

Why Be Married?

25 Great Reasons from www.AssumeLove.com



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There are so many great reasons to get married and stay married. Here are some of my favorites from the first four years of the Assume Love blog, www.AssumeLove.com.

Wishing you a lifetime of love,

Patly Newbold

Why Be Married? To Be Someone's Everything

Milton Rivera Manga started a poll this week in Linked In's Harvard Business Review group. He's received six responses so far, two from women, four from men. It's an international, multi-ethnic group of people in high places.

Milton's question: When you wake up in the morning, what are you grateful for? As usual, four out of four men responding are grateful for a wife.

Assume Love blog, September 6, 2009

Why Be Married? For the Lows and the Highs

A friend's mother died last week. An only child, he would have been alone in sitting with her as she slipped away and in dealing with her death. But he wasn't. He's married to a wonderful woman who provided help and love during all of it. Being married softens the blow of our low points.

It also enhances our high points. Last week, my husband, Ed, celebrated his birthday by taking his first flying lesson. He's wanted to fly for 40 years or more. He'd crossed many obstacles to reach this starting point. I went along. Shot 75 pictures to capture every bit of it. Watched him learn to do the pre-flight check. Stood there with tears in my eyes as he started up the plane lights and then the propeller and began down the taxiway. Cheered as the wheels left the ground.

My eyes welled up again as he hopped out of the plane and posed by it, all grins, for my final snapshot. When I proposed a celebration at a local restaurant, he agreed in an instant. We smiled at each other through the last bit of dessert. Then we relived the experience with the photos. It had been an unforgettable high point for both of us.

December 3, 2006

Why Be Married? For the Tacos

Yesterday afternoon, all I could think of was tacos. Nothing fancy, like our favorite Mexican restaurant serves, nor really spicy, like the wonderful new restaurant we found last month. Just simple, ground-beef tacos in pre-made taco shells, overflowing with shredded lettuce and salsa. But after I bought the ingredients, I had no energy to make them. So I asked my husband, and he said yes, and they were really, really yummy. And one more time I thought how very lucky I am to be married.

December 4, 2009

Why Be Married? It's the World's Best Kind of Drug

I Get That All the Time by Due West is #8 this week on the Great American Country charts with a great answer to the question Why Be Married?

What is it that happily married folks get all the time? The “world's best kind of drug” and “the night of your life.”
(<http://www.cmt.com/videos/due-west/421500/i-get-that-all-the-time.jhtml>)

September 24, 2009

Why Be Married? Because Most Couples Don't Divorce

Here's the skinny on divorce. If you first got married in the 1950s, the odds are better than 2 to 1 you celebrated your 25th wedding anniversary. If you married in the 1960s, the odds are still good you got there: a little better than 1.5 to 1. If you married in the 1970s, the odds are 1.2 to 1, still better than even.

If you recently married, or you're thinking about getting married, your parents might be among those who married in the 1970s. Almost a third of the couples married then were divorced before their 10th anniversary, which means even when you were just a kid, a lot of the adults in your life were splitting up, maybe even your parents.

I can't blame you if you expect your chances of staying together for the long run must be pretty slim now. But there's good news.

The tide turned in 1979. The percentage of first-marriage couples staying together has been climbing since then. For those married in the 1990s, the odds of still being married ten years later were pretty close to what they were for the 1960s couples: for every ten couples who split up, another 35 didn't.

Across the board, divorce is down. The total number of divorces per 1,000 married couples is 25% lower now than it was in 1979. It's back to 1972 levels, lower than 1947 levels.

(All statistics from Trends in Marriage Stability by Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers, October 2007.)

So, why be married? Because most couples don't ever divorce, and a good marriage grows richer with every year.

October 21, 2007

Why Be Married? To Cover Your Parents' Debts

I found this fascinating description of marriage in Bali today, with yet another reason to be married (<http://blog.baliwww.com/religion/2124>):

“For Balinese, a marriage in Bali is not just a union of two individual but also a passing of the baton religious and social responsibilities from father to son. Son inherits everything, wealth, debt, religious and social obligations, family temple, and of course obligation to perform cremation ceremony for his parents.”

The wife moves into the husband's home and cuts her responsibilities to her family of origin to help him meet his.

No sons to offer in marriage? Offer a daughter. There's a special marriage form in which you adopt your son-in-law, giving him all the rights and responsibilities of a married son. He moves in with your daughter, abandons his responsibilities to his parents.

If that's a problem, because he's an only son, there's a special third form, seen as less desirable than the first two, in which he takes on the responsibilities and rights of both families.

I have not attempted to verify if this is an accurate description, but It's got me thinking once again about our reasons for marrying.

Too often, we focus on what we expect to get from marriage, rather than what we are offering to do. Happiness research has shown satisfaction comes from feeling part of something bigger than ourselves. The happiness of physical and emotional pleasures from a spouse is fleeting and must be renewed constantly, but the satisfaction of feeling part of something meaningful and larger than ourselves is much more long-lasting.

October 15, 2008

Why Be Married? For the Environment

How green is your marriage? "Divorce breeds environmental degradation," reports tomorrow's business section in The Australian.

[A study on household energy use released by the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts in June] found that despite the advent of airconditioners and plasma-screen TVs, the average energy consumption of each Australian household is not expected to change significantly. From 1990 to 2020, household energy demand will increase by 56 per cent, but mainly because the number of Australian households will increase by 61 per cent.

And it's not just electricity:

A four-person family that breaks up will generate around 43 per cent more garbage than they did when they were together. They will use up to 34 per cent more water and up to 70 per cent more energy, depending on the type of new dwellings being occupied.

Have you gone green with marriage education?

August 10, 2008

Why Be Married? For the Name

Michael Buday and Diana Bijon wanted to share a last name: hers. On Monday, he finally got his new driver's license with the name Michael Bijon. He sued the State of California--and got a change in the law--when they told him it would cost \$350 and require court appearances to get a name change women can make for free.

According to Reuters, only nine other states include this option on the marriage license application.

May 7, 2008

Why Be Married? For the Fans

The San Diego Padres are up for sale, because John and Becky Moores are no longer willing to be married.

Baseball's rules require one controlling owner, and they don't have enough assets to split them without violating this rule, except by selling the team.

According to SignOnSanDiego (<http://www.signonsandiego.com/>), "The Moores met in high school history class in Texas and married in 1963. They have four adult children, including Jennifer, a minority owner of the Padres."

December 17, 2008

Why Be Married? To Avoid a Stroke

The news from psychologist Julianne Holt-Lunstad of Brigham Young University yesterday, according to the Washington Post: Happily married people have lower blood pressure than unhappily married people or singles, even those with a supportive social network.

Better yet, blood pressure dips even lower at night in the happily married, reducing their risk of cardiovascular problems.

March 21, 2008

Why Be Married? It's Like Color TV

Danny Perasa says being married is like color TV instead of black & white. He and his wife Annie tell their love story, one well worth listening to, at the NPR website (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5230164>).

February 27, 2006

Why Be Married? For the Ride

Today was a clear, autumn day in Pennsylvania. Perfect for a new experience. For the first time, I flew in a small, four-seater plane, a Cessna 172. In the pilot's seat was my husband, now in possession of a pilot's license after 40-some years of looking up at the sky and wishing.

As a child, I had frequented airports and looked up, too, with my parents, who both flew until they had kids. I didn't inherit their longing, but I had a blast seeing this semi-rural county, and the city of Philadelphia in the distance, from the air. I was also excited to share the culmination of a two-year learning journey--I had no idea how much one needs to know to fly today--and the accomplishment of a long held dream with the man I love.

I doubt I would ever have tried this on my own. It's one of the delights of marriage to try new things, especially in the comfort of a loving relationship, and I am so glad I tried this.

Oct 20, 2008

Why Be Married? For Protection Against Alzheimer's

More evidence today that being married may protect us against Alzheimer's Disease or a less serious loss of cognitive abilities.

This comes from Krister Hakansson of Sweden in a report to the International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease today (<http://www.medpagetoday.com/MeetingCoverage/ICAD/tb/10334>). The study looks at more than 1,400 people in Finland over a 21-year period from middle-aged to over 65.

Among those who carried a gene associated with Alzheimer's, the ones who were married when the study began fared much better than those who were widowed or divorced then.

July 30, 2008

Why Be Married? For the Family

I've always thought it wonderful that when I married, I married into a family. Both my husbands' families are now part of my extended family. When my son married eight years ago, my family grew again. In a couple of weeks, I'll get to meet his mother-in-law and father-in-law, who live in India, in person for the first time. I can't wait. We share a couple of adorable grandkids who stand at the ready to translate for us.

When people marry expecting they'll divorce if it doesn't work out, I always wonder how they can be so cavalier about the rest of their extended family. Some manage to stay connected to their new family after divorce, but not many. My life would seem so much smaller without my California-Florida-Pennsylvania-Ohio-Texas-Ontario-Saudi Arabia-India family arms. They are a wonderful part of being married.

July 12, 2008

Why Be Married? To Get into the Guinness Book of World Records

Sydney, Australia set the record at 272 last September, but Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania smashed it this weekend. Which record? The number of married couples simultaneously renewing their wedding vows.

To help celebrate Pittsburgh's 250th birthday and their love for each other, approximately 750 couples gathered in Pittsburgh's Carnegie Music Hall on February 10th for the celebration, which included champagne, wedding cake, photos, and prizes. The new record, after it's verified, will stand at 611, the number of couples present who recited their renewal vows and produced their wedding certificates to be copied for the folks at Guinness.

Ed and Helen Downing of Bellevue had been married the longest. They married on Thanksgiving Day in 1947. Meet them and watch as all those couples renew their love for each other on the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette's website.

Pittsburgh was my home for five years, but I live in the Philadelphia area now, and I hope the new mayor, Michael Nutter, accepts the challenge to beat Pittsburgh's record. With four and half times as many people in this city, we can easily push the record over 2,500!

February 13, 2008

Why Be Married? For the Company

My cousin mentioned today his surprise (or was it delight?) at how much his wife appreciates doing simple things together, like grocery shopping. She's not alone. Life's just better with someone who loves you along for the ride. A backrub, a shared day of leaf raking, a smooth river stone with "you're the best" painted on it, a love note tucked into a briefcase -- being married brings joy to life.

November 13, 2007

Why Be Married? For the Kidney

Chip and Cindy Altemos of South Whitehall Township, Pennsylvania, have called off the divorce they both thought they wanted. A week after Valentine's Day this year, Cindy gave Chip her kidney.

According to an AP article on CNN.com, Cindy said, "There was no way I could walk around with two kidneys and he had none. It was the right thing to do."

"Chip Altemos said his wife's gesture put an end to his new relationship and to talk of divorce. The two will be married 17 years in October."

May 4, 2007

Why Be Married? For Your Kids and Grandkids

Dr. Norval Glenn, sociologist at The University of Texas at Austin, with Elizabeth Marquardt, recently surveyed 1,500 18 to 35 year olds and interviewed another 70 in depth. Half were children of divorce, half were not.

No more than a third had their lives improved by their parents' divorce. Norval reports, "if there is violence or extreme conflict, or if the marriage is so bad it leaves the primary parent, usually the mother, so depressed she can't parent effectively, the children are usually better off after the parents divorce."

But for the rest, probably more than 2 out of 3, the consequences were negative, both as children and in their own relationships. Children from these "good" divorces had less successful marriages than those from happy marriages, those from divorces that protected them from harm as children, and even those from unhappy marriages.

www.utexas.edu/features/2006/divorce/

March 28, 2006

Why Be Married? It's a Calling

From The Georgian Times this week:

Theoretically Georgia [the country between Turkey and Russia, not the US state] should have a decreasing divorce rate. In the Soviet period getting married was a civil contract, without the deeper relevance of an Orthodox Christian marriage . . . In the Orthodox Christian understanding . . . marriage is a calling, and people marry if they are 'called' to do so. Often this calling is not accompanied by any romantic feelings whatever, and can only be confirmed by seeking the counsel of clergymen and other wiser people.

While the divorce rate may be increasing, Georgia has one of the lowest divorce rates in the world, whether you measure it by the annual ratio of divorces to new marriages (6.6%) or the annual number of divorces per 1,000 people (0.4).

February 6, 2008

Why Be Married? For the Future

Even though we may vow to remain a couple for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, for as long as we both shall live, most of us can't imagine what lies ahead when we marry. As I and my friends grow older, the benefits of being part of a happily married couple become more and more obvious.

Injuries, cancer, heart attacks, chronic illnesses, the deaths of our parents (or worse, our children) turn our worlds upside down. They make the chore-sharing battles we faced as newlyweds look like kid stuff. These are big-time challenges and SO much easier faced as a shared battle than alone.

August 8, 2007

Why Be Married? For the Shopping

Last night's cold rain kept most sane folks at home, but we needed food. Neither of us felt motivated to do it solo, so Ed and I went to the supermarket together. We shopped efficiently. He kept us moving briskly. I made sure we didn't miss any staples or overlook a buy one get one offer on anything we bought. We each got only half as wet loading the bags into the car and carrying them up the flight of steps in front of our home. When we had it all put away, instead of the self-satisfaction of a chore completed, we felt the bond of us-satisfaction and gave each other a hug.

March 16, 2007

Why Be Married? For Good Fortune and Happiness

No one need apply for a divorce in many Chinese cities this Friday (8/8/08). It has nothing to do with the Olympics and everything to do with the number of couples applying for marriage registration on this luckiest of days. Triple eights brings a threefold measure of fortune and happiness in China. What better way to start a marriage?

August 6, 2008

Why Be Married? For Mother's Day

I had a great Mother's Day weekend. Mom came for four days. My son and daughter-in-law came for an evening. Five friends joined us for brunch on Sunday, before we headed off to an outdoor festival.

But it was my husband Ed that I noticed most. We have a small, efficient kitchen for one, and we seldom try to cook together. But that's what we did for Sunday brunch. We know what sets each of us off about cooking for others and about sharing that small space, so we scheduled our tasks to avoid those conflicts.

I admired Ed for preparing test batches of three new dishes a couple of days in advance. Two were delicious, and the third didn't get made on Sunday. He alarmed me by insisting on an 8 a.m. dash to the store, but it tickled me to learn he went to get flowers for the table.

We did a great job in the kitchen and had a wonderful time with Mom and friends. Days like this one make me very happy to be married to this man.

May 19, 2006

Why Be Married? For Love

I'm reading a history of marriage this week. Over the years, people have married to grow their labor force, to give another clan a reason not to attack them, to hold onto wealth, and many other reasons other than love. Even today in the Indian state my daughter-in-law comes from, love ranks as one of the most inappropriate reasons to marry.

But here in the United States, it's the reason. Few of us live in an extended family overflowing with love or willing to share their wealth or strength. We seek love. We want to give it and we want it reciprocated. As those of us who've been single after 30 know, we'll do the most ridiculous things to find love. The craving for love is in our genes.

On Thanksgiving this year, I gave thanks for the husband who loves me, the daughter-in-law who loves my son, and the father who loved my mother. Since I learned to Assume Love and gave up my "if you loved me" yardsticks (OK, most of them), life seems like one giant sunrise.

And to Mike Fitzpatrick, if you're reading this, when you publicly announced "I love my wife" at Thanksgiving dinner, you made my day.

November 25, 2006

Why Be Married? To Celebrate a 25th Anniversary

Wishing David and Elaine a very, very happy 25th anniversary and the start of the next 25 great years together. Well done, guys! Still have your wedding photo just a few feet from my computer. Can't imagine a better gift to your kids than your love for each other.

December 15, 2009

Meet the Author of Assume Love, Patty Newbold



Hi! My name is Patty Newbold, and I've been married twice.

Both times, I chose really great guys, but it didn't go so well the first time. By the time our 13th anniversary rolled around, I had a long list of things my husband needed to change to make the marriage work. I was frustrated, really frustrated. I had read every self-help book I could find and talked to a therapist and to my husband's psychiatrist about my frustrations. And I found no answers.

I felt depressed and guilty. He was sick, fighting a long-term chronic disease that used up most of his energy. How dare I complain? How did my needs stack up against his? And how was an exercise in communicating going to help? We talked all the time. Neither of us had any answers to the conflicts that we faced.

When I reached my breaking point, I read my husband my list of unmet needs and suggested a divorce. I really wanted my marriage back. I wanted that more than anything else in the world. I wanted to feel loved again. But it didn't seem possible, and a divorce seemed like a good runner-up solution. We could each find other people to love us and still be friendly while we raised our son. He was a great father and a good man. I just couldn't stand the way my life was with him. It wasn't meeting my needs.

I've had a long time to think about that list of needs. He died the next day, a freak side effect of his illness and his medications. After I made the awful calls to his family and our friends, I slept. And when I woke up, I did a mental inventory. He was gone, but the list remained. Out of perhaps 30 needs, only one was made easier to meet by losing him. Only one! Yes, now I was free to move the drinking glasses next to the sink.

Still on the list was a need for more income, so we could keep our son in the great private school we'd found for him. Now there was less. Somebody to learn to dance with was on the list. Help with the yard work or with finding someone to do the yard work was on the list. No dance partner or lawn maintenance crew showed up just because I was no longer married. I wanted to be touched and held more often, too. Instead, I got less.

When I got to the bottom of my list that morning after he died, I realized for the first time in my 34 years that marriage isn't about my needs or his needs or about how well we communicate about our needs. And it really doesn't require any hard work after all.