



## Query

**W**ell, things are better. Maybe I shouldn't look too deeply into these things, but I can't help myself. It's amazing, unexpected, exhilarating: my wife and I are having fun again. We went to a concert last night and I actually held her close, we chatted nonstop before and after the venue, discussing what we'd see and then what we'd seen. It was a little moment, not one of those swooning fevers typical of obsessional, Hollywood love. But it was welcome, for I was like a dry man in the desert, feeling in this marriage that I had been forsaken.

A month ago I'd pick her up after work, and up until the moment she got into the car I felt like there was promise, that the marriage was worth withstanding, that things could be good, might be good, would be good. Then she'd get in the car and we'd bicker, the promise spent in the first hard syllable.

Now the promise is there again. I've the feeling that if I try, if I am gentle, if I stay optimistic, things will get even better. Not just "not fighting," not even "nothing to fight about," but rather actual things to build a relationship on, not the shifting sands of marital discord. A partnership.

This may seem basic to some, Marriage 101, but I've paid a price to get this far, the cost being my health and recent hospitalization. The biggest thing I've learned is that nothing is doomed, that resuscitation can work, that believing things will get better is the first step in making things get better.

I can't describe this feeling exactly: it's not happiness, for that's trite. "Joy" isn't quite right either, because there has

been a certain amount of resentment and bitterness on this journey. Perhaps it's a rediscovery of love, tempered by the loss of same in the past. It's ironic: somewhere along the way I lost what I'd most sought.

I guess hope has paid off, and I'm foolish enough to believe that this love will last. I never want to go back; I'm uncertain if I'll have the patience or strength to find it again. For a long time there, I was spiritually exhausted, at points feeling despair at having suffered enough.

But then I talked to my wife about it, and she said she felt the same way. This was the second step in fixing our marriage. Once we knew each other's coordinates, there could be détente. Diplomats could be sent to the enemy encampment.

Now I drink a cup of coffee in the morning and share a moment with my wife before my daughter goes to school. We talk on the phone at work daily. A floodgate of words has opened, and we're planning a family trip to Eastern Europe. There seems to be a future now, whereas before there was the interminable present.

All this took was patience and willingness, qualities that get drained by constant fighting and selfishness. But really, who knows what caused us to like one another once again. Luck, probably. There is no recipe for this sort of thing. Perhaps it is indeed a cycle, and there will be highs and lows. For right now, I'll just rejoice in the fact that I'm not going to bed mad. And hopefully, hopefully, even better things will come.

— *Dr. Ursus*