

A LETTER TO MY HUSBAND ON OUR 15TH ANNIVERSARY

Mark,

Thank you for never quitting me no matter how many times I've given you the opportunity.

Life's given us too many chances to quit. We've given each other too many chances to quit. We've gone on anyway. We decided to go on anyway.

I love that we've asked the hard questions of ourselves, and of each other, without fearing the answers. Even when the questions sounded stupid and the truth in the answers was terrifying.

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A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

—Lao Tzu

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Some days the steps go backward, but we keep going. Some mornings we sit on the edge of the bed and wonder how any steps can be taken at all today. Some nights we cry ourselves to sleep—together, alone—wondering how something so hard can be done.

And why?

Why?

Because this is love. This is life. You are love to me. You are joy to me.

In an attempt to prevent pain, we prevent joy. Pain isn't the opposite of joy. Joy flows on the banks of pain. That's what joy is. That's what marriage is. That's what life is. It's not shying away from pain. Denying the possibility of pain is the opposite of joy. Pain gives joy a place to flow.

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Have there been times I wanted to quit? Plenty.

We'd be lying to ourselves, to everyone, if we said marriage was easy. It's not. Sometimes it's next to impossible. But more than that, you know what it is? Worth it.

Weaving our lives together can look like a tangled mess and, some days, a masterpiece. It's vulnerable when I don't know where I end and where you begin.

If we cut up our fabric—our life—we've woven, how do we know which part to take and which part to leave? I'd have to take pieces of you and leave fragments of me.

Since we turned into we fifteen years ago, I don't know which threads I wove, which threads you wove, which threads you taught me to weave and which threads I helped you to weave in. Where you end and where I begin is seamless. One. You don't end, and I don't begin. We move, we weave through this, together.

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When the world says quit, we don't.

We've held each other and cried together. We've held each other and laughed together. Nothing can erase that.

Marriage is an ancient, sacred, elevating experience that's worth our best. Worth the tears and the laughter.

It cracks us open, not cleanly or comfortably. Even painfully—often. That cracking opened me up to another world: you.

That world is worth it. You are worth it. We are worth it.

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Remember why we started?

Love. Our love created four beautiful children. We created a world, a person to be loved and to give love.

Smarts. You are ridiculously smart. We are ridiculously smart together.

Attraction. Still, always.

Love. Smarts. Attraction. Repeat.

For the laughter and for the tears and for fifteen-times-many more years:

In love with you still, always,

Missy