

Wow! I am so Glad I Married You!
(The secret to marital bliss)

The main thing I remember about being with my ex-husband is how angry I felt all the time. I was always unhappy with him about something. He didn't care if the living room was covered with screws from the many computer parts he was constantly putting together. He didn't care that I was alone most every night in a small town miles away from my family while he was working late at night. He disregarded my feelings about most things and pretty much did as he liked with no regard for me.

I had a long list of gripes, serious complaints and general dissatisfaction with him that ate me up every day. When I left him I felt such relief, just to not be carrying all that resentment any more.

After being single for nearly 10 years I finally met and married my current husband. And, I have to say, I did a lot of work on myself in the interim. The gripes that I had regarding my ex-husband, I am chagrined to disclose, were mostly kept to myself. That is, between my girlfriends and myself, they all knew; my husband didn't.

So now, going into this marriage I was determined to speak my truths and not pretend that everything was okay when I was deeply or even shallowly perturbed with him. Needless to say my first year of marriage was tough. After years of not speaking my truths I began to realize that my truths were not THE truth. That, in fact, there were other ways of looking at things, and other perspectives was a shock to me, in spite of my training and knowledge.

This left me with a new way to look at my life, and what was happening in my marriage. Maybe there were other ways to look at what was happening, and had happened in my previous marriages (yes, marriages, plural).

You see the funny thing is that both my most recent ex-husband and my current one are in the same line of work. They even share the same name, and initials, first, middle and last. Both are hardheaded and extremely bright. Both work very hard and

care a lot about their family. Yet the quality of my relationship with my current husband is light years from my previous one.

Honestly, while some of this has to do with their differences (they are not exactly alike, even with all the similarities) – I really don't believe that explains it fully.

The Gift of Gratitude

The difference that counts is that I am different. I am so very different in many ways, but the one that hit me tonight is that I am now able to be grateful for my husband.

Understand, my husband is not perfect. He has, like all spouses, his quirks and neurotic tendencies. He has things about him that I am not all that fond of and he will, on occasion royally piss me off. And there are times when he gets downright negative and bitter.

But, those things are not what I focus on. Today I realized that for the past 8 years of our marriage I have been blissfully happy, over all. I also realized that when I think about him, I don't think about the things that piss me off or frustrate me. I think about the things I am so grateful for about him.

Our thoughts are powerful things. I know many of us have heard the idea that "Thoughts are things." But I am here to testify to you that you can indeed change the quality of your relationship by how you think about what is happening.

Negative Traits Do Not Destroy a Marriage

When my husband was trying to develop a company that never made a dime and cost us what remained of our life savings (after the stock market crash), I didn't nag him and focus on how bad things were. Instead I continued to focus on how grateful I was for him and all the things he brings to my life.

When he would pout and fume at me when I would return from trips to various activities, I didn't push back and become bitter and angry with him. I focused on how glad I was to have him to come home to, even if he was temporarily unhappy with me.

When he got depressed after months of looking for work and not finding it, I didn't focus on his bitterness. I just continued to focus on how grateful I am to have him.

The things he does for me are huge. He holds me in the mornings before he gets up. He makes sure the pool is clean and the lawn is mowed. He feeds the dog and initiates doing the laundry on Saturday. He fixes anything I have that needs to be fixed. He helps me with projects I am working on and encourages me in the things I want to do. He cares if I am unhappy and holds me when I cry.

Happiness has no Price

Any of those things are worth the price I pay to be married to him. Having him be there to partner in my life is a gift that I cannot possibly express the value of in one sitting. And, he doesn't have to do any of the above all the time. In fact, he doesn't. He doesn't do them "perfectly" or always in the ways I would want him to do. But that is insignificant.

The funny thing is that I realized the full value of my gratitude for him on this Thanksgiving. This year he will make more money than both of us put together have ever made. We are closer than we have ever been and he is excited about the things he is doing and where his life is going. So am I. I continue to be overwhelmingly grateful for him.

Focus on What You Have!

I am not telling you this for you to hear what a great husband I have. I am telling you this for you to stop focusing on what you DON'T have and start focusing on what you DO have. Start being grateful for the fact that you have someone in your life that says they love you. Be grateful for the fact of this person. Be grateful for the fun times, the sad times, the stressful times because you have someone on the path with you. Be grateful every time they hold you, kiss you, do some small thing for you. Be aware that each thing they do for and with you is a gift that is priceless.

My husband has no idea that my gratitude is so great. He doesn't really need to know that I am constantly in a prayer of sorts about how thankful I am that he is in my life. Yet he does know, somehow, that he is appreciated. His knowing that he is

appreciated makes him want to do and be more. It, unconsciously, pushes him to want to be what I need him to be. It gives him a sense that he matters and increases his sense of self worth. He feels happier.

A happier mate means a happier partnership. Thus, giving me even more to be grateful for every day. Try it, you'll be amazed.