

## **Good Night. Have a Nice Sleep**

By Jan Nieman

Mrs. Jacobs here. Did you catch the announcement in the *Maryvale News*? It says: “Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Jacobs celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary March 16 at Sonny’s Resort. When asked what contributed to their fifty years of marriage, Mr. Jacobs offered, “We never went to bed mad at each other.”

Don’t you believe a word of it!

Please note it was Mister Jacobs who recited that cliché. Missus Jacobs - that would be me - was biting her lip and stewing when Bill uttered those words. He has no clue as to how often I’m in a snit when I mumble, “Good night. Have a nice sleep.”

Lately, I’ve been in a constant state of irritation. How many times do I ask him to take out the kitchen trash before bugs invade? Instead, he smashes it down with his foot, cramming more in. “There,” he sez, “It’ll be OK till Tuesday.” It’s not OK. Trust me. It doesn’t stop the ants and his foot leaves garbage prints where he walks.

How often can he misplace his Bank of America card and tear the house apart before he phones them to report it missing. If he’d tell me when he first notices he lost it, I’d immediately check his shirt pocket before (not after) it goes through the wash.

Bill cannot carry a cup of coffee from the kitchen to the living room without a trail. Last night Bill fried a hamburger. As usual, he left spattered grease all over the stove, not to mention salt everywhere except on the hamburger. What do you think the odds are that come morning I’ll be greeted by the mess?

But, do I say anything? No!

“And why not?” you ask.

I’ll tell you why not. If it’d been the first time, I’d have drawn it to his attention, perhaps even the second or third. But, if you’ve been married fifty years and it hasn’t sunk in, what’s the point?

It’s not the big issues like losing your job or your youngest marrying a no-good druggie that creates bumps in a marriage. Nope! You get through that stuff. It’s the daily grind of denied expectations that eat away year after year until you explode.

I’m almost asleep when our mattress shifts. Guess Bill’s not going to wake me up to say, “Good night.” He must have forgotten something, because a few seconds later he tip-toes to the kitchen. I hear the spray of Lysol Kitchen and Bathroom Cleaner followed by a whisk of paper toweling. Well, how about that? Guess I’ll find a clean stove come morning. Bill can be downright sweet at times.

He eases his bulk into bed. I pretend to wake up, give him a kiss, and say, “Good night. Have a nice sleep.”

Mr. Jacobs here:

Listen! Hear me out on this. Lily is an “A” type personality. Me? I’m definitely a “B.” She wraps her mind around putzy household chores that require daily attention. Of course, I’m the source of some of them. The problem is she’ll want them done immediately and I figure I’ll get around to them before the house burns down. For instance, if I leave my empty Miller Lite on the end table, she’s grabbing it and erasing the invisible ring before I’m barely out of my chair. Cripes!

Yep, we’ve been married over fifty years, so the paper says, and I’ve gotten used to the way she operates. See, the thing is we have different levels of expectation. Now

don't you smirk. It gets to be serious-like to adjust to one another and it doesn't come out when you date. No, siree. Everyone's on their best behavior and its kissy, kissy until one day all hell breaks loose over something trivial.

For instance, she's late for everything. I can't tell you how many times we sneak into the last row at church just in time for the sermon. You'd think someone who demands stuff done right this minute would be a timely person. But, that ain't the case.

I tell her, "I'll go out and get the car warmed up." (It's a little hint that we should be on our way.) It doesn't do a bit of good. I sit out there running the engine for another twenty minutes. Does she think church begins at a different time every Sunday? I don't get it. I'm so aggravated I can't even open my mouth to sing and to top things off I leave my church envelope in the car.

Now maybe I'm telling tales out of school, but another thing that bugs me is the way she's pleasant to everyone after we've squabbled. I still have hurt feelings when we arrive at some shindig while she swishes in happy, happy. How can the woman fake that for three hours? Me? I find a corner where I nurse a couple of beers.

We get home from one of these, climb into bed, and she seems to forget we promised we wouldn't go to sleep without settling things between us. But, when I say, "Good night," she doesn't even answer.

I know you're wondering how we managed to last fifty years. I'm thinking one reason is we both have a good sense of humor and for some reason we go into survival mode to weather the big troubles like Jenny being born with Down's syndrome. Then, it could be God getting us through, too. Although, I wonder where he is when we get bent all out of shape for the little things.

Nuts! I forgot to clean the stove. If there's one speck of grease in the morning, Lily will have a hemi. See, I fried this big hamburger and...sorry, 'scuse me a second.

Guess I'm not quiet enough. Lily wakes up and gives me a sweet kiss. She says, "Good night. Have a nice sleep."

I reach for her hand, "You, too."