

2001: The Ph.D. of Life

Dear Gus,

Congratulations. I've always said that being in a monogamous relationship is the Ph.D. of life. There's nothing harder or more rewarding. There have been few experiences that have taught me more about myself than sharing my life with another. Larry and I created a "mission statement" when we first got together. In case you're not sure what that is, a mission statement is a statement made by a business when they first open their doors to the public. The purpose of it is to declare what their intentions are.

Larry and my mission statement was to support each other in our individual growth. At first, I thought that would be easy, but it didn't turn out to be easy at all.

I learned that that didn't mean I'd tell him how to live his life. It didn't mean I'd be able to shield him from pain or "make" him happy. It just meant that I'd support him. I'd listen, and when I was through listening, I'd listen some more. And when I was through listening a second time, I'd still listen more. I wouldn't advise him how to live his life. I wouldn't get in his way or in any way come off my path for him. I'd tell him of my experience on my path and listen to his experience on his path. That is what "support" came to mean for me.

It was harder than I thought, but most rewarding. Eleven years later I feel like an adult and treats others like adults – with respect and confidence that they can handle their own life.

In your email you said you decided to "get serious." Welcome to the club and mazel tov. [Good luck – Hebrew] The more serious I get, the sweeter, happier and funnier life becomes.

Sincerely,
Barry