

## I Am Learning

I am a coach.

My heart beats faster when I see ten pairs of feet sprinting across the soccer pitch. My pulse quickens at the sound of the dull slap of leather on leather as the forward charges to the goal and shoots. I gain satisfaction from teaching a skill to a player and then watching as she perfects it. It takes practice to coach the keeper on how to use the ball to absorb the shock when she is diving to stop a shot, and it is time consuming to teach a midfielder how to gain speed by leaning into the run and using the arms as pistons. The repetition is monotonous, but the sight of a player's face lighting up when she perfects a technique is why I coach. My ability to bring fifteen girls together and focused on a single purpose is a talent I bring to my soccer team. It is a great accomplishment to have the team so focused that they are oblivious to the slowly passing car of gawking boys on its fourth lap around the block. I am learning perseverance and organization.

I am a wife.

A sense of humor and a willingness to laugh at myself are vital to a strong and healthy marriage. Take two people who will never agree on the direction the Charmin should hang from the roll and have them share a bathroom; this is the stuff of television sit-coms and real-life marriage. My idealistic vision of "happily ever after" is in contradiction to my day-to-day reality. Passionate lovemaking cools when I catch sight of crusty socks piled up alongside the bed. My husband's compulsion for alphabetizing the canned goods clashes with my chaotic style of pantry organization. I struggle with placing another person's desires on a level with my own. I am learning tolerance and compromise.

I am a mother.

The shift from all-night parties to late-night feedings and the responsibility for another person's life is a shock. Pampers and sleepless nights neutralize the feeling of having the God-like power to create life. I watch in awe as my baby learns to roll over, crawl, and walk. I must learn when to set boundaries for them and when to stand back to allow them to make mistakes. I teach my child to ride a bike, and then watch silently from behind the curtain as he wipes dirt and gravel from his knees when he falls from the bike. I watch my child who is afraid of the dark grow into a teen who needs a curfew because he wants to stay out all night. This is the irony of being a mother. I must teach the one person I would lay down my life for how to leave me. I am learning patience and selflessness.

I am these things and more. I am sometimes unwilling to persevere. I am disorganized, intolerant, and uncompromising. I am impatient and selfish. But, I am learning.

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