

7 Lessons Learned from 22 Years of Marriage

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My wife and I celebrated our 22nd wedding anniversary last Friday...For me, it was love at first sight. For her it took a while :) but 22 years later we have grown a lot and I want to share 7 lessons I learned

1. *My wife is always right.*
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6. *My wife is always right.*
7. *My wife is always right.*

While I hope this made you laugh, and my wife IS always right, here are 7 lessons I learned in 22 years of marriage:

1. **You Know You Are With The Right Person When They Give You Strength.** Looking back on my life and marriage, there's no way I could have done it without my wife. Her love, support, belief and encouragement gave me strength. She believed in me when no one else did and gave me the confidence to pursue my dreams.
2. **Be Willing.** Early in our marriage our relationship wasn't very good. I was young, selfish and quite negative. One day she had enough. She said "I love you but I'm not going to spend my life being married to someone who is so negative and miserable and who makes me miserable. You have to change." I looked at myself and my life and realized she was right....I was willing to change and it led me to do the work I do now.... So, be willing to improve and grow. You'll benefit your marriage and the world.
3. **Communicate, Communicate, Communicate.** Most relationships initially break down because of poor communication. It's so important to keep the lines of communication open. My wife and I have had our share of disagreements over the years but we always communicated and this allowed us to grow strong together.

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4. **The More I Love My Wife the More I Love My Life.** I'm not talking about the popular phrase happy wife, happy life. I'm talking about the fact that the more I focus on loving and serving my wife, the better I feel about myself and my marriage. It's not about what she does for me. It's not about keeping score. It's about me deciding to be selfless and love her, serve her and be there for her. I've found when I do this we both get better.
 5. **Encourage Instead of Compete.** My wife and I have met a lot of couples over the years who seem to compete with one another. They get jealous if their spouse is getting fit or enjoying success rather than encouraging and supporting them. Instead of being one team they act like they are two separate teams. To have a great marriage you have to be one team who supports and encourages each other. When you support and advocate for each other you grow as individuals and also strengthen your team.
 6. **Have a Shared Mission.** My wife and I knew that we weren't together just for ourselves. We felt our mission was and is to raise champions in life that will make a difference in the world. This mission and purpose influenced every decision we made and continues to influence us....
 7. **Keep Working At It. Don't Quit.** As everyone knows, marriage isn't easy. There's an ebb and flow. Sometimes marriage is great and sometimes it isn't...When you plant yourself in your marriage and nurture your relationship and invest your time and energy in your spouse, over time you grow into the person you are meant to be. Marriage is where you learn to give and take and compromise. It's where you work on your individual issues and heal together. It's where a strong family begins. Over the years there were times my wife and I went to counseling, took parenting classes, argued and disliked each other but we never stopped loving each other and we never stopped working on our marriage. There might have been a few times where it would have been easier to give up but thank God we didn't. I call it relationship grit. You stay the course. Keep working at it. Don't give up. (Please know if you are dealing with abuse, that's a different story and I encourage you seek expert advice immediately.)