

Letter No. 4

A Letter to Himself. We can work this out,

Dearest husband,

Last night I was annoyed and hurt by something you'd done, but we decided not to sort it out late at night, we'd talk about it tomorrow. A good decision! I know we'll sit down and hear each other this evening, and we can work this out.

How different to the early days of our marriage, whenever there was an argument or disagreement, talking long and tearfully into the night, me longing to have unity and peace between us, you longing to go to sleep! We learned from those times that late night discussions were not effective, often leading to more upset as things got out of proportion and we'd lose sight of what the original issue was. By the time we'd made it up you'd be exhausted and fall fast asleep, while I'd lie there awake all night having been so stirred up and distressed! We decided never to discuss difficulties after 10pm and that's worked well for us.

But this is not always an easy choice! Like last night - I felt you had let me down in front of our friends, correcting my version of a story and changing the details. I was furious, not to say also convinced my version was the right one! And you saw my reaction. I bottled up my feelings and couldn't wait for the evening to be over. Coming home in the car the air between us was very chilly! "I know you're cross" you said. "Can it wait until tomorrow?"

That's the point at which a choice has to be made - open it all up and prove how right I am and how wrong you are? Demand an apology? Turn a cold shoulder on you and make you suffer?

Or trust you! Trust you didn't mean to hurt me. Trust you to bring the matter up tomorrow and be committed to talking it through. "Don't let the sun go down on your anger" it says in the Bible, with good reason. I know what it is to nurse a grudge all night. It has a way of growing into full blown resentment and if left long enough, it allows bitterness to creep in.

So my response was "Yes, I'm angry now. But I don't want to stay angry with you or hurt you now by saying something I shouldn't. I let it all go and we'll talk tomorrow." Immediately the atmosphere changed between us! The temperature thawed. You reached over and gave my hand a squeeze. I relaxed. There was an unspoken acceptance that yes, there was a problem. This wasn't the first time this kind of thing had happened, which is why I was so upset. But we both wanted to work it all out. We are on the same side! Let's attack the problem, not each other. In choosing unity we can face the issue, get to the root, set things right and forgive each other, and be the richer for it. So, my dear good husband, we will talk tonight. We can work this out!

With love from,

Trish