

LOVE PROTECTS

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Almost 8 crazy, sweet, long, short, tumultuous, beautiful years ago I got married to this total stud. He's hot you guys. And brilliant. I totally adore him and feel equally as adored — except on those days when he's completely annoying to me and I'm totally annoying to him. You know — it's marriage. And on those days we have a choice. A choice about how we handle our spouses' hearts. Whether or not we draw swords for them. Honestly? Sometimes I think it would be easier to face our adversaries brandishing a sword and a shield than to wake up with the task of predicting their presence. **We might not carry physical swords, but we certainly protect or demolish as though we do.** Great love is always challenged. And when it survives and gets better... [it's something worth reveling in.](#)

*"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. **It always protects,** always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres."* -- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

You know that scene from [Mr. and Mrs. Smith](#) (ironic example, I know), when Brad Pitt

and Angelina Jolie are standing back to back brandishing their weapons against their deadly pursuers? Sexiest fight ever. And they completely annihilate them and survive the onslaught. And their marriage not only escaped total collapse, but ended up becoming something more powerful and exciting than it ever had been... loved it. I know it's a movie, and way more exciting to engage in than the messy stuff of real life; I mean, I don't ever struggle with trying to kill my secret agent husband in the kitchen wearing nothing but his work shirt... more likely it's how we're going to discipline our kids, or manage a new business, or just try to save some energy to hang out without resembling zombies after a crazy day living the dream.

Love protects.

I just got back from seeing a sweet friend who's husband is deployed. They're just a little over halfway through his absence and while she would probably say there are lots of overwhelming days, I was amazed at a couple of things I saw. Her husband skypes or calls *every day*. It is making a remarkable difference for their kids — which eases some of the burden from his wife's shoulders. He reads them stories, they build things "together," he puts the computer on his bed and jumps, sending the screen ricocheting in all directions. As their little giggles echoed down the hall I realized, *he is doing his best to protect his family while he protects our country*.

There was one night that was particularly tough as attitudes soar and fell, careful discipline was administered, and to top of the evening, most of dinner resurfaced from her littles' bellies. We cleaned them up, brushed their teeth, and cuddled tear-streaked faces before collapsing to bed ourselves. So when the call came from the husband the next day I expected a full report... which ended up being a casually offered one-liner about the difficult evening. Huh? I thought at first. And then it hit me; *she was protecting too*. While staying connected and bearing each other's burdens is to be applauded for the life it offers, there is a difference between life-giving transparency and burdensome truth. She chose to consider how hard it would be for him to hear of her tough night without his help in a situation where he could do nothing about it but ache.

Love Protects.

When Brandon and I got married we decided to write our own vows. There was one particular phrase that to be really honest, surprised me when it garnered a lot of

attention. I say surprised because I honestly liked a lot of the other gushy stuff better, but **in retrospect, how we handle our words probably offers more depth of romance than the gushy love stuff.**

"As an ambassador of your heart and your character, when I walk into a room, I will consider you — in the way I talk to you and about you."

There were some women more experienced in their marriages in attendance who were all about that one. I guess there had just been a slew of divorces in their office that all started with a gathering of professional women who spent their breaks "husband-bashing." A little playful camaraderie against their helpless husbands ended in a crescendo of anger and hostility — and the dominos fell. One after the other, within weeks of the first, they filed for divorce. They had brandished their swords against their own marriages. Words matter. They can be swords and shields.

Love protects in sickness and in health. Love protects in good times and in bad. Love protects in joy as well as in sorrow. Love protects unconditionally.