

**Embedded: About Marriage and Mattresses**

**Cheryl L. Rice**

**484-557-8846**

[Cheryl@cherylriceleadership.com](mailto:Cheryl@cherylriceleadership.com)

I never expected to start the New Year in A Sleepy's Mattress store, telling my husband, Alan, that we can't choose a mattress on price alone. We have to lie down on each one and see what feels comfortable, and what feels right.

I didn't expect we'd be ready to invest in a new mattress now. What I really mean is, I never expected to be ready to re-invest in my marriage. One year ago I was wondering where I'd be sleeping if I left both our marriage and our bed. And now we're discussing the merits of foam versus spring with Lee the mattress guy.

I never expected marriage to be so hard. I never expected the love songs to lie. I never expected to be at least half of the problem, or to realize that what I most want from Alan is what I most fear having. I never expected that buying a king-sized mattress would require king-sized courage. But it does.

A king-sized bed for a king-sized marriage. If we can be comfortable in a new bed can we be comfortable in our lives together?

We bought our house after we married five years ago. We made every room functional and beautiful. Every room except our bedroom – why didn't we *start* with our bedroom? Our bed? Why didn't I insist on it? Such neglect. Taking something so new and precious for granted – despite the statistics. Crazy.

Instead I learned to leap onto the very-high-off-the-ground queen-sized bed inherited from Alan's first marriage. The bed was half as high and half as old as me. And I learned how not to bump into two of the four-posters that punctuated the ends of the bed, often imagining them as spears when insomnia relegated them to nighttime shadows. And this was before Alan's snoring became not so cute anymore, and before my slow retreat inward after my mother died.

What is it to be embedded, not just wedded, with another person the way one is with a husband? I never imagined I'd miss my single-girl days when I slept undisturbed with my cats, Thai curled at my feet, and Mystic nestled under my chin. So much easier sleeping with cats than a husband.

When I first brought up the idea of graduating from a queen to a king-sized mattress, Alan said he thought that was one step toward a divorce. I told him it was actually one giant step (at least for me) away from divorce.

Back at the mattress store, Lee is explaining *motion control*. He's saying it will prevent me from waking up when Alan bounces into bed after a Phillies win. I'm wondering if a lack of turbulence in our bed will create less turbulence out of it. Will a peaceful night of rest translate into a peaceful day of marriage?

Lee is telling us about the 20-year warranty. Twenty years! Is that for the bed or for the marriage? If the marriage doesn't last 20 more years, can I return the mattress?

And now he's talking about a comfort guarantee. Yes. I'll take it. I want a comfort guarantee because for most of these five years I've been uncomfortable. And if buying a mattress from Lee the mattress guy can guarantee my comfort, sign me up. NOW.

I want my mattress to be perfect. No lumps. No noise. No squeaks. I want it to be welcoming, calming and soothing, a foundation for only good dreams, and a sanctuary from the aches and pains of life. It's what I want my marriage to be, too.

So Alan and I bought the king-sized, super-comfy, low-turbulence, high-price mattress, *and* the matching pad. As Alan completed the paperwork, it occurred to me that we were spending more money on bedding than we had on couples counseling this past year, yet doing so felt oddly therapeutic. And come to think of it, Lee the mattress guy, his voice as soft as down, did facilitate our mattress choice with more ease than we usually muster trying to agree on a Saturday night movie.

As we left the store, feeling more optimistic than when we had entered, Alan reached for my hand. And it suddenly dawned on me that changing the bed, instead of the person lying in it with you, even when life gets lumpy, may be exactly what being embedded is about.