

Published based on [Lessons Learned from 28 Years of Marriage](#)

Lessons Learned from 28 Years of Marriage

On August 4, 2009, Lisa and I celebrated our 28th wedding anniversary.

We met at a A & W fast food restaurant. Lisa was looking for job, I was the guy hiring, and we fast became "just after high school" sweethearts.

So here we are 28 years later and we still love, respect and like each other. It's pretty incredible, and I'm looking forward to sharing the next 28 years together.

So what's the secret?

Well, Lisa's been a saint from the beginning but I came to the table with a lot of rough edges that needed polishing. A lot of hurts, habits and hang ups that most people wouldn't have put up with long enough for me to get past them. I also had a few fears, phobias, and fantastically bizarre belief systems.

So patience is critical. Patience and understanding.

Unconditional love and acceptance also goes a long way. Unconditional in the sense that reciprocation is not part of the deal. I love you and treat you well... regardless. Which is tough because you have to learn to stop being so self-centered and selfish, a natural survival response, but seriously detrimental to most relationships.

I also had to learn this incredible, life-changing lesson:

You can be right, but wrong at the top of your voice.

Years ago I was a contributing editor for large real estate publication, and I wrote a "how to" newsletter designed to teach real estate agents and brokers how to sell more real estate without cold call prospecting. And I was known as the guy with a "voice" - the guy who had serious opinions about everything that he didn't mind sharing. So you either loved me or hated me because I didn't shade anything grey. It was black and white and that's the way it was. Period. End of conversation.

The challenge was I often carried this "voice" back into my home and into the relationship with my wife and children. And it was not only unfair (because there ARE wonderful shades of grey we can all appreciate), it was rude and inappropriate...

... Even if what I was saying was true.

You can be right, but wrong at the top of your voice.

For example, if you are driving and you KNOW you have a yellow light and plenty of time to make it through the intersection safely but your spouse insists you ran a red light - your natural reaction might be to justify your actions and SNAP back LOUDLY, "No, the light just turned yellow. What are you a back seat driver now?" You were RIGHT, but wrong.

- "If I've told you once I've told you a thousand times..."
- "Can't you do anything right?"
- "Now that's just ridiculous..."

And if you really think about it:

Why is it so important to always be right, to always get in the last word?

Wouldn't life be all that more pleasant and enjoyable without one up-man-ship? (Is this even a word?)