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Acceptance speech on the occasion of receiving the Gift of Life Marrow Registry's highest honor, the Partners for Life Award, at the organization's annual gala held on September 27, 2019, in New York City.

Thank you so much for this enormous honor. Thank you the entire Gift of Life Team, especially Jay Feinberg and Robyn Malek. Congratulations to my fellow honorees, Mitzi and Warren Eisenberg and the New York Mets. I am deeply appreciative of my friends and colleagues here tonight. Your support means the world.

We may think of transplant technology as cutting edge. Gift of Life does its extraordinary work because of the miracle of modern medicine. But in fact, gifting life is as old as human history. It is at the very center of what it means to be human. We are all here because of a transplant. In the Book of Genesis, God takes Adam's rib and creates Eve. It seems a little more involved than a cheek swab, but the basic idea is the same; giving to someone else makes you whole. An act of kindness creates the possibility for a future. Adam lost a rib but gained a wife and partner. His loneliness ended only when generosity created the possibility for human connection. Helping someone to heal is not only fixing a problem; it is an act of creation, a partnership that makes new things possible.

I think that true wholeness is impossible without giving something of yourself. Life is a gift, and giving gifts is what makes life meaningful and rich. Some of you may know that I spend a lot of my time thinking about give and take, the exhausting and exhilarating process by which deals get made. A merger or an acquisition is at its core about how to



build a larger wholeness through giving and collaboration. It is about getting the fit right and finding the match in ways that can be unexpected and serendipitous. A deal only happens when wholeness and completeness come together from a process of giving and receiving. Of course, even the largest or most lucrative deal is dwarfed by the work we celebrate here tonight- saving one life is considered equivalent to saving an entire world. But the lessons of finding a match and giving of yourself to help someone in need apply in every realm of life.

The beautiful thing about giving is not only the decisive difference it makes. By connecting people who would otherwise never meet in the most intimate and powerful way, Gift of Life does something else of vital importance; it overcomes loneliness. A gift is a relationship, and it opens new horizons where we see farther and more clearly. It cuts through the noise and clarifies what is most important. It redefines subtraction as addition; you give something up and get so much more in return.

But Gift of Life engages in far more than simple addition and subtraction. There is a geometric principal coined by the architect and designer Buckminster Fuller called Tensegrity, which describes a shape created when isolated components are put into a net that holds them apart but in place. This tension is what creates the integrity of the object. Joining a Registry, finding a match, giving or receiving a gift- all of these create new and long-lasting shapes, binding together individuals into wonderful new patterns of relationships.

For me, this is personal. I will never forget hearing that two swab kits supported by LionTree have found matches. A sixty-five year old man. A fifteen-year old boy. Two lives saved, whole worlds of joy and love and meaning and purpose preserved and allowed to



grow. This is a gift I have been given. Our relationship with Gift of Life made this possible, and we are now connected, invisibly yet indelibly.

Relationships, whether in business or in life, are how we make meaning in the world, and even across the galaxy. Let me tell you a little bit about an astronaut named Gene Cernan. Gene was an astronaut who died just two years ago, and some of you may have seen him in the documentary “The Last Man on the Moon.” He went into space three times, including as the commander of Apollo 17, the final lunar landing. In that capacity, he was the eleventh man to walk on the moon, and the last. Just before he reentered the Lunar Module to fly back to Earth, Cernan knelt-down and scribbled his daughter’s initials, “TDC,” for Tracy Dawn Cernan, onto the Moon’s dusty surface. There is no wind there—those letters will last for all eternity.

Just imagine this man, by himself on the moon— his crewmates had already headed back to the ship. In both a literal and metaphoric sense, Cernan was as alone as any person has ever been. Just imagine the quiet, and the space, and a universe unimaginably large. Also, consider the sense of pride, the magnitude of the achievement. Then remember that at that instant, all Cernan wanted to do was write his daughter’s name, in the most indelible way possible. She was his gift, the person he thought of at this crowning moment was his daughter. He reached for connection.

Gift of Life is that writing of a name on the surface of the moon, an inscription that is both a hope and a prayer and a very human effort to heal one another. The work it does will also last forever, not because it is recorded on the dusty surface of the moon but because it heals and makes whole, gives hope and grants connections. These are moonshots that land,



every single day. I am so grateful to be a part of this effort, and in awe of those of you who make it possible.

Thank you, and good night.