

SIXTEEN

A SPIRITUAL FAMILY CONNECTION

DAVID, KELLY, AND
NICHOLAS POMERANZ

The year 2000 was a big one for me. I made my debut on Broadway in Stephen Sondheim's musical *Putting It Together*. I hosted *Late Night with David Letterman*, made a film with Howie Mandel called *Spinning Out of Control*, and released two albums: the pop album *Heart of a Woman* for Universal Records and *Born for You*—my favorite of all of the twenty-two I've recorded. Oh yes, I almost forgot! I also left *Live with Regis and Kathie Lee* after fifteen incredible years.

It was obviously a milestone year for me and one I look back on with extraordinary gratitude. I made amazing new friends, and one of them, the crazy-talented singer-composer David Pomeranz, is an even dearer friend today. David composed the title song "Born for You" with another equally talented friend and Tony-winning lyricist, David Zippel.

I invited David Pomeranz to visit me, and we wrote a song together. That was twenty-one years ago, and I have lost count of how many we have written since. Both my off-Broadway musical, *Under the Bridge*, and my

Tony-nominated *Scandalous* were written with David, as is one of my newest oratorios, *The God of the How and When*. I believe that gives you a good idea of how much I love and admire him.

David grew up in a Jewish family but is now a member of the Church of Scientology, which I had heard of but knew very little about. As the years and projects flew by, we shared many conversations about our spiritual beliefs, and I felt led to invite David and his wife, Kelly, and son, Nicholas, to accompany me on one of our rabbinical trips to Israel. As it always does, that trip changed everyone's hearts.



KATHIE LEE: So, Dave, you grew up with your beautiful parents in a Jewish home. Can you tell me about that?

DAVID: Well, I was very blessed because of these good, good people. It was a real family, a big tribe. The best part of my upbringing was the family coming together and enjoying one another. Spiritually, as you know, my dad and I would perform in the synagogue, and it was one of the first times I played in front of an audience.

KATHIE LEE: And that was in New York, right?

DAVID: Yes, it was in New York, in Long Island. And I was maybe nine or ten years old. We were in the choir, and on the High Holy Days, we would go to the mic and sing the most gorgeous—

KATHIE LEE: Yes. They are gloriously beautiful, they are ancient and from age to age, or everlasting. They are magnificent.

DAVID: That's the truth. So the music was something we all shared. We gathered around the Passover table with family, and we sang. We celebrated Hanukkah, and we sang. I was bar mitzvahed, and we sang. It wasn't so much about the literal Bible as it was a spiritual feeling that connected us all through the music.

KATHIE LEE: And then, David, you pursued a very successful career in music, working with artists like Barry Manilow. You and I met when I

was doing my album *Born for You*. And then you met Kelly, and that's when your life changed. Am I right about that?

DAVID: Yes, you are right about that.

KATHIE LEE: Kelly, let's get to you for a second. You discovered something called Scientology. At what age were you?

KELLY: I was about twenty-four.

KATHIE LEE: What was it about Scientology that appealed to you?

KELLY: Well, I always knew I was a spiritual being. It was just taken for granted that there was another dimension in life. And I was raised Catholic and went to Catholic school. But after I got out of college, there were certain things in my life, certain barriers I was hitting up against, and I thought, "*There must be something that I don't know.*" And Scientology actually makes me a better Christian. All the goals that I had as a young person in my religion, I still have the same ones. I mean, Jesus, you know, He is the role model. He is the guy.

KATHIE LEE: Right.

KELLY: I just found Scientology had tools that made sense. Scientology doesn't tell you, "Here is something, and you have to believe this." It's like, "Here is a piece of information. When you apply this in life, see if it helps improve conditions." So it helps you toward your own goals.

A friend of mine told me about this place called Celebrity Centre, which helps artists, because Mr. Hubbard felt that artists create the society. I think artists have the ability and the courage to create new places and new viewpoints for people to move into.

KATHIE LEE: Yes, if we are created in God's image, then we are creators as well. And I think that's why as artists we feel such an overflowing in our spirits when we create something of beauty to share with a hurting world. It's got to be done for that purpose, too, right?

KELLY: Yeah, absolutely, because we are multifaceted beings. It's a joyful thing to be as godlike as we can, to use our talents as much as we can to improve life and to help others, and to be involved with others, which Jesus was.

KATHIE LEE: The Bible says “to whom much is given, much is required.” We are to understand who God is, what He wants from His followers, not to control them but to bless them to bless others.

KATHIE LEE: And you have to allow others to have the blessing of giving also. That on your own, David?

DAVID: No, I found it on my own. I was in a lot of spiritual pain and confusion and upset. And the beauty of Scientology for me is that it helped to handle the travail. I had my head screwed on straight enough to go, *Oh, I'm a spiritual being*, and then could live a more spiritual life and, as Kelly was saying, more and more, and closer and closer to God, and closer and closer to the all of all. And that's what it did for me.

KATHIE LEE: So this started working for you, and then you met Kelly there?

DAVID: Yeah, we met at a party and became good friends as artists, Kelly being a marvelous actress. We were interested in one another's art and our processes, and then we fell in love.

KATHIE LEE: And when I met you, David, you had adopted a baby boy, Nicholas. Tell me about that.

KELLY: Yeah, so the thing with Nicky was very interesting. David and I got married later than a lot of people. And we were running around the world and doing shows, and we created this company, and I was producing things. All of a sudden, it was kind of like, “Wait a minute,” looking at the clock, “when are we going to have kids?”

KATHIE LEE: Right, like, “Oh yeah, we forgot something.”

KELLY: Yeah, I had this moment where I thought, “*If I take nine months, is it really going to be something I'm going to miss?*” And I went, “No. So let's just adopt.” Now, I didn't know at the time that it usually takes a couple of years—

KATHIE LEE: It's a long gestation.

KELLY: No, I had no idea. So I was visiting a friend who lived in Las Vegas, and we sat down to have coffee and catch up. She said, “Kelly, what are you doing?” I said, “Well, David and I decided we should adopt a kid.” She said, “Oh my God, you are the parents!” And I said, “What are you

talking about?” She said, “I know this fourteen-year-old girl; she is eight months pregnant. And she hasn't been able to find parents. And here you are!”

So I went home and told David about it. We found this lawyer, and he said, “Listen, you better jump on this. I've been in this business for almost twenty-five years, and I've never heard a story like this. There is some hand guiding this.” So we decided to go meet the girl. Then I get a call from my friend, and she said, “The mother found a family in Los Angeles, and they are coming down on Saturday.”

KATHIE LEE: So now it's going to be almost an auction.

KELLY: Yes. David said, “Kelly, we are flying to Las Vegas on Friday night,” because the other family was supposed to come down Saturday. So we went to Vegas, and I took this big press book of David's with the pictures and everything.

KATHIE LEE: Of course. Like, “You, too, could be introduced to Barry Manilow.”

KELLY: Yes, exactly. So we met the girl, and she was absolutely adorable. We went to a restaurant, where people just stand up and sing. David was asked to sing, so he sang, came back, sat down. She was sitting directly opposite us, and she said, “I'm not going to LA tomorrow because you are the parents,” and we both started crying. She said, “I know I'm just the instrument for you, but you are actually the parents.” It was like a spiritual thing where she knew that we were meant to have this child.

KATHIE LEE: Right, what wisdom for a fourteen-year-old.

DAVID: And she came and lived with us for some time, because we knew it was going to happen soon.

KELLY: I had forgotten that part, yeah. She stayed with us, and he was supposed to be born in about three weeks. Then, all of a sudden, one morning she was up very early, and I thought, “Well, that's different.” We were making breakfast, and she went into labor. We took her to the birthing center, and she wanted her mom to be there. So we called her mom; her mom jumped on a plane in Vegas. And just as her mom got there, he was born.

KATHIE LEE: How many miracles, how much evidence do you need of God's love?

KELLY: Yeah. It was; it really was a miracle.

KATHIE LEE: And he is how old now?

DAVID: He is going to be twenty in a few months.
KATHIE LEE: Wow, all right, so that's the miracle. Now David and I started working together, and I invited you guys to come to Israel with me. I prayed that the Lord would lead me to invite people who wouldn't automatically be the people I would put together. And so the Lord placed around my heart that the three of you should come as a family. And you did. And tell me what you expected and what surprised you the most, Kelly, please.

KELLY: Well, I love traveling, and I love learning. But I really didn't expect the spiritual experience. And I think my whole earlier education, you know in Catholic school, with Bible stories and all of that, the Bible came alive for me. Sort of like I understood it in a different way, and it was very profound, the connection with the Bible and Jesus and what His lessons really were.

KATHIE LEE: Yes. And when Nicky jumped in the Jordan to be baptized, it was just thrilling. But that's the way we ended our ten-day trip. And we all came home, I think, transformed and changed in different kinds of ways. And that's what I love about a personal God. Every one of us who went there left with the deeper understanding of who we are as individuals and where we fit as a community into this world that God has created. And was that your experience, Dave?

DAVID: Yes. I took away many, many things, like the both of you just discussed. Just the undeniable resonance of the truth that went on there. But being raised a Jew, I was missing the connection. I didn't understand. What's the point of having Jesus when you've got God?

KATHIE LEE: Yes, yes.

DAVID: And what I saw for myself was the message that you are made in the image of God. So this is how I got it. God takes this earthly form and transmits into this earthly form and gives Him a message and says, "Show them how it's done."

KATHIE LEE: Oh, David, that's beautiful.

DAVID: And the other thing I walked away really stunned with, how much it impressed me, was who this being was. Jesus. And you know, the bravery, the unconditional love, and unconditional compliance with His own message that He received. Jesus' message is, "Yes, here I am, here is God," but it's also, "There you are, and you are like Me. You treat others the way you want to be treated. It's God in you. So you get to walk like Me, to whatever degree you misstep or cheat or look away, you'll have some travail, because that's just the way it goes. It's not like I'm going to do anything bad to you, but you'll do something bad to you."

KATHIE LEE: That is amazing. That is so true. God just wants to bless His children. The Ten Commandments are to bless His children and bring us home to where He always intended us to be, in the Father's house. Wow, you guys, I'm so grateful for you sharing what you shared today.



KATHIE LEE: Nicholas, you were adopted. That kind of love is so special. Love is a choice, and your parents made a choice to find you. And when that opportunity arose, they just got in a car to Vegas.

NICHOLAS: Yes, that's where my biological mother lives. Her mom was really good friends with my parents. That's how my parents ended up hearing about it.

KATHIE LEE: Your mom grew up Catholic, and your dad is Jewish. And they both had become members of Scientology by the time you were born. Tell me how that affected your young life.

NICHOLAS: From an early age, Scientology got me to be responsible for myself and my actions. The truth about Scientology is that it's a technology to life, covering areas like how to understand human emotions, why people do what they do, how to communicate more effectively, and how to improve relationships. I consider myself a Christian as well.

KATHIE LEE: Okay, so tell me, what was your first impression of Jesus?

NICHOLAS: Well, the first time I ever heard about Jesus was in third or fourth grade. I did a world religions class. All that I can recall then was how Jesus Christ lived over in the Middle East somewhere, and He'd cure people with leprosy, and go to women with scarlet letters and flow them love when no one else did. I didn't so much get into the religious side, but it was more about the miracles He did that intrigued me.

KATHIE LEE: So when you were invited to come on the trip to Israel, what did you think?

NICHOLAS: I was thrilled. Israel is the center of all religion, maybe the most important place on planet Earth. When you read anything on Christianity or Judaism, it's all about Israel.

KATHIE LEE: Yes, and even Islam. All roads lead to Israel. So what was your first impression of the land? Did you have a favorite spot?

NICHOLAS: Yes. Bethlehem.

KATHIE LEE: Tell me why.

NICHOLAS: I'm sure you experience a similar thing, a certain energy. Considering the most iconic figure in the history of modern humanity, Jesus Christ, was born there, where a lot of these miracles occurred, it was amazing being in the exact same presence where He was born.

KATHIE LEE: Where divinity became humanity. You were the youngest member of our team. I loved your openness. I didn't know how your family would respond. I knew your dad, David, as a Jew would respond magnificently to the Jewish stuff we were learning. We all came from the same earthly father, Abraham, but that the story from the Old Testament continues with the New Testament. It's one love story about how God created us for fellowship with Him. So to see you jump in the Jordan, there was an eagerness about you, and you were the first one. What were you thinking on that day?

NICHOLAS: It's one thing to get baptized in Florida or New York or Chicago, but baptized in the Jordan River? I just thought it was an amazing opportunity. And my dad being Jewish, my mom being Christian, and us being Scientologists has nothing to do with being in the Holy Land.

I was superexcited to get baptized and immerse myself in everything that was going on.

KATHIE LEE: Has it changed you at all?

NICHOLAS: I would say that the trip in general changed me. Learning about Jesus' tenure for thirty-three years gave me a lot more of reality about Christianity. It's hard to know what's true and false about religions in particular, especially with the media being extremely biased. Going to Israel, and hearing pretty much from the source, gave me a profound reality of Christianity and how these events transpired. It gave me an exterior view of the world.

KATHIE LEE: It certainly broadens it. So for your young heart, Jesus met you right where you were so you could understand Him because He longs to have you walk with Him and be your Messiah, best friend, and your source of life. As you go forward, I have no doubt in my heart, what God did in you during that time He will continue to work in you.