

Pick Carefully!

“Marriage is an eternal job with three free meals and a nap a day.” This idea is from women’s point of view in the past in Japan. About 30-40 years ago, most couples did not divorce, and housework was getting lighter and easier than before because the size of the family became smaller, and appliances like washing machines and rice cookers had spread throughout Japan. However, nowadays, the rate of divorce has been increasing and some wives work outside their home because their lifestyles and the economic situation have changed. Personally, I thought marriage was romantic in my teens and early twenties, but I have changed my idea about marriage through my experience. Recently, I had a chance of talking with Anna Smith, my friend, about marriage. She is a married American in her 40’s, so we are the same generation. Anna has some of the same ideas as me about how to make a strong marriage, even though we are from different countries and cultures.

“A good marriage is a place where people feel safe to be themselves,” Anna says, so she thinks couples should be tolerant. At home, people don’t have to pretend and can express their own feelings honestly. A good marriage provides them with a home, which is a place to relax and feel comfortable. I agree with her. Lovers sometimes put on masks so that they look better than themselves. It is difficult to keep their mask on after getting married. If the partner feels stressed because of their work, they can feel relieved when they get back home if there is an understanding partner at home. A home like that is desirable.

Anna’s second idea is “A couple should grow with each other.” Each partner is independent mentally. Some couples are insecure and stuck. If their partner wants to do something new without them, they don’t allow it easily. A relationship like that would disturb their partner’s growth. I have an idea close to this one; “Each should have his or her own world.” Of course, it is precious to spend time together and share, but also to have our own work, hobbies, and relationships with others. One half of the couple should not work for the other. Some people are willing to devote their time and life to their partner and family. If they feel satisfied, that’s okay. However, if they don’t want to do that, and have other desires, the partner should support the other partner pleasantly. That leads to their growth. Denying oneself might cause an explosive ending in divorce.

Finally, “A marriage partner makes up for the parts each lacks.” These words were sent to me by my friend when I was looking for my partner. Nobody is perfect, and there is not a perfect partner. After marriage, we have to make our own way and live our lives. We need to help each other mutually, and we need to respect our partners who have the part that fill our weak points. For example, I sometimes stick to my ideas and get stuck on the little things and can’t go ahead. In contrast to me, my husband has a broad outlook and advises me. Sometimes we have different ideas from each other, but we iron them out. So far, it seems to work well.

Anna and I agree with each other’s idea mutually. Our basic point about marriage is to respect and help our partner. In addition, we agree with the point that when people decide to marry, “Don’t be emotional! Pick carefully!” Our lives are so long, but it is difficult to keep romantic emotions. As we are growing up, the relationship with the partner is also maturing through our experiences. The energy that we get from our marriage makes it possible for us to do things we could not do by ourselves. That is my ideal marriage.