

## How Far Would You Go For Your Partner?

In February 2011, I was in California at a weeklong seminar. I was to be gone a total of nine days. Rob, my partner and husband, was at home 2300 miles away. Before I left he seemed to be coming down with a nasty cold or some type of flu. Because of my location and my busy schedule it was difficult to call; I usually just texted back and forth with him. When I did speak to him I noticed that this cold/flu “thing” was really taking a toll. On top of that a record-breaking ice storm had hit. My next to last day in California I called home again to talk to him.

My sweet love – a man who never gets sick – was so ill and coughing this strange, high-pitched cough that he could barely talk to me. He and the kids had lost electricity due to the storm so they were staying at my parents’. I hung up from Rob and called my mother’s cell. “Mom, does Rob need to go to the hospital?” She informed me that she had tried to get him to go the previous night! She told me that he was so sick he couldn’t put his sweatshirt on by himself – she had to help him! I told her to have my father take him to the emergency room immediately. I called Rob’s cell again and told him in more than a few choice words that he was going to the hospital right then – no ifs, ands, or buts (maybe I was harsh – but I felt helpless and deeply afraid). Remember, there was an ice storm – inches of ice on the car and extremely treacherous driving conditions. It took over an hour to reach the hospital that is only 10 minutes from my parents’ home. My next step was to find a way to get home! Up in the mountains I was an hour’s drive from the airport and a seven-hour flight from home – no nonstop flights from my location.

The events that transpired at the airports were challenging to say the least, but I encountered some of the most wonderful people to help me. I was able to make my plane connection with just an hour to spare before they shut down the Houston, TX airport due to snow!! And, I was able to land in Indianapolis on schedule with only two runways open! A close friend picked me up and drove me to the hospital.

The end result was a blood clot in my husband’s jugular vein and a developing abscess near his right collarbone. He had to have surgery to drain the abscess and heavy-duty antibiotics. He spent a week in the hospital!! Then, he spent the next month with a picc line in his arm so that he could take powerful antibiotics intravenously at home and six months on blood thinners. The specialists were never able to decide what brought this about. No one knows if the blood clot developed first or the infection – the chicken or the egg?

The point is that we sometimes deal with things in our lives that we never expected. Some of these can pack quite a punch. I am pondering this experience today because I have been thinking about a movie I just watched yesterday. We might not expect great struggle and death defying feats regularly, but others know no different.

In 2005, *March of the Penguins* was shared with the world. This is a very powerful film. What amazes me the most is not only what these Emperor penguins go through to find a mate and produce offspring, but the loving tenderness they seem to share with one another. These amazing beings of nature travel over 70 miles of ice and snow to return to where they were born. They search through the

thousands of penguins until they find a fitting mate. The pair off in cuddled up pairs prior to mating. Once they are blessed with an egg, they must delicately trade it from the mother's feet to the father's feet. In a matter of moments the freezing temperatures, which are on average -72°F, will steal away the life within the egg if they are not successful. The female penguin must return the 70 plus miles to the sea to regain her weight and bring back food for the new little penguin.

As the males protect their precious eggs and wait out the winter for the females' return they huddle together in an effort to stay warm. They take turns being in the center. This grouping of penguins reminds me of the blended spirit Rob and I, as Relationship Guides, talk so often about. These compassionate and loving father's become winter warriors as they blend their energies and spirits to form a mass of continually moving penguin bodies that almost becomes its own being. They go nearly four months without food from when they first started their journey. They are extraordinarily cold and near starving, but they continue to protect and provide for their babies.

Upon the females' return the precarious exchange of baby penguin from one parent's feet to the other parent's feet takes place again – just in reverse this time. Now, the males must make the huge journey to return to the sea and eat before they surrender to death due to lack of food. The mother penguins remain with their babies protecting them and feeding them. It will be a couple more months before the females leave the baby penguins alone and return as well. Eventually, the little penguins are big enough to make their own journey to the sea and the cycle continues.

Throughout this dangerous journey every year some, both adults and babies, succumb to the cold or the lack of food. Sadly, some of the babies don't live long enough to even meet their mothers. To live life, to continue existence they must risk it all time and time again.

I ask you – would you travel over 70 miles in devastatingly cold temperatures to find a mate and create new life? Would you be willing to entrust this tenuous new life with your partner? Okay, this scenario might be extreme. I mean, after all, you aren't a penguin – right?

Instead, I ask you to consider:

- How far you would go for your partner?
- Even more importantly, do you consider the little things you do for each other?
- Do you appreciate him/her?
- Are you grateful for the little things let alone the big things?
- Would you drop everything and be there if your partner really needed you to?

Maybe you won't have to worry about a major event, a frightening event or miles and miles of snow and ice, but think about how important it is to be there for your partner everyday. Sometimes we just need to stop and listen – really listen to

what he/she is saying. We don't necessarily need to do anything other than just being present, perhaps giving a hug or offering a shoulder.

Loving another and blending your spirit with another is a beautiful experience. And, it can help you weather any storm.

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