The Best Marriage Advice I Ever Got

The best marriage advice I was ever given was given to me by my dear friend Yvette. Her grandmother gave this advice to her. She said, simply: “start out as you can hold out.” What she meant by this is that we often start relationships, in an effort o put our best foot forward, being overly yielding and accommodating to our partner. Sometimes we even mold ourselves in the hopes of pleasing and connecting with our object of desire. We may try to become more interested in opera or sports or skiing, etc. even when this is not really our passion. We may make the effort to be more social or less social to accommodate the other, to be neater, to be an early riser, etc. Many women will be overly caretaking early on – picking up after the other person, happily cooking and washing and cleaning without minding a disparity in the division of labor. The problem is that, over the years, resentment can build toward the other person for not accommodating our needs or for a lack of fairness (which we agreed to in the beginning of the relationship). Our partner, who has likely been happy with being accommodated to, may be blind-sided by our sudden anger and resentment. For example, if you start out doing all the cooking, cleaning etc, for the household and then 20 years later, you decide this isn’t working for you any longer, you have to essentially change the contract of the marriage and the other person will invariably resist. A struggle then ensues. However, if we were to ask ourselves in the beginning of a relationship, “will I be able to sustain this pattern for the next 30+ years?” you are in a much better position to decide how you want to conduct yourself. If you can’t sustain the pattern – be honest with yourself and your partner. You might find that you are not well suited – but at least you’ve saved yourself future heartache. Or, you may find that your partner is willing to accept you for who you are and may be willing to make accommodations as well. Then, you can have a partnership that will be based on mutual acceptance and accommodation. “Men marry women with the hope they will never change. Women marry men with the hope they will change. Invariably they are both disappointed.” Albert Einstein