

Luce, thank you for that kind introduction.

I want to talk to you tonight not about politics and not about party.

And while there are many important issues we'll hear discussed in this convention and throughout this campaign, tonight I want to talk to you from my heart about our hearts.

I want to talk not about what divides us, but what holds us together as an American family. I want to talk to you tonight about that one great thing that unites us, that one thing that brings us our greatest joy when times are good, and the deepest solace in our dark hours.

Tonight I want to talk to you about love.

I want to talk to you about the deep and abiding love I have for a man I met at a dance many years ago. And the profound love I have, and I know we share, for this country.

I want to talk to you about that love so deep only a mother can fathom it -- the love we have for our children and our children's children.

And I want us to think tonight about the love we all share for those Americans, our brothers and sisters, who are going through difficult times, whose days are never easy, nights are always long, and whose work never seems done.

They are here among us tonight in this hall; they are here in neighborhoods across Tampa and all across America. The parents who lie awake at night side by side, wondering how they'll be able to pay the mortgage or make the rent; the single dad who's working extra hours tonight, so that his kids can buy some new clothes to go back to school, can take a school trip or play a sport, so his kids can feel... like the other kids.

And the working moms who love their jobs but would like to work just a little less to spend more time with the kids, but that's just out of the question with this economy. Or that couple who would like to have another child, but wonder how will they afford it.

I've been all across this country for the past year and a half and heard these stories of how hard it is to get ahead now. I've heard your voices: "I'm running in place," "we just can't get ahead."

Sometimes I think that late at night, if we were all silent for just a few moments and listened carefully, we could hear a great collective sigh from the moms and dads across America who made it through another day, and know that they'll make it through another one tomorrow. But in that end of the day moment, they just aren't sure how.

And if you listen carefully, you'll hear the women sighing a little bit more than the men. It's how it is, isn't it?

It's the moms who always have to work a little harder, to make everything right.

It's the moms of this nation -- single, married, widowed -- who really hold this country together. We're the mothers, we're the wives, we're the grandmothers, we're the big sisters, we're the little sisters, we're the daughters.

You know it's true, don't you?

You're the ones who always have to do a little more.

You know what it's like to work a little harder during the day to earn the respect you deserve at work and then come home to help with that book report which just has to be done.

You know what those late night phone calls with an elderly parent are like and the long weekend drives just to see how they're doing.

You know the fastest route to the local emergency room and which doctors actually answer the phone when you call at night.

You know what it's like to sit in that graduation ceremony and wonder how it was that so many long days turned into years that went by so quickly.

You are the best of America.

You are the hope of America.

There would not be an America without you.

Tonight, we salute you and sing your praises.

I'm not sure if men really understand this, but I don't think there's a woman in America who really expects her life to be easy. In our own ways, we all know better!

And that's fine. We don't want easy. But these last few years have been harder than they needed to be. It's all the little things -- that price at the pump you just can't believe, the grocery bills that just get bigger; all those things that used to be free, like school sports, are now one more bill to pay. It's all the little things that pile up to become big things. And the big things - the good jobs, the chance at college, that home you want to buy, just get harder. Everything has become harder.

We're too smart to know there aren't easy answers. But we're not dumb enough to accept that there aren't better answers.

And that is where this boy I met at a high school dance comes in. His name is Mitt Romney and you really should get to know him.

I could tell you why I fell in love with him -- he was tall, laughed a lot, was nervous -- girls like that, it shows the guy's a little intimidated -- and he was nice to my parents but he was really glad when my parents weren't around.

That's a good thing. And he made me laugh.

I am the granddaughter of a Welsh coal miner who was determined that his kids get out of the mines. My dad got his first job when he was six years old, in a little village in Wales called Nantyffyllon, cleaning bottles at the Colliers Arms.

When he was 15, dad came to America. In our country, he saw hope and an opportunity to escape from poverty. He moved to a small town in the great state of Michigan. There, he started a business -- one he built himself, by the way.

He raised a family. And he became mayor of our town.

My dad would often remind my brothers and me how fortunate we were to grow up in a place like America. He wanted us to have every opportunity that came with life in this country -- and so he pushed us to be our best and give our all.

Inside the houses that lined the streets of our town, there were a lot of good fathers teaching their sons and daughters those same values. I didn't know it at the time, but one of those dads was my future father-in-law, George Romney.

Mitt's dad never graduated from college. Instead, he became a carpenter.

He worked hard, and he became the head of a car company, and then the governor of Michigan.

When Mitt and I met and fell in love, we were determined not to let anything stand in the way of our life together. I was an Episcopalian. He was a Mormon.

We were very young. Both still in college. There were many reasons to delay marriage, and you know? We just didn't care. We got married and moved into a basement apartment. We walked to class together, shared the housekeeping, and ate a lot of pasta and tuna fish. Our desk was a door propped up on sawhorses. Our dining room table was a fold down ironing board in the kitchen. Those were very special days.

Then our first son came along. All at once I'm 22 years old, with a baby and a husband who's going to business school and law school at the same time, and I can tell you, probably like every other girl who finds herself in a new life far from family and friends, with a new baby and a new husband, that it dawned on me that I had absolutely no idea what I was getting into.

That was 42 years ago. Now we have five sons and 18 grandchildren and I'm still in love with that boy I met at a high school dance.

I read somewhere that Mitt and I have a "storybook marriage." Well, in the storybooks I read, there were never long, long, rainy winter afternoons in a house with five boys screaming at once. And those storybooks never seemed to have chapters called MS or Breast Cancer.

A storybook marriage? No, not at all. What Mitt Romney and I have is a real marriage.

I know this good and decent man for what he is -- warm and loving and patient.

He has tried to live his life with a set of values centered on family, faith, and love of one's fellow man. From the time we were first married, I've seen him spend countless hours helping others. I've seen him drop everything to help a friend in trouble, and been there when late-night calls of panic came from a member of our church whose child had been taken to the hospital.

You may not agree with Mitt's positions on issues or his politics. Massachusetts is only 13% Republican, so it's not like that's a shock.

But let me say this to every American who is thinking about who should be our next President:

No one will work harder.

No one will care more.

No one will move heaven and earth like Mitt Romney to make this country a better place to live!

It's true that Mitt has been successful at each new challenge he has taken on. It amazes me to see his history of success actually being attacked. Are those really the values that made our country great? As a mom of five boys, do we want to raise our children to be afraid of success?

Do we send our children out in the world with the advice, "Try to do... okay?"

And let's be honest. If the last four years had been more successful, do we really think there would be this attack on Mitt Romney's success?

Of course not.

Mitt will be the first to tell you that he is the most fortunate man in the world. He had two loving parents who gave him strong values and taught him the value of work. He had the chance to get the education his father never had.

But as his partner on this amazing journey, I can tell you Mitt Romney was not handed success.

He built it.

He stayed in Massachusetts after graduate school and got a job. I saw the long hours that started with that first job. I was there when he and a small group of friends talked about starting a new company. I was there when they struggled and wondered if the whole idea just wasn't going to work. Mitt's reaction was to work harder and press on.

Today that company has become another great American success story.

Has it made those who started the company successful beyond their dreams?

Yes, it has.

It allowed us to give our sons the chance at good educations and made all those long hours of book reports and homework worth every minute. It's given us the deep satisfaction of being able to help others in ways that we could never have imagined. Mitt doesn't like to talk about how he has helped others because he sees it as a privilege, not a political talking point. And we're no different than the millions of Americans who quietly help their neighbors, their churches and their communities. They don't do it so that others will think more of them.

They do it because there IS no greater joy.

"Give and it shall be given unto you."

But because this is America, that small company which grew has helped so many others lead better lives. The jobs that grew from the risks they took have become college educations, first homes. That success has helped fund scholarships, pensions, and retirement funds. This is the genius of America: dreams fulfilled help others launch new dreams.

At every turn in his life, this man I met at a high school dance, has helped lift up others. He did it with the Olympics, when many wanted to give up.

He did it in Massachusetts, where he guided a state from economic crisis to unemployment of just 4.7%.

Under Mitt, Massachusetts's schools were the best in the nation. The best. He started the John and Abigail Adams scholarships, which give the top 25% of high school graduates a four-year tuition-free scholarship.

This is the man America needs.

This is the man who will wake up every day with the determination to solve the problems that others say can't be solved, to fix what others say is beyond repair. This is the man who will work harder than anyone so that we can work a little less hard.

I can't tell you what will happen over the next four years. But I can only stand here tonight, as a wife, a mother, a grandmother, an American, and make you this solemn commitment:

This man will not fail.

This man will not let us down.

This man will lift up America!

It has been 47 years since that tall, kind of charming young man brought me home from our first dance. Not every day since has been easy.

But he still makes me laugh. And never once did I have a single reason to doubt that I was the luckiest woman in the world.

I said tonight I wanted to talk to you about love. Look into your hearts.

This is our country.

This is our future.

These are our children and grandchildren.

You can trust Mitt.

He loves America.

He will take us to a better place, just as he took me home safely from that dance.

Give him that chance.

Give America that chance.

God bless each of you and God Bless the United States of America.