

Getting Married! Are You Crazy?

An honest look at saying "I do" - by Todd Bauerle

Chapter One: After the Confetti

The wedding is designed to be the best day of your life, and often it is. The problem is what comes next. Nobody throws a party for the ordinary Tuesday eight months in, when you are both tired, slightly annoyed about the dishwasher, and quietly wondering whether this is what you signed up for.

That Tuesday is the marriage. The wedding was the announcement. This is a book about the difference, written for people who are about to say "I do," people who said it recently and are surprised how hard it is, and people who said it long ago and need a reminder of why.

Love got you to the altar. It will not, on its own, get you to your anniversary. That takes a decision, made again and again, usually when you least feel like making it.

I am not going to pretend I have marriage solved. I have been married long enough to have been wrong about it in most of the ways a person can be wrong, and that turns out to be the only qualification that matters for a book like this. What follows is not a system. It is straight talk about the parts nobody quite warns you about.

We will talk about money, because more marriages bruise over money than over almost anything else, and because the fight is rarely actually about the money. We will talk about family - yours, theirs, and the new one you are starting whether you feel ready or not. We will talk about expectations, the silent contracts we sign without reading, and what happens when the other person turns out to have signed a different one.

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And we will talk about forgiveness, which is the actual engine of the whole thing. Two flawed people living at close range will injure each other. Not usually on purpose, not usually dramatically - just steadily, the way weather wears stone. A marriage that lasts is one where forgiveness is restocked faster than it is spent.

If you are engaged, read this before the invitations go out. If you are newly married, read it on one of those Tuesdays. If you are a decade in, read it out loud to each other and argue with me in the margins. However you got here, the question in the title is a

fair one, and I mean it warmly: getting married? Are you crazy?

A little. Everyone who does it is, a little. The next chapters are about doing it on purpose, with your eyes open, in a way you will be glad about for a long time.

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