

HEALTH

# My husband forgot our anniversary again, and I love him for it

Essay by [Jonna Jerome](#) Dec 13, 2023, 3:30 AM PST

[Share](#) | [Save](#)



The author (right) and her husband. Courtesy of Jonna Jerome

- **My husband and I forgot our anniversary this year again.**
- **I've realized that as we grow older, the definition of what love is changes.**
- **It's not the grand gestures that do it for me anymore, but the every day things.**

I realized in the [Target](#) parking lot that my husband and I had both forgotten our [wedding anniversary](#). Again. This may sound damning for the health of our relationship, yet truly, it's the opposite.

To be fair, it wasn't always like this. He'd bring me [flowers](#). I hung on to his every word. Life was easier then. I wasn't folding [his underwear](#) while discussing which one of our children was the most emotionally damaged.

## It took me a while to be OK with all of it

Early on, I got butterflies and a big stupid grin on my face whenever I'd see him approach — just like in the movies. We all have ideals about what love should look like. If someone had told me I'd marry someone who forgets things like wedding anniversaries, and I would forget them too, that would have been downright incomprehensible.

A lot of what we glamorize is the intoxication of new love. Less is said of how romance changes over time and what it really looks like — warts and all. This anniversary got me thinking about the coupling of romance with longevity.

Misconceptions about what's important can really mess with your head. My husband and I might look pathetic to newlyweds who don't want to spend their anniversary at Target, but I know better. I won't lie. This mindset took time and tears.

## When you marry at a later age, you come with a certain amount of baggage

Some carry-ons are cute and fit in the overhead bin. Then there's the lumpy duffel bag that wrinkles all your clothes and leaves you an emotional wreck. Luckily, we found in each other the carry-on variety.

My matchmaker girlfriend set us up. I reluctantly agreed to meet. I drank only cranberry juice — though he thought I was pounding cocktails. I got lots of intel as he valiantly tried to keep up. I was slightly worried he might think I was an alcoholic. By the end of the evening, I thought, "Hey, this guy isn't a jerk." He's pretty cute and very funny, even if he didn't tell me I had salad in my teeth.

## Quite a few years have passed since then

Married life kicked into high gear quickly — much bigger and messier than expected.

We have lived for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health. You won't typically see family estrangement, chronic and serious health issues, or death featured prominently in a rom-com.

My definition of love looks very different than it once did. I've learned it truly is the little things that ground us, not the grand gestures. It isn't any extravagant gift given or how gorgeous my husband looks in a suit that brings tears to my eyes. It's the fact he keeps showing up day after day, whether I greet him with more joy than a kid in a candy store or can barely drag myself out of bed.

This man is in the trenches with me. It's not my former ideals or anyone else's that matters now. It's the beautiful tribute he gave at my father's funeral, how he held me up when we lost our baby, that he sings when he cooks, has nerves of steel, and so much more.

These acts make me realize he was, and still is, the guy for me. The hard times have shown me the kind of person I partnered with. This connection is what can keep you happily together long after neither one of you looks good in (or out) of a suit.