

A lucky guy

18 Nov, 2020

Last evening (or was it two evenings ago?), Mary turns to me and comments on how well we're doing as a couple. Which is, as it happens, extremely well.

In the last six months, we've been through some stuff. Some good, some bad, all stressful. I hear other folks talking about the strain on their marriages caused by (choose your condition or combination of conditions) and I understand. I swear I do.

So, what makes us different? And are we, really? Hmm...

We joke that we don't let the tensions of a long marriage get to us because neither of us wants to live alone and we're both too damned lazy to go through dating again. And truth be told, that might be part of it. But the real thing, seems to me, is our history together.

Our history is made up, as you might expect, of some big things. Things like emergency surgery and sick babies and losing parents and finding out our country isn't as mature as we'd believed or certainly, as we might have hoped.

A lot of big decisions and whistling past graveyards in our time together but I don't think that's the history that binds us - not primarily, anyway.

Our history, the part that really matters, is chock full of small things. Taking the crying baby so the other could eat dinner while it's still hot. Rushing over with the glass of water when the coughing sounds a certain way. Picking up dog piles and making the bed and putting up with (whatever) and killing spiders and waving away butterflies and taking an extra turn at the wheel, getting up to turn out the hallway light we forgot and pretending not to notice or noticing when it's appropriate and putting out the trash and listening even when you really, truly don't care but know the other does or perhaps just needs to feel heard and remembering to get the creamer even though it wasn't on the list and giving in when the other just needs a little win and never mentioning it again because giving in grudgingly is not generosity.

Lots and lots and lots of small things, tiny things we did right. And letting go of small things we did wrong, or at least, less right.

Our happiness together resides in closeness while allowing space. Being aware without being smothered.

I'm a lucky guy to have found myself in this place, with this person and these memories. And especially with the times we don't remember because they were such small things. But they added up to comfort together. Loving just sitting in the same room.