

An Enduring Marriage

by **Ariele M. Huff**

"Though you didn't ask me, I believe I know, at least what works for us."

That's how I started the e-mail to my friend of many years who was back on the dating market and doubting the possibility of ever finding love. As I listened to her, I felt she was causing a lot of her problems with expectations that weren't even based on what I believe she really wants in a relationship.

I made this list of the things that work in what I like to call my "high functioning" marriage of 21 years. Some of these things have been oft-said and weren't surprises to me when I saw them creating our longstanding mutual respect and affection. However, some of them seem almost counter-intuitive. But, hey, I'm not going to argue with success and happiness!

1) Thinking of love as a choice to be committed rather than as an emotion. Emotions change from hour to hour. Pleasures are subservient to the commitment, allowing us

to stick it out through times of disagreement, illness, lack of sex, etc.

2) Expressing gratitude and appreciation as frequently as possible, always sincerely.

3) Going beyond the easy "thank you" or "sorry" to say something that smacks of authentic feeling.

4) Going beyond words. A situation where I'd say "thank you" makes me want to do something in return. "Sorry" means wanting to make amends, like making a sign to hang over the kitchen sink, "Brad's in the shower. Dishes later."

5) Recognizing that nothing lasts forever. That makes us cherish what we have.

6) Focusing humbly on what we can do for each other rather than what we want from each other. That can't be forced but seems to happen organically due to the gratitude thing.

7) Willingness to show neediness while not feeling loss of power due to that takes courage and trust.

8) Valuing the other's trust above anything else.

9) Awareness that we are always capable of moving on, surviving alone, and articulating that we will do so if deal breaker issues can't be resolved. Deal breaker issues are different for each person and are something we know we couldn't move past if they continue, like violence or cheating.

10) Willingness to reformulate attitudes and ideas to make the union more functional and/or more pleasurable. For example, changing your mind about what you find attractive or interesting. (As an example, hubby suddenly decides that martial arts movie watching is his favorite thing to do on weekends. He never did this before, but you look for the good parts of that, join in if you can, or tolerate at a distance if you can't. And he does look cute cheering for his favorite fighter. Same thing for him if you suddenly decide that, after all, Shirley Temple movies are the best watching.)

11) Setting times to be together as a priority.

12) Allowing each other space and individuality. We don't share all our interests or expect to like all the same people. Like good friends, we respect the other person's right to have some quirks and interests we don't share, or even understand.

13) Picking our battles and letting the rest

go by.

14) Rehearsing what a fabulous marriage we have. Reminding ourselves of good times, fun moments, and things we've done for and with each other; how lucky we are as a couple and how much happiness we've had.

15) Laughing over the mistakes, intentional and unintentional.

Ariele's class, Change Lab, is scheduled for Sunday, August 17, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the UW Women's Center. Break out of old belief systems, expand options, re-write life scripts, and plan for a positive tomorrow. Call 206-685-1090 to register.

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I've Always Loved Music

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verified, for we often hear of alternative medical practitioners who use specific tones to heal the organs.

Hans Jenny, a Swiss scientist, passed sound waves through various moldable matter, such as fine shavings and sand, and the pictures he left show remarkable patterns that were created by these waves. When we look at the way they take on various three-dimensional forms, we can begin to imagine how creation by sound might occur.

For centuries, mystics have told us that sound/music actually creates matter. Scientists have begun to prove the mystics right, uncovering evidence that primordial sound helped create and order galaxies. As a

singer and voice teacher this really excites me, because for years I had been hearing that little inside voice saying we could "manage molecules" with our voice. That's another "wow!" Just imagine. If that were really true, and I believe it is, then what we say or sing, and even the way that we do it, is really important!

I started using my voice, and training my students to use theirs, more responsibly. Armed with the knowledge of how the natural voice works, and with our new (remembered?) understandings of the effects of pitches and vowels, we began to create some very exciting effects with our voices. Our bodies began to heal and change shape as we sang naturally-produced tones, colors began to appear in our fields of

vision as we blended certain frequencies, and our spiritual awareness began to increase.

Reach down into your old memories, and begin to sing musical scales, vowel sounds, chants, and heartfelt soul songs daily. Sing with others. Listen to beautiful music and the sounds of nature. Learn and play an instrument.

Read a good book on sound. Become very aware of the sounds/music around you.

Yes! Sound/music is that powerful!

For concerts that make you laugh and cry, creative products that you'll want to buy, poetry that makes you see things new, or lessons on voice bringing songs out of you, contact vanessa@www.thewondersofmusic.com, P.O. Box 2187, Lynnwood, WA

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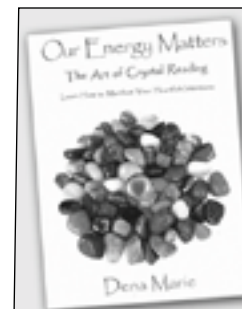
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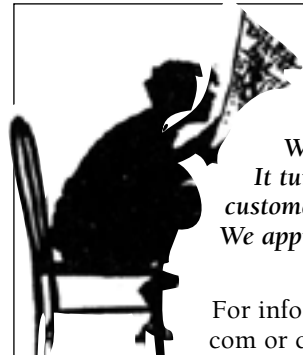
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