

Thank you all for coming today

Before Aidan came into my life, standing here and speaking today, is something I am not sure I would have had the strength and courage to do, but that is the beauty in finding your soul mate, they teach you not with words or directions, but with an unspoken guidance, flowing between each other, allowing one to become a better person, to grow above and beyond what you ever thought you could be or ever thought you could do. Despite the fact Aidan has left us physically, I have found over the last week, that his strong spirit is still guiding me through life and every time I see something that reminds me of him, which is all the time, my first instinct is to smile, to feel content, to feel happy for what he has given me in life, and although I am sure I there are many tears to be shed over the rest of my life for all the things I will miss, I will always smile first and be indescribably happy and grateful, because that's the way Aidan loved people, with a smile larger than life and a heart with eternal depths and endless limits, and that is the way in which I want to continue to love him and everyone in our lives.

So I'll try and take a break from the heartfelt stuff, as I am sure Aidan is standing at the back somewhere thinking, "come on woman, stop making me cry, lets have a laugh, even if it is just at each other" which we did do so often, laughing at the sound of each other's laughter. Aidan was always the quiet one of the two of us, while I never paused to finish one thought before the next one popped out. Aidan would sit patiently and always listen to my half finished sentences, only to say when I had finally finished "what exactly are you on about?" and I would be amazed, and sometimes cranky, that he sat there the entire time not knowing what I was actually talking about. But it was more important to him, for me to get my thoughts out without interruption, and that the understanding would come later, when I had taken the time to think what I was trying to say. There was never a need to rush or hurry with Aidan,

everything would happen in it's own time, when it was meant to happen. It is soothing to be around such a relaxed soul and it's rare in life to find someone who will listen and never judge, who will give you all the time in the world, just to hear your perspective, someone who gives you the freedom to be able to do whatever you need to do in life.

Aidan had the unique ability to walk into a room and emit a calming vibe that people were drawn to – this is what first attracted me to him when he walked into our grade 10 art class, rosey cheeked & curley haired with his beautiful olive skin and mysterious charm. It took one glance with those beautiful eyes and we were all intrigued by this gorgeous foreigner. People wanted to be close to him, because he made them feel at ease, just by being in the same room – he was wise beyond his years and loved whole heartedly, and as we developed an amazing friendship over time, both of us realized we were destined for more than just friendship, we were connected on another level and we had a love that ran deeper than either of us could comprehend or appreciate at the time, until we faced life's challenges and the tests of time.

I think one of Aidan's greatest challenges was becoming a chef. Whilst his passion for food and natural abilities guided him through his apprenticeship, it was a grueling process, working long hours, with never-ending preparations & exhausting lunch and dinner services, but his determination and absolute love for food, which saw him place 4th in the apprentice of the year competition in 2006, was what kept him going, especially when he began suffering double vision in the final months of his apprenticeship – nothing could stop him finishing! And once he had finished and our battle with his cancer had begun, he didn't sit around and cry or complain, despite the physical impairments that followed. He simply saw it as an opportunity to travel a different life journey and began his market stall business, as the pirate chef, in which he sold some amazing baked goods and, as

Aidan did in life, touched a lot of hearts, made a lot of friends and left an everlasting impression.

Amongst the challenges he faced, he had many blissful moments spending time with his mates, his family & traveling. He was always cooking and teaching me to cook, which was so joyful and it was beautiful to watch him create such mouthwatering cuisines and even more so to eat them! Those of you lucky enough to have tasted his food will agree I am sure. And of course he had his beloved animals, especially his two cats which he adored and spoilt, they still sit in his chair and sleep on his side of the bed, he was a sucker for animals and they for him. I faced many surprises when I would come home from work...an aquarium full of tropical fish, 2 chickens, to 4 chickens to 7 chickens and then of course we added our second cat to the zoo when Aidan was first diagnosed. I have to say he was certainly unpredictable and spontaneous, but it made our lives so interesting and often entertaining. We all often reminisce of the time I woke up at 2am to hear Aidan on the phone ordering knives from an ad he saw on TV.

Alison, Renee and myself spent Aidan's last night with him a week ago today. While he often dismissed us girls fussing over him, when Alison and I rotated sleeping in the hospital bed with him that night, the entire left side of his body, which in the last few weeks had become completely limp and no longer functioned, sparked back to life again and he grasped our hands throughout the night. He knew what was going on, as Aidan usually did before every one else, but he was clearly more concerned about us and wanted to be the one to comfort us. And he still does.

Aidan knew exactly who he was in life and never changed for anyone, but I am sure he brought about change in many people, myself included, and although we only had 7 years together, we created enough love, laughter, strength, beauty and memories to last a lifetime and beyond. I can take this

with me through whatever challenges I face in life and know that I won't be alone, and I know all of the people in Aidan's life have this gift to see them through life too. Thank you Aidan, for being my best friend, my love, my husband and my inspiration in life.