

The Poindexter and the peacenik - 20 years together



BARB GUY

Milestones are funny things. They're all about the present, but without the past, they'd be meaningless.

Living with the same human being - one you chose for this purpose - for 20 entire years is a big milestone. There are bigger ones, but still.

One only child, and one the youngest of four children; one hopelessly right-brained, and one a total Poindexter genius, have been working toward this accomplishment since April of 1987. That's when the egghead lost his mind and cohabitated with a girl who crusaded for peace and played at being artistic instead of working for a living.

Later, when the genius's parents met the peace girl, the disappointment was palpable. The Golden Boy's mother made several overt mentions of her

baby's prodigious smarts, perhaps wondering where they had gone.

Definition of right-brained: Dominated by emotion, creativity, intuition and global reasoning rather than logic and analysis.

Definition of left-brained: I forgot to look it up. I'm guessing it means the exact opposite.

Somehow now it's our 20th anniversary.

Since the day we 20-somethings carried all we owned into a rented house on 2nd Avenue, we've been a team, if occasionally an awkward one. My puppy, Bob Barker, instantly became our dog. Over time, nearly every "mine" became an "ours." Exceptions: It took 13 years to work up to a joint checking account and we never did integrate our two huge record collections; CDs overtook us before we could bear to do it.

I remember housesitting for a favorite couple when I was young and single. In several places on their alphabetized bookshelves I'd find two copies of the same book. That was the height of romance for me: two readers in love. Now our bookshelves tell the same story.

Things I thought I was kind of good at until I met Chris: reading, writing, kindness, art, woodworking, patience, creativity. Chris has never let on, but I think it would be annoying to be married to someone dumber than one's self.

I've benefited from his intelligence more times than I can say. He is better and smarter than I am in every single way, not just the Mr. Science areas. The latter superiority you might get him to admit, but never the former. He's even-keeled, sweet and kind-hearted. I am so lucky.

Which is not to say we haven't had our share of big fights and little squabbles.

One time I agreed to photograph someone's wedding, knowing in my heart I didn't want to do it. I ended up hiring a photographer with my own money to get out of it, calling at the last minute to announce I was sending a substitute.

Chris, a serious bean counter, calmly added a line to our household budget and named it, "Learning to Say No." There might have been some lively discussion in between, but who can remember? What Chris gave and what he sacrificed during the years-long passing of my mom would fill a book. There simply are not words for my gratitude.

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Very soon we will take a special trip to celebrate all 20 of our years together. It'll be a longish trip, one involving much planning and the study of another language. During this adventure we'll take time to remember all the previous vacations as well as the times we were too poor to go anywhere. We were formed by both.

Chris has been mentioned on these pages before, and, until now, he's had veto power. Not today; this one's a surprise in honor of the milestone. On this day more than any other I am overwhelmed by my good fortune.

BARB GUY is a regular contributor to these pages. © Salt Lake Tribune.