

Taking Ownership and Finding the Beauty in Marriage

Marriage Box

Most people get married believing a myth that marriage is a beautiful box full of all the things they have longed for; companionship, intimacy, friendship, etc. The truth is that marriage at the start is an empty box. You must put something in before you can take anything out. There is no love in marriage. Love is in people. And people put love in marriage. There is no romance in marriage. You have to infuse it into your marriage. A couple must learn the art and form the habit of giving, loving, serving, praising, of keeping the box full. If you take out more than you put in, the box will be empty.

At a very young age, I fondly recall being unbelievably excited about being married – I couldn't wait to be a wife – to cook, keep a beautiful home, take care of our children, go on picnics and be a family. While it sounds mundane and 'plain', seeing my mom execute her role as a homemaker so flawlessly and with joy, I was convinced that would be my role too.

However, when I got married at 20 years old, I waited for that 'feeling' of being married to kick-in. I had no idea what it was supposed to *feel* like, but I knew I wasn't feeling it. It was clear that I missed the conversation about marriage involving *work* and *investment*, and I definitely didn't recall seeing or hearing how external influences (including family) could impact a marriage and relationship.

What I missed in my first 7 years of marriage was ownership. I expected to receive love, feel appreciated, be respected and the list goes on and on. What I didn't consider was **my own** investment which I needed to make. As with any relationship, in order to reap the rewards, we must invest and that takes work. We know it won't always be sunshine and roses, but being able to persevere through those difficult times, those struggles – when we think the world is falling apart around us – those are the times we draw on Him and we grow – we grow in faith, we grow in our marriage and we grow individually. Through our 27 years of marriage, we have been through the ownership and closing of a business, the death of my parents, the struggle with family and relationships, and what we've learned is that we are much stronger together than we are tearing each other a part.

Many times we yearn for what we consider a **glamorous** moment in a marriage – candlelight dinner, flowers delivered to the office or a sweet gift. But I can honestly say, the moment I fell most deeply in love with my husband, was the time I returned home from a long day with working and school, and seeing him care for my elderly father who was living with us. It's those moments that keep your spark and keep your love alive. Marriage can be the most beautiful relationship – but remember, that beautiful relationship doesn't happen on its own.

Most importantly, the investment we make in relationships isn't short-lived – it continues – our children witness our behavior, our willingness to do better, our interest in being better. Make your commitment to relationships, to a strong, loving marriage a legacy worth carrying on.

P.S. On the subject of commitment and relationships, I am reminded that many of us may run out of Mass immediately following Communion and before the final prayer. As the "**Prayer Warrior**" addressed in a blog, she asked, "*Would anyone with any social skills even consider leaving a friend's home immediately after finishing their dinner (and even before the others guests finished)? No one would unless there was an emergency of some sort. How much worse is it then to run out on God? Think about it for a minute. God humbled himself enough to die for us. God gives us the gift of His body. Seriously, hang out a minute, thank him and repeat at least one week later.*"

Written by Bernadette Lawson, a member of our Stewardship Committee