

How to be a husband

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Abstrak

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ABSTRACT

Believe me, not a day goes by without me stopping to ask myself, 'How the hell did I end up here?' Twenty years ago my wife and I embarked on a project so foolhardy, the prospect of which seemed to both of us so weary, stale and flat that even thinking about it made us shudder. Neither of us could propose to the other, because neither of us could possibly make a case for the idea. We simply agreed we'll get married with the resigned determination of two people plotting to bury a body in the woods. Two decades on we are still together, still married and still, well, I hesitate to say happy, if only because it's one of those absolute terms, like 'nit-free', that life has taught me to deploy with caution. And really, I can only speak for myself in this matter. But yes: I am, at the time of writing, 100 per cent nit-free. This is the story of how I ended up here, and along with it an examination of what it means to be a husband in the 21st century, and what is and isn't required to hold that office. I can't pretend to offer much in the way of solid advice on how to be a man - I tried to become a man, and in the end I just got old. But 'Husband' - it's one of the main things on my CV, right below 'BA, English' and just above 'Once got into a shark cage for money'. 'Husband' is the thing I do that makes everything else I do seem like a hobby. But, I hear you ask, are you a good husband? Perhaps that is for my wife to judge, but I think I know what she would say: no. Still, I can't help feeling there's a longer answer, a more considered, qualified way of saying no. I'm not an expert on being a husband, but what kind of husband would an expert make? If nothing else, I can look back and point out ways round some of the pitfalls I was fortunate enough to overstep, and relate a few cautionary tales about the ones I fell headlong into.