**LWQA episode 113**

You're listening to life work QA episode 113. Hey there, and welcome to life work QA where I answer a listener question each week and provide resources and guidance to help you take your life and work to the next level. I'm your host. Dr. Katie Linder. Today's episode is kind of a special one for a couple of reasons one.

It's a combination of a bunch of questions that I often get from people about my relationship with my partner and I thought I would put them all into one episode because of the other special reason and that is because today happens to be my wedding anniversary. So of course, I'm thinking about all things.

Love and Marriage today and I thought it would be kind of fun to put all these things into one because I do get some pretty frequent questions about my partner. So the first question that I get sometimes as are we actually married because I refer to my partner as my partner and I rarely refer to him as my husband and the answer is yes, because today is our wedding anniversary.

We got married on December 1 14 years ago. So we are actually married and so that leads to the. Question, I often get and I should say people don't just kind of like walk up to me on the street and ask these questions, but I do get them from people who've known me for a while and they're just kind of curious about things.

So the other question I get is why do I call my partner my partner? Why do I not call him my husband or something? And so I call my partner my partner because I got into the habit of doing this when I was in grad school and it was something that was very common within my grad program because in a women and gender studies Department there were people who were partnered in all kinds of different ways with people of varying gender.

And one of the things we talked about was in the classroom or in our offices, it could actually lead to some challenges for various people in our department who may be discriminated against if students knew that they were a certain sexuality or gender category and that person preferred not to be out.

To their students and it could show up in classroom evaluations or things like that. So we all kind of got into the Habit at least in my cohort of calling our partners partners instead of husbands or wives because it kind of allowed people to make that decision about whether or not they wanted to be out to their students or to the larger department on their own time, and a lot of people were very open and like happy to talk about that with their students and but it was really kind of a equity issue.

In some ways and we also were careful about not putting pictures up of our partners on our desks and things like that as we were kind of trying to feel out. You know, what did what did it mean to kind of practice feminism and to practice some of the things that we were learning about feminist pedagogy in our classrooms in our shared office space, so.

It over that period of time and I was there for five or six years in my graduate program. I just got in the habit of calling been my partner. I calling him my partner and not my husband and so after that and it was interesting because I think he was a little thrown by it at first, but now he calls me his partner.

And so that's just language that we use and if you listen to make your way the show that I co-host with Sarah Langworthy about small business, you will hear me refer to him as my life partner and my business partner because I think sometimes when people hear partner and they know that you're married to someone of the same or of the opposite gender, they assume you mean a business partner and not a life partner.

So sometimes I use that language as well, but it's typically when I'm also referring to him as my business partner. So that's the origin story of why I call him my partner and also I think it's actually just a really good description. I do think of him as my life partner. I do think of him as my partner in most things and that's something that's actually really important about our relationship is how much we are Partners to each.

A question I often get to is how long have we been together? So we've been married 14 years as of today, but we were together for a little over a year before that as of this past October. We've been together for 15 years and we met in college and we met my junior year of college. And so we actually got married in like the middle of my senior year of college in December so over that that kind of break period.

And that was interesting it wasn't what I expected and I definitely got married earlier than I had planned. I was only 20 when we got married and and turn 21 later that month. So yeah, it was we met in college. We were in the same Department. We were both English Majors. He was a non-traditional student.

He's a little older than me by eight years. So we rep via mutual friends who knew both of us, but we hadn't yet met each other then had actually been on a. Study abroad trip for a lot of my sophomore year and so I wouldn't have met him because he was out of the country and then we happened to run into each other my junior year and I would say after we met we probably started dating two weeks later and it was pretty quick in terms of when we decided to start to be exclusive with each other and start dating.

So I also get the question of when did we decide to get married after we first met and some people I think her surprised to know that we decided about a month after we met we basically got engaged. Not with rings but like verbally about a month after we started dating and that's I think kind of surprising to people and to be honest.

It was very surprising to me as well at the time. I had not planned on getting married for a quite a while. I knew at that point that I wanted to go to grad school and I had enough I don't think I'd applied to grad schools yet, but I knew that was the plan and I had not really planned on meeting and dating anyone and then I met Ben and we.

Dating and then we knew that we wanted to be together and he knew at minimum. He was going to follow me to grad school and I ended up going to Ohio State as I think I've talked about before on this show and so he came with me there, but we ended up actually getting married before we left to go to grad school.

So. It was very quick and that leads off into the other question I get which is how did you know and you know, I thought about this a lot and I have to say like I think I had the best instincts in the world. I was so young and I think that I got really lucky in some ways and there were certain aspects of Ben's personality that really drew me to him that were the opposite of my personality which in some cases could be a recipe for disaster and in this.

Case it just ended up working out perfectly. Ben is an incredibly patient person and so he really balances out my impatience. He is also very rebellious and that really balances out my kind of rule-following Tendencies and and my nature with that and he's also just the most generous person I've ever known and so there were just certain things that I think I was very drawn to and helped me to think that this would be someone who would make a good life partner.

And I would say to I took that decision at the time very seriously. I do have parents who are divorced and so marriage is something that's incredibly important to me. It's a value that I hold very dear in my life. And so I think that there were just a kind. Conglomeration of things a constellation of things that he represented that made me think that we would be a good fit together, but I have to say, you know, like I don't necessarily recommend getting married super young.

I think that you know, it's not always the best choice but for us for me, it was a good choice and he happened to be at the time it years older than me. And so I think he was making a different kind of Life decision than I was making at the time. I should also mention that when we decided to get married we didn't necessarily.

We tell our families because it was so soon and they hadn't even met either one of us in person yet. So we waited a little bit about six months before we told them that that was the plan and then we waited a little over a year before we actually had the wedding. Okay, so the other question I get especially when people know that I have kind of this background of working with women and gender studies is what was my wedding like because even an undergrad when I got married I was a minoring in women's studies.

I knew I was going to grad school in women's studies. And that definitely influenced the wedding that we had we did get married in a courthouse and it was very small. We just invited immediate family members and it was on a Wednesday evening. We actually chose the date of our wedding before we looked at a calendar been felt very strongly about December 1.

He felt like it would help him remember they had a versary and so far. He's been very good about that. So we picked the date and then we flew everybody up. We were in Spokane which is where we went to undergrad in, Washington. And everybody came up and we got married in the courthouse and then my mom actually cooked a dinner for everyone which was vegan and gluten-free.

And so we had a dinner in our apartment living room. We rented a very long table. We lived in a one-bedroom apartment and we had vows that we had written for each other that we read at the courthouse and then we also had some more kind of private vows that we said to each other in front of our families at our apartment.

And that was it. It was very like I said, very small very private. We had receptions later on in different states. We had a reception down in California for Ben's family and friends. We had one in Spokane for our. Friends, and then we had another reception in the Portland area for my family and friends.

And so we traveled around and did those instead of having a larger. And I have to say I have absolutely no regrets about that. We did not do formal photography. There was a lot about our wedding that was not kind of traditional in terms of what you would typically do and I have not regretted that one bit.

I am a relatively private person despite all the things I share on the podcast and so it was really important to me not to be in front of a bunch of people and it was really nice. It was I think we both agree that it was very us and actually I can also share that then that day booked us massages before we got married and I had the day off of school because I was still a student and so he booked us massages and the way that the timing worked I couldn't take a shower after the massage and and we were going to the courthouse so we have some photography just from like family of us getting married in kind of standing up and saying our vows to each other.

You can actually see I had very short hair kind of like I do now you can see the massage oil in the back of my hair and he's shots because I mean it was so informal in some ways, but it was very us and it was a it was a very good day and we really enjoyed it. Okay. So another question that I get from people is when did we know we didn't want to have kids and did we talk about it when we talk about it with each other and this was something that I knew very early on.

I've known from a very young age that this that having children was not really something I wanted to pursue and it was something I was very open about with people because I went to college at a kind of a religiously Affiliated School. Where a lot of people wanted to get married and have families. I mean this was something that they were very interested in and when you were dating people, it was actually a very common conversation to have even though you know, we were all so young it was a big deal for people to talk about this and so I was very open with men about it from the very beginning that I would say, maybe even in the first week or two it came up so that may be kind of weird, but it was kind of in the culture of where we were and the context in which we were dating and.

And he was also had been very clear that he also did not want kids and I think this is something that actually help to bond us to each other a little bit more is that we had both made that decision. We did discuss it. We did discuss, you know, did we think that might change in the future especially because I was relatively young at the time.

What would we do if we thought that changed in the future? How did we feel about having biological children versus adopting children versus fostering children? Like we talked through all of that and. It was something that I think we both had pretty clear feelings about and those feelings have not changed and have not even really wavered for either one of us.

So I do think it's a huge conversation to have I know a lot of people are really challenged by that in a relationship, especially if one person feels very differently than the other person and we were very fortunate that we felt the same way. We do have nieces and nephews which has been a fun kind of way to have younger people in our lives.

And we have them on both sides of our family's been has a sibling and I have two siblings. So that's been I think about helpful way and it was actually part of the reason we decided to move back West several years ago is because we wanted to be closer to family. So but we knew about this very early on and it was definitely something we talked about and I'm glad we.

Okay other questions I get one that I get is what does my partner think about how much I work because obviously I work quite a bit and you've probably heard we talked about on the show how I have a full-time job. I work on the weekends. I have this side business. And so some people I think are very curious about what Ben thinks about how much I.

And I'm happy to report he's very supportive. I think it's very clear to been especially after however many years. We've been together at this 15 years that this is something that I do i-it's not like I have worked this amount just in the past few years and especially because he saw me, Kind of pursuing my graduate degrees and also like my first job after grad school where I was really hustling pretty hard and I was working quite a bit to make sure that I was successful in those environments.

This is something that doesn't feel I think really new to him. It's really just part of who I am and what makes me happy and he supports that. I definitely think it's helpful that my partner is a very independent person. So he goes off and does his own thing. He doesn't need to be you know with me on the weekends.

Like we're we are both introverted and so we need kind of our alone time. And so I think that's helpful and it's something that. He's very comfortable with in terms of the work now that he co-owns the business to I think that it is a easier thing for him to understand. There are certain aspects of the business that I have to do.

Especially the client work are the coaching work of a speaking work that he can't really do those things. And so we're starting to kind of balance out a little bit more of the work that I could pass over to him so that he can kind of support that a little bit more. But this is a business that I kind of built from the ground up.

And so I've done everything in it and when he became a co-owner we started to kind of slowly transition some things over to him. And I think he got a better understanding of what exactly it takes to kind of keep it afloat in terms of all the things that are going on in the systems that are running.

So that often leads people to a question of what does my partner do for work and kind of a question about his job and his background so been currently his primary job right now is co-owning our business. He does not work outside of our home. He is a fiction writer and he often likes to bracket that saying he's unpublished.

He like you will not find his workout anywhere publicly, but he's been working on fiction writing for the past several years and before that he worked for a software company and did a lot of technical writing and like project management and also working directly with customers and providing like customer service and support.

And he is incredibly gifted in all of those areas. And these are definitely things that we have brought into his work in the side business, especially with things like customer support. And he's been teaching me a lot about those systems and how does that work? But several years ago about four years ago.

Now when we were still living in Boston, he was pretty unhappy and his job and had been for quite some time for a number of reasons and we got to a place financially where he didn't have to work. And so we decided to take a break for him in a similar way that we kind of. Let me go to grad school for like five and a half six years and he supported me financially throughout that period I said I will support him financially if he decides he wanted to pursue writing which was what he wanted to do.

And that's what he's done. He's been pursuing writing and he writes mostly this is something people are very interested in. What is he? What is he right? He write science fiction and he's an incredibly gifted writer. He's so brilliant and he really writes in ways that are very opposite to the ways that I write.

So watching his process. Has just been such a lesson for me in terms of how how to write differently than kind of a linear way, which is typically what I do. So right now he is not working outside of our home which means he does play a little bit of a househusband. Although I know he's certainly would not describe it that way but his schedule is a lot more flexible than mine.

And so he does do a lot of the. Grocery shopping, you know taking our car in for the oil change rotating the tires, you know things that I can't necessarily do during the day he certainly does and that is a huge help in addition to he basically runs like the entire Tech of our business which includes multiple websites multiple client websites.

He does all the backend work for that. He's basically assisted men for our clients and for me in terms of all, the things that we're doing with our business, which is obviously. Amazing and never having to worry about my internet being down and you know, like he's just he backs up everything we do and it's incredible.

So that's kind of what he spends his time doing. And I don't know like at this point we don't have plans to have him go back to a more traditional working environment if that was something he wanted to do, of course, I would support it. But I think he's pretty happy with just working on the writing and having kind of a pretty unstructured schedule as I mentioned.

He's pretty rebellious and I say that based on Gretchen Rubens framework where I talk about being in a polder. I'm in a polder. He's definitely a rebel and so he likes to do things his own way and. That's something I want to make sure to support. All right. Let me go ahead and wrap this up with a question that I posed to myself which is what is my favorite thing about my partner about then and this is hard to narrow down to one and I narrowed it down to two.

So number one is without knowing it. Ben has represented to me the most obvious example of radical self dress. And as you've heard me talk about on this show. I didn't know what radical self-trust was until about six months ago when I named it and I kind of coin that term and I defined it for myself and I talked about how I've been writing about it for a couple of years.

And I'd I've been using the terminology and really thinking with that taxonomy in mind for a long time, but I hadn't called it what it was. And once I called it what it was and I started looking around for different examples and things what I realized was then is like the ultimate example of radical self-trust he because of his rebellious nature will go against what everyone else says and do what he thinks is right and he has a very strong ethical core that is amazing to watch and he will help people and just be generous in ways that are just so incredible and I think that.

What I realized once I kind of coin that term was he is in some ways like that is what has drawn me to him. And that is what makes him such a good partner for me is that he is practicing that radical self-trust all the time and it's a lesson for me and I've joked with him that he's like my spiritual teacher because he shows me how to do radical self trust and that leads me to the second favorite thing about him and that is his.

And he is the most patient person I've ever met. I think that because I'm so impatient it like I said before it bounces me out quite a bit and it is such a lesson to me to watch him and to especially as he makes like big decisions big life decisions. He really thinks about it so carefully and then when he commits he really commits because he's had this time to kind of think about it and decide.

And over the course of our relationship, he is on such a different timetable than me. You could definitely think about us as like the turtle and the hare that he is more of a turtle and I'm the one who's kind of rushing along, you know, doing lots of different things. He's very focused. He likes to do, you know, one thing at a time and think carefully about things and at first I can admit this was frustrating and I had to kind of figure out how to work with that and now it's something that is so valuable to me that he.

This and that he slows us down and really helps me to Think Through decisions really carefully when I would just off the cuff like make a random decision and be ready to move on. So hopefully this episode was interesting. I'm sure it ran a little bit longer than what I would normally do but these are common questions that I get and of course I'm happy to answer additional ones.

Maybe next year on my my next wedding anniversary. I'll do another episode but I have to say, you know. On my wedding anniversary, of course, I think about how important than is to my life and I could not do the things I do without his support and he is such a valuable addition and someone that I hold so dear and I'm so glad that we are partnered and that we continue to work together and live together in the ways that we have for the past 15 years.

So thanks so much for listening to this life work queue a little bit more on the life side this week and I'll be back. Speak with all new content for you've got this and think right revised and life work QA. We're going to start thinking about planning for the new year, which is of course my favorite time.

So I'm really looking forward to that. Thanks so much for listening. Thanks for listening to this episode of Life work QA show notes and a transcript for this episode can be found at Katie Linder dot work / podcasts lifework QA is part of the radical self-trust podcast Channel a collection of content dedicated to helping you seek self-knowledge nurture your superpowers playfully experiment live your core values with intention practice loving kindness towards yourself and others.

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