

## **Why do we cry at weddings?**

Why do we cry at weddings? I think its because we are all hopeless romantics. We all want the dream of a lasting connection that keeps us engaged and invested. We want to feel hot about our lover 30 years into the marriage and we want that for others. We cry because we want it for ourselves and because we don't really know if it's possible.

My daughter cried at my wedding. She was, afraid, perhaps. Afraid that while it seemed so good at the point of the wedding that it might not end up the fairy tale. I've been married three times now and she knew how it could turn out. She has seen my two previous marriages fail and got a really clear picture of how bad a bad marriage can be. But even at that third attempt, she cried. She wanted, at 16 to have a father who cared about her, and a husband for her lonely mom. Her hopes brought tears.

As she walked down the isle herself, a couple of weeks ago, I cried. My husband asked me what I was feeling and I told him, "Sad, glad, wonderful."

What was amazing me was that in spite of seeing me go through two disastrous marriages, she still had hope. She believes in her ability to love, and she believes in her husband.

When I hear the debate about whether you should stay together for the kids or show them that it's okay to find happiness, I am amused. Ideally, we should all be able to make it work out. But watching miserable parents suffer for their sake does not make for well-adjusted children.

What I like to think my daughter saw, which gave her continued hope, is that when you are determined enough, anything is possible.

Ending two marriages in divorce was not what I wanted for my kids, or in the least, myself. I was ill equipped to manage a lasting connection. My mother also went through two divorces, one when I was a toddler, and another long after I was grown. So I saw both divorce, and “staying together for the kids”. Neither provided me a model for intimacy.

But I was determined to have what my mother did not, a lasting, intimate connection with my husband. What I did, and what my daughter witnessed, is to find out what it took to have what I dreamed of having.

I hoped therapy would help me find it. And undoubtedly, the work I did and the things I learned did path the way. But it wasn't until I discovered the Cycles of the Heart model that I fully understood why it is so horribly difficult for most of us to have that romantic dream. And it wasn't until I understood the way out that I was able to do it differently.

Discovering that the way our minds are wired and how our culture has indoctrinated us into believing that we have to view every problem as a question of “who is to blame” transformed my life and my relationships.

I also believe that it is why my daughter was able to confidently take her vows with a kind, loving man with whom I have no doubt she will have a marvelous life. She learned, along with me, that there is a different way to live than we have been led by biology and culture to believe.

So I cried at her wedding. I cried from a depth of understanding of the possibilities before her, at 27, which were not there for me. My joy overflows, because she is starting out her life with wisdom that eluded me.

She cried at her wedding, too. My husband lifted his glass in toast to her. He said, with tears in his eyes, (as best I can recall) “You two have everything you need to make a marriage work. Because I know that you (my daughter) have realized that you can’t forget who your husband is when you are in conflict. No matter how angry he is, or you are, you don’t forget who he is in spite of whatever might be happening. This is how I know you have what it takes.” She burst into tears because she knew what he said is true, and that she had won an incredible prize by having this gift.

This wisdom doesn’t come easily or naturally. It’s something we have to learn, and continue to practice. But it makes all the difference in the world in our relationships, whether with our spouse, our children, our parents, our friends or our neighbors.