



“There was that one time when I jumped out of a moving car,” I recalled, “and then that time when you launched your phone at the brick exterior of your brother’s house.”

## year six

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**O**n May 27, 2014, my fiancé and I, we celebrated our 6th anniversary together. We sat on our broken-in couch with Nate, our house guest, combing through the few occasions when we had had an argument. Six years and we can still count our arguments on one hand.

With a raised brow, Nate said, “You guys argue?” People are always so shocked. But personally, I’ve never met a couple that doesn’t argue. Flashing a bit of his million dollar gapped-tooth smile, my fiancé grabbed a handful of his Pai Mei inspired beard and replied, “Sure we argue; we’re human. We’re not always going to be on the same page...and that’s okay. The key is acceptance.”

Our most recent disagreement was considerably brief and dramatically loud. Thunder spewed from our mouths as we barked at each other about God knows what. We rarely dwell on what our arguments are about after the fact. But this particular occurrence was different. Outside of the shouting bout, it was as if there was an etiquette established from our previous arguments. We claimed responsibility for our actions, patiently let one another express their perspective without interruption, and following the episode...we took some time to cool down and evaluate the outcome. It was healthy; and it was beautiful. I am proud of how far we’ve come since our first tiff.

A seasoned couple of multiple decades once shared an appreciated sliver of clichéd but valid advice with us. “To preserve the longevity of your relationship, you must never go to bed angry with one another.” Dismissing the dispute without a mutual resolution allows it to ferment and fester only to result in another spat down the road—and thus grudges are

formed. It all boils down to a matter of mature respect. Fiancé and I practice the challenging process of honesty with one another. We don’t attack each other’s character but we trade [sometimes brutal] truths. That bittersweet moment when your hunny bunny accomplishes a task on the infamous, never-ending “honey do list” and leaves a colossal path of destruction for you to discover. Yes...that moment. It reminds me of the quote “You can measure the happiness of a marriage by the number of scars that each partner carries on their tongues, earned from years of biting back angry words.” Those careless moments where the toilet seat is left up could either erupt into a feud of mammoth proportions or can be simply discussed with your partner. You decide. Request the other party to be more mindful. Let them know their actions

get under your skin. It’s only fair.

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Don’t expect habitual actions to transform overnight. Some things take time. While conversing with my married friends, they tend to share their partner’s least favorable attributes and habits—and I usually sit and listen. And as they reveal their fantasies of how they wish to change them—I interrupt that haze of insanity. I share with them advice on practicing honesty which usually concludes with an anecdote rooted from experience. But as they run through the lists of negatives or unacceptables, a heinous curl of my lips internally spreads as I feverishly rub my hands together and release a cackle increasing in volume. “Iaintgottadealwitdat.” It’s our mantra; our way of saying “I appreciate you.” We choose to avoid the elements destructive relationships are made of through honesty, respect, consideration, and most importantly, patience. With six years under our belt, I chose this piece of wisdom to share with you to utilize in your own relationships. And if our six years isn’t enough, when jolted into the most unpleasant moments within your relationship and you find yourself hollering with all of your might, remember the 13th century poet Rumi’s lyrics, “raise your words, not your voice. It is the rain that grows flowers, not thunder.”