



Today I have been married to my best friend for 15 years. Fifteen beautiful years.

The first time I saw my husband, I knew he was the one. It was like, “Yep, there’s the rest of my heart sitting there across the room.” Dustin and I both had significant others when we met, but...well, you see where we are today.

I truly believe we came together because of my mom’s persistent prayers. Never underestimate a momma’s prayers; they’ve got God’s ear, for sure.

I don’t know if 15 years qualifies me to talk about marriage. I don’t know if there is a magical anniversary number that makes you legit enough to say anything about marriage. Ah, but, you know, I like talking (or writing) so I’m gonna say the things on my mind.

I’d marry this man a thousand times over. My heart and soul are stitched to him with an unbreakable thread. There are so many things in my life that I thank God for, but the gift of my husband sits at the top of the list.

With that said, I’m going to jump right in and say some things in this blog that may make a lot of people recoil—especially women. Let’s dive in...

After a couple gets married and then children come, it is often the case, that the spouse gets put to the side. I’ve heard women tell me, “Right now, it’s all about our kids, my husband is just going to have to learn to take a back seat.” This always makes me cringe a little.

I’ve heard husbands say, “It’s all about the kids right now, when they move out, maybe then we will have some time to reconnect.” There is always sadness behind these words. I’ve never seen anyone say it with a twinkle in their eye and a genuine smile on their face.

Our marriages, outside of our relationship with God, has to sit at the top of the priority

list. Marriage does not take a back burner. Your spouse is not to be placed on the sideline. There are two things that you can do that will make you amazing parents:

1. Take care of the souls that are entrusted to you by giving them a foundation in Christ and loving them.

2. Have a solid marriage. I'll say it again. *Have a solid marriage.*

This does not mean love your kids less, so don't even try to offer up that argument. It does mean, do not love your spouse less. Do not set them aside and then pretend that in twenty-some-odd-years that you are going to magically fall back together and all will be bliss after the kids leave. You simply cannot neglect a spouse for a quarter of a century and then pretend that it will all fall into place.

"We grew apart." Ever heard that line before from divorced people? I have on numerous occasions and it makes me sad because it doesn't have to be that way. On our wedding day, none of us thinks to ourselves about putting our spouse on the back burner when the kids come—not a single one of us. Yet, for many, once the kids do come, this becomes our attitude. I get it, things get busy, exhausting, mundane, and crazy. Nobody has time to gaze longingly into each other's eyes. But, there are other ways to connect that are simple, mindful, and easy. We often times have an either/or attitude about our spouse. Either we can gush over each other while going out on long, romantic dates OR we can just wait till all our kids are grown and then try to find the romance again. We can't draw these hard lines and refuse to be flexible. Connecting with your spouse during child-rearing years is going to look different than when you were first dating. It's going to look different than a retired couple. You gotta have a realistic game-plan to stay connected and that only happens through good communication.

Your kids are the gift of your love with your spouse. Your kids need mom and dad to be unbreakable. You are their foundation and they need that foundation to maintain throughout their life. Yes, even as adults, they need that foundation. I know this to be true because my parents divorced when I was in my thirties. The pain is just as great no matter your age.

You are being a good mother when you love your children's father. You are being a fantastic dad when you love your wife. Kids need to see you loving each other, fighting for each other, depending on each other. They need to see you kiss, hug, hold hands, and snuggle. They need to see you argue (without cussing and name calling) and then make up without breaking up. You teach them that you can have disagreements with people, but not fall apart and hate each other. Want your children to have a beautiful, peaceful, secure childhood? Then love your spouse with all your being. As children, there is no substitute for falling asleep at night content in the knowledge that mom and dad are one.

Of course, this doesn't mean don't take care of your children. It's doesn't mean don't love them with your heart. It's not like, we as humans, have a limited amount of love. In fact, when we love and love well, it gives us more energy and more joy. Understand this, one day your kids are going to move out and start their own families. **Their priority should then be their spouse—not mom and dad. You are hopefully going to be with your spouse longer than any other human being on earth: Longer than with your own parents, longer than with your kids. The relationship you have with your spouse is of utmost importance. Your kids want a place to come home to, to see mom and dad—together.** They want to know that when they leave the house one day, the two of you are together. They want to bring their kids to see grandma and grandpa—in the same house, in the same town.

Our marriages are a sacrament. They are *sacred*. Sacred things need taken care of and not left on the shelf to collect dust. We are sealed to our spouse with a supernatural bond and it is one of the most powerful things on earth. That is why when couples are ripped apart in divorce, the pain is so devastating.

When a married couple loves each other and sets their marriage as a top priority there is almost no greater witness to Christ's love. When each spouse puts the other first, both are happy, content, satisfied and everything else falls into place. When each spouse feels loved and cared for by the other, when they are a united front, parenting is so much better and easier. However, when the spouses ignore each other and only focus on the kids, the spouses grow distant, resentful, bitter. As often is the case, they get divorced and the kids are ripped from their foundation. I guarantee you, your kids do not want this.

Every time my husband and I kiss in the kitchen, I know we are giving a gift to our children. Every time we take a night to go on a date and connect, I know we are loving our kids. Every time they see us hold hands in the car, I know we are reassuring our children's hearts that their mom and dad love each other. Every time I kiss my husband goodbye for work and greet him at the door when he comes home, I know our kids are content in the knowledge that their foundation is never going to crumble apart.

Don't set your spouse on the back burner. It is imperative that you make time for your spouse and see your marriage as a witness to your children of what true, authentic love looks like. They are watching you and, I promise, they want and need to know that mom and dad are one.

This article was wrote by Amy Thomas in <https://catholicpilgrim.net/>