

Let me first say I'm slightly confused by all these wonderful things people have been saying about me all evening. Not that I don't agree with your comments. In fact, I could add a few other qualities I think you've overlooked. But what genuinely confuses me is that none of you've bothered to mention these feelings to me before. Heck, if you'd only come and spoken to me before I retired, who knows, I might have given you a raise or a promotion. I would have at least spoken a little more kindly of you. Even towards you, for that matter.

Honestly, though, I couldn't be more honored by tonight's ceremony. To hear those who are the closest and most important people in my life recounting such touching memories is a very special pleasure. My sincere thanks goes out to [ORGANIZERS OF EVENT] for making such a magical evening for me. To my work colleagues, thank you for making my Mondays to Fridays (plus the occasional weekend) so enjoyable. Looking back on my career and thinking of all the wonderful people I've had the opportunity to work with is something that I'll always treasure. To my children, my siblings and other relatives both here and absent, quite simply, I couldn't stand here tonight without the support you've provided me over the years. And naturally, there is the one person who has made all the difference in the world - who has defined love, loyalty and true happiness for me. I can't begin to explain how extraordinary she/he is. To [SPOUSE], all I have to say is... get used to having me around the house.

Now to all of my old work colleagues, I'd hope that my retirement doesn't mean you'll abandon me. Just because I'm not lurking around the office doesn't mean I'm not interested in hearing what everybody's doing. I'll miss my [IDENTIFY A DAILY/WEEKLY RITUAL] and somebody's got to be responsible for keeping me in the gossip loop. And if by chance I can convince some of you to take an extended lunch and come [GOLFING/FISHING/SAILING] with me some afternoon, I hope it won't take too much effort.

In the meantime, you know where you can find me. Thanks again so much for such a lovely evening. I'll never forget it.