

TEAM TAYLOR

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That handsome man you see in the picture just happens to be my husband. He's my favorite. We just celebrated 11 years of marriage by sitting cage-side at an Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) event he was working in Chicago. Truth. Nothing says romance like deciphering the submission strategy of men 10 feet from your face covered in layers of blood and sweat. I'm not sure how long I get points for that, but an hour ago he did submit to watching "The Crown," on Netflix rather than a Karate documentary.

Here's what I love about 11 years in. We've finally gotten past the normalizing part of how this relationship is going to work; you know, what's your job, what's my job, how do we fight, how do we make up, who are our people... the basics of merging of 2 imperfect lives, and actually built some stories. There have been some really hard years. Some years that brought a lot of aches and a lot of reworking of dreams. Marriage is grit-worthy stuff. And it is not lost upon me that many great people don't have great marriages. **And the truth is this: your value is not defined by your marriage status.** By the grace of God, we are in this thing, and so I will relish that. We together agreed the other day, that it still feels like we just exited the starting blocks — and we *really have*, relatively speaking. But aside from a better understanding of MMA, there are a few things we're starting to learn and working on implementing in order to have a life-giving marriage. One of my big ones is this:

We are on the same team. Foster unity.

Some of our greatest perceptions of division are when we forget this. We were driving somewhere once when Brandon says: "If I ever say something, and you can take it two different ways... assume it's the good one." We had a good laugh over it, but it has proven to be really good advice. Assume the best. Have grace for the worst. In total transparency, Brandon is actually really good at this. He intrigues me with quiet confidence and gentle strength — which he frequently pours out, deserving or not, into my life. He serves me in little ways every day, that underscore that he is interested in seeing me thrive and grow. Even this blog would not exist without him. He created it. It might have been in hopes that my capacity for words would be redirected, at least a little, but whatever.

When you are on the same team, you have the freedom to delight in your differences. There is something glorious God had in mind when he designed you. And your spouse. And most of us were wired pretty differently. Brandon is a 7 (enthusiast) on the [enneagram](#). I'm a 4 (romantic). I am basically swimming in feelings on the regular, and to Brandon, if it's not fun, he'll make it fun, because he's a creative entrepreneur who lives for experiences. He's the only one in the world who could make me laugh during active labor with our third, and he needs me in order not to be an emotional cripple. Truth: when our differences threaten our agendas, we must decide what lens to peer through when we regard one another. Delight in it... even when you're trying to serve broccoli as your husband is passing out marshmallows...

this happens, you guys. No wonder the kids like him so much...

Great love stories point to THE greatest love story. I love my man and he serves me well quite often, but the one who saved my life, who died in my place, and pursued my heart — that story saves me from needing a human version that does any more than resemble that. I long to serve my Lord, just as I long to please my husband — because they both love me with intimate affection. One died for me, the other is living sacrificially on my behalf. One is perfect, one is not. One I worship, the other I come alongside to worship with. While Brandon is my favorite person, **I am not his damsel and he is not my savior.** He's my husband. And I'm his wife. It's amazing. It's hard. I often confuse one story for the other, and I often forget what I'm meant to be pointing towards.

Marriage (at least for us) has been a cycle of revealing and refining. And for that, I need to remember that we're Team Taylor.