

A photograph of a man and a woman smiling and embracing each other. The man is in the foreground, wearing a white shirt, and the woman is behind him, also in a white shirt, with her arms around his shoulders. They are outdoors, with a bright, slightly blurred background suggesting a beach or outdoor setting.

MURDER MARRIAGE & sweatpants

by mark bond

“I do.” And we remember saying it, almost. There was the ‘richer and poorer’ clause; check. The ‘in sickness and in health’ provision seemed reasonable enough. Even the stipulations of ‘till death do us part’ appeared a just promise, considering the occasion. Though amidst the flurry of emotions, or perhaps lost in rapturous anticipation, we missed the reading of the entire contract and subsequently a large portion subtitled Limited Spousal Consortium.

Over the years, we’ve been reminded of the small print on many occasion as it pertains to breaches and failure to perform covenants, and we’ve had equal opportunities to evaluate the long passages of time that have culminated to land us in this exact spot. At first, the nuances, or perhaps the symptoms of marital discord, were so insidious that they created little wake in the voyage of our matrimony. However, just as quickly as the sun will wink goodnight to a South Pacific yachtsman, the journey of our marriage was cast adrift; the murder of our vows executed...the day she started wearing sweatpants.

Men and women are vastly different creatures, the biology, physiology and emotional chemistry of which has been studied for ages. Neither gender has had much success in identifying the characteristics that would make for an amicable perpetuity. As such, contemporary society is witness to failing relationships, doomed marriages, and divorce in numbers unequaled in history.

The element most noted to be the cause of such prolific discontent is our longevity as a species. In ages past, the human life span was such that men never grew old enough to harbor the heightened levels of incompatibility with their wives. Men died of heart attacks and disease, long before the mortal nagging took its toll. Industrial and labor related demise saved them from the inevitable and painful passing due to unimaginative casseroles and dry-stringy wild game.

And so, with long lives ahead of them, men have attempted to facilitate the mechanisms of cohabitation as prescribed by the connubial creed. First and foremost, we’ve taken great measures to “understand,” our spouse. We’ve read a few books, attended a few seminars, and even went so far as to share a few nuggets of conjugal wisdom with our less-than-enlightened brethren.

Although noble and knowledgeable beasts, we don’t share in the heightened awareness of our mates. Our needs are simple and primal. As our heads hit the pillow at the end of our day, we’re generally pretty happy with our accomplishments. Aside from a few dreams that remain just out of reach, our sole purpose is to provide for our family and exist on a contented plane.

When we fell in lust...I mean love, you seemed to enjoy our enthusiasm for adventure and life. We sailed, we rock-climbed, bicycled and ran. We danced and traveled and exercised- because it’s what we do. It brought us together and provided for endless hours of conversation...then we married.

The elements of that life that drew us near, the activities that made us who we were, became frivolous hobbies that we could no longer find time for. After all, the grass needed cutting, the house needed painting, and the ‘honey-do’ list just kept on growing. As the climbing gear grew dusty and the sails dried and cracked, we grew daily more resentful that we’d lost ourselves.

So instead of playing football with friends, we watch it on TV. Instead of emptying a satisfying bottle of spring water after a grueling game, we nurse a beer on the couch. It’s no wonder we can’t squeeze into our 32s any longer. And you? If we ever claimed to have married you for the intellectual stimulation, we were so full of crap. We were after your bod...plain and simple. We may not have the guts to suggest your sweatpants do little to emphasize your features, but we’re thinking how you used to turn our head. That you could hold a conversation after a sweaty liaison in the back of our Chevy was an attribute we eventually came to value. Because, and we realize there exists a myth which claims we can read minds, we’ve evolved to actually enjoy hearing what’s on your mind.

We wouldn’t mind learning how to separate the laundry so as not to pink everything up if granted a short reprieve to muscle our dusty bike around the lake. We could cook a few meals (with limited ingredients) if it meant spending quality time with you in the kitchen... we recognize it’s still YOUR room. And instead of sighing with resentment and frustration, you might mention moving a bit to the left or right, faster or slower...you already know that we can get there no matter what gear we’re in.

In the days of yore, didn’t we talk for hours? What the hell did we talk about? Dreams, aspirations, plans, goals. It’s as if we don’t have them anymore. The marriage conversations have devolved into the logistics of managing a home and family as our desires slowly ebb from our spirit. Let’s talk again.

While we’re at it, we’ll promise to always pick up our socks if you swear to bury the tuna-noodle recipe under a mound of earth. It will take more than the occasional touch, the engaging locution, and the exchange of dreams to fan the flames of desire, but if you trade the sweats for jeans ‘as long as we both shall live’ instead of an “I do,” we will.