

*This is an excerpt of a manuscript that I edited. It gives a before-and-after look at the material.*

### **Before Editing:**

It was a year and a half into our marriage when the strangeness began. Not the kind of strangeness that would divide us but the kind that would reveal how our marriage would evolve. When I write “strangeness” it is because I don’t know what to call it. I am sure there is a more accurate word in the metaphysical realm. Maybe its synchronicity or kismet or maybe it’s just coincidental. This strangeness that I’m referring to is actually a chain of events that occurred in a short period of time.

Prior to our marriage, my wife, Linda had a job in public safety. She’d been a medic on an ambulance for ten years and two as a 911 dispatcher. Along with those jobs she was a men’s fashion sales rep, a zoo worker and waitress. Working in the public was the common thread between all of them.

As a teenager I had worked in retail and an amusement park as my only job where I dealt with the public. I worked in the insulated worlds of factories, labs, offices and cubicles always working with the same people day in and day out. She being an extrovert, me being an introvert, complete opposites that found each other in a floating sea of wandering souls.

Another trait I loved about my wife when I was courting her was her compassion for people and animals. She had amazing patience with individuals I couldn’t understand. I could easily blow off a person without regard to their situation. I didn’t want to be bothered with others problems when I had to deal with my own. I always thought that you should take care of your issues, by yourself, without burdening others.

Early into our marriage she stated numerous times she thought we should get a puppy. I resisted because I didn't want the responsibility and addition to not wanting a dog sleeping on our bed. I know how dogs are when they discover that they can lie on your mattress. She eventually broke me down, so I surprised her when I brought home a yellow Labrador puppy. It was the same puppy she'd gone to see at a breeders house a week before. I brought home the big lovable lug of a dog that had more spunk and energy than I anticipated. She apparently liked her, the friskiest dog in the litter that begged to be picked up who was vocal with a vociferous bark. Clearly the Alpha of the pack.

We soon found out that a simple walk in the neighborhood wasn't enough exercise for puppy Riley to calm her down. In addition, I would have to play tug of war for a half hour just to get her tired so she would stop demanding our attention all night. We soon found ourselves hauling her to the park every day to throw endless balls and frisbees.

On one such occasion we drove to a different park than our usual choice. We came upon a vehicle flashing taillights in the middle of the road right in front of the dog park. We pulled alongside the massive SUV then peered into the window. The blacked-out window rolled down and the face of a thirtyish blonde women with a cell phone pressed to her ear. She put it down and let us know of the fact that she was out of gas.

My wife was quick to offer my services. I looked at this urban assault vehicle and wondered if I should try to push it to the gas station a block away.

### **After Editing:**

It was a year and a half into our marriage when the 'strangeness' began. It was nothing that would divide us, but it would reveal how our bond would evolve. I call it strangeness because I simply cannot come up with another word. Perhaps I should call it synchronicity or kismet; or maybe just plain coincidence. Either way, it was an odd chain of events that occurred in a short period of time.

Prior to our marriage, my wife Linda had a job in public safety. She had been an ambulance medic for ten years and a 911 dispatcher for two. She had also worked as a men's fashion sales representative, a zoo worker, and a waitress. She had always worked with the public in one capacity or another.

As a teenager, the only job that I had dealing with the public was at an amusement park. Later, I mainly worked in semi-isolation in factories, labs, offices, and cubicles. It was the same people every day. Unlike me, my wife is an extrovert. We are complete opposites, wandering souls that somehow found each other. I never believed opposites could attract – until I met Linda.

My wife has great compassion for people and animals, and amazing patience – patience that I could never truly understand. I could always easily dismiss a stranger without any regard to his or her situation. That may sound harsh, but it's the truth. I just don't want to be bothered with other people's problems when I have to deal with my own. I just can't handle it. Besides, I always thought that we should all take care of our own issues without burdening others.

Just after our marriage, she began suggesting that we should get a puppy. I resisted because I didn't want the responsibility. I also didn't want a dog sleeping on our bed. I know how dogs are when they discover that they can lie on your mattress, it's only a matter of time before they are inside the sheets. But she eventually broke me down and I surprised her by bringing home a yellow Labrador puppy. It was a puppy that she had gone to see at a breeder's house the week before.

The dog had more spunk and energy than I had anticipated. Linda apparently liked him, the friskiest dog in the litter that begged to be picked up and barked indecently. We discovered that a simple walk in the neighborhood wasn't enough exercise to calm our new puppy down. In addition, I had to play tug of war with him for a half hour each night to tire him enough to sleep. And many days were spent in the park throwing balls and Frisbees.