dinner to talk about it. They had been waiting and hoping this would happen and Grampy immediately ordered champagne, but Grammy said, 'Wait,' and got very serious in a way we didn't often see. She adored your Dad and wanted very much for us to be together, but she needed to have a clear understanding with Dad. She took his hands and looked into his eyes and said, 'I need you to tell me right now that in this relationship, in this commitment, in this marriage, not only will you be there for Ellen, but you will never hurt her intentionally, physically, emotionally or spiritually. She is my treasure and my baby and I will entrust her to you if you can make this promise.'

"Dad held Grammy's hands and he looked her right in the eye and said, 'I will make many mistakes, but I will never intentionally hurt her, nor could I ever think of hurting her.' That was an important contract that had tremendous meaning for me in creating trust. I felt not only valued by Dad, knowing how he felt, but by Grammy, that as a parent, she was making sure that I was going into a safe and loving place. If I am not there to make that contract with your spouse, I will hope that it happens in such a way that you feel sure, down to your toes, that you are joining with a partner who can insure those things for you."