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18 Things I'm Letting Go for My Marriage

In honor of our 18th anniversary, here's what I've learned to leave behind to have a great marriage.

by Sara Debbie Gutfreund



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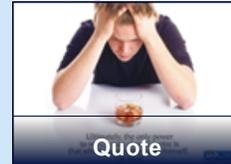
Eighteen years ago, I stood under the chuppah with my husband-to-be and gazed across the water at the setting sun as we left behind our lives as single individuals and stepped into a new dimension of unity and marriage. There is so much that I have learned since that moment; some lessons I have learned through laughter and inspiring days and others through pain and tough mistakes.

There are many precious gifts that 18 years of marriage have given me, as well as things I've learned to let go. Here are 18 things I'm leaving behind on our anniversary this year.

1. I'm letting go of my need to be right even when I think my way is the only way. At this point, I would rather be connected than vindicated.
2. I'm leaving behind the expectation that our plans will work out the way we thought they would. Sometimes God has different ways of bringing us to where He wants us to be.
3. I'm letting go of 'guessing' what it means when my husband does or says something that I don't like. Often my assumptions or the meanings that I give to his actions are biased and inaccurate, so at this point I prefer to ask him what he meant. His answers are usually not what I would or could have guessed.
4. I'm leaving behind blaming him or any external circumstances when I'm unhappy. I accept full responsibility for my own moods and choices. If I'm frustrated with something, then it's up to me to try to change it.
5. I'm letting go of my old ideas of what love is. I used to think love was made up of roses, exotic vacations and flying sparks. Now I think love is made up more of getting up in the middle of the

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night to hold a crying baby, building a jungle gym in the living room, waiting up at midnight for teenagers to come home, filling my tires with air, and being there for both the laughter and the tears. Day in and day out.

6. I'm leaving behind keeping track of how much I give vs how much my spouse gives. I would rather give more and have a relationship than give "equally" and feel like we're in a business transaction.
7. I'm letting go of disliking my mother-in-law. Life is too short for petty dynamics and trivial irritations. I would rather put up with some complaining and offhand comments than lose my connection with the special person that loved and raised my husband, so he could become the person that he is today.
8. I'm leaving behind other people's ideas of how marriage should be. If it works for us, it works.
9. I'm letting go of expecting my husband to change. We all have strengths and weaknesses. I'm not perfect and I no longer expect my husband to be.
10. I'm leaving behind the idea that life should be easy and comfortable. Sometimes it is, but most of the time it's challenging and uncertain. Life is hard, but hard is where the growth is.
11. I'm letting go of regret. Mistakes are meant to be learned from, not dwelled upon. I'm picking up my lessons from the past and moving on.
12. I'm leaving behind limits for our future. The only limits we have are the ones we place upon ourselves. God can make the impossible possible in a second.
13. I'm letting go of having all the answers. Sometimes I just don't know. And in this world full of depth and mystery, I am discovering that sometimes not knowing is itself a gift.
14. I'm leaving behind complaining. There's enough negativity in the world without my adding to it. Sometimes silence works wonders for our problems.
15. I'm letting go of having a perfect marriage. Just like everything else, marriage will have its flaws and hardships. It's how I respond to them that matters.
16. I'm leaving behind my worries for the future and holding onto my prayers and my appreciation for today.
17. I'm letting go of apathy for anything and anyone. Caring hurts sometimes, but it hurts more to ignore the problems around us.
18. I'm leaving behind the idea that I will always have time. I'm letting go of the illusion that I will always have what I have today. Instead I am treasuring the life and the marriage that I have right now, and for the many ways in which I can use it to build and bring light to the world.



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