

I Love Your Being a Lawyer; I Hate Your Being a Lawyer. How Does "Lawyering" Affect Your Relationship?

Hmmm...maybe "hate" is too strong a word, but in my relationship coaching work, I have come to believe there is a flavor of the love-hate dynamic in nearly every personal relationship...new relationships, committed and exclusive relationships, with engaged couples and with married couples. If there's not, then, (tongue in cheek), perhaps it's because you haven't known the person long enough to find something to resent. At any rate, a love-hate relationship does not mean there is no passion, no intimacy, no sincere and deep love, commitment and devotion.

So, in the lawyer-non-lawyer relationship, I'm curious how the lawyer piece plays out in both supporting the relationship and in limiting, even sabotaging, the relationship.

For example, if the lawyer piece points to being a skilled negotiator what does that look like in your relationship?

On the "I love your being a lawyer" end of the continuum, does the non-lawyer-partner depend on the (skilled negotiator)lawyer-partner to purchase (negotiate the price/sale) a new car or other big-ticket item?

Or, does your non-lawyer partner depend on the ("time-is-money-focused") lawyer-partner to manage projects that demand efficient and effective use of time?

Does the non-lawyer partner rely on the ("socially-skilled") lawyer-partner to be the life of the dinner party, to break the ice, get things rolling and generate lively energy?

Why else might your non-lawyer partner say, "I love your being a lawyer?" Does the non-lawyer partner achieve a sense of worth and value by continually suggesting the lawyer-partner to friends and neighbors who are in need of legal advice?

On the other end of the continuum, what might it be about the lawyer-partner that gets in the way of a smooth relationship?

When does the attractive, "plus" side of the lawyer-partner perhaps morph into a more repelling side that may cause resentment or bitterness, or teasing and sarcasm (which are veiled forms of anger and resentment)?

For example, when the non-lawyer partner needs support, a kind ear, and silence in order to be heard, does the lawyer-partner become overbearing, dominating in a manner that is insensitive, undiplomatic, holier than thou, or argumentative?

Does the lawyer-partner always need to have the "logic" of a discussion drive the discussion, and perhaps drive the non-lawyer partner away? Or, do most discussions become "arguments"?

Does the lawyer-partner need to cross-examine and/or aim to undermine the non-lawyer partner each time the non-lawyer makes a life choice with which the lawyer-partner has a different perspective?

So, my curiosity. When does it support your relationship to bring the "office" home and when does it support the relationship to leave the "office" behind? My curiosity is directed to lawyers and to non-lawyer spouses or partners who are in relationship with lawyers.

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