

I'm Robin Marie

If you haven't heard my story I'd like to invite you to go back to episodes 8 - 11

Welcome to Chasing Different.

One of the little things I try to do for my husband each morning is to make coffee. I usually set up the coffee makers the night before so all he needs to do is press the start button. Yes, I said coffee makers.

We each have our own pot. He likes plain old ordinary "Folgers" coffee and I like the flavored stuff. You know, the foo foey stuff, like white chocolate truffle, French toast and Snickerdoodle.

We are different.

Listen in.

When it comes to coffee, My husband likes three scoops of regular coffee mate creamer with another three scoops of raw sugar and I like my one pack of stevia with my sugar free Hazelnut creamer.

We are very different. But in the morning (some may call it night, since we wake up at 3:30 am) We each fill our mugs and sit in the dark drinking our own cups of sunshine.

One evening as I was setting up the coffee station I grabbed a different spoon to put in my husband's mug than I usually do.

He promptly replaced it with the one he constantly asked for.

What was so different about this spoon that he had to have it? I had never asked, I had only assumed it was the feel of the handle but I was wrong.

"It's not the feel of the spoon, " he said as I joked about how strange his fixation was with his spoon. "It's that it's just the right size for the amount of sugar I need in my coffee,"

Ok, let me stop and interject.

Forty- three years married to this man of mine and I never knew this? What else didn't I know?

As I reflect on that day, I think about all the little things we never tell each other. We live in the same house, eat at the same table and share the same family but we never take the time to truly listen to each other or to be curious about each other's lives.

We go through the same old routines and say the same old phrases and forget that we are all humans not robots. We all have stories that haven't been told and little quirks that no one will ever understand unless we tell them.

I have to say for me, I tend to imagine the story in my head before it's even told and most of the time I'm wrong.

"Did you visit your grandparents often?" I asked one evening trying to keep the momentum going from the night before. I was trying to embrace curiosity.

After all, I didn't know much about my husband's childhood, only that he had to grow up fast because he lived with a mentally ill mother and a father who worked a lot.

"Yes," he replied. "I can remember being sent away many times to stay with my grandparents,"

My husband was a very active little boy whose mother couldn't handle him. His third grade teacher told his parents that he almost drove her out of the teaching profession. That little boy was sent to live for weeks and often months at a time with a grandmother who had made it clear that she never wanted to have children in the first place and a grandfather who wanted a son so badly he told his only daughter, my mother in law, that he wanted to keep her son.

Again, I was amazed at what I learned as I listened and continued to ask for more questions.

After hearing some of the details of that little boy's adventures in and out of his family of origin I gained a better understanding of the man I married.

I thought I knew all about this man. The one I'd spent over four decades with, but I didn't. I hadn't listened to the little things. All I'd seen was the big things and often those things are what I imagined his life was made up of.

If we're honest, we do this to each other all the time. We look at surface things.

The way someone looks on the outside. Their body language.
The words we hear them say when we're in conflict.
The places and experiences our past has brought to the relationship.

But what we don't see or hear or even experience are some of the most important pieces of that person's puzzle. Those are the pieces that will connect us on a deeper level if we pay attention. Pieces that will give us compassion and understanding when our friendships or marriages go through difficulties.

I'd love to read a portion of my journal.

I sit quietly listening to the clock tick as time passes. I'm not concerned about the rushing or the hurrying of life. His razor sitting by the couch, reading glasses next to the daily bread, these are the little things I need to remember.

A thank you spoken by one whose hands are marked with the passing of sacred time, dishes no longer visible and floors that have been swept clean by a man who tries his best to serve his family while struggling with the memories of a sick emotionally distant mother.

Portraits on the walls lovingly hung with patience, shelves that hold books stained with his sweat, windows and doors bolted shut, protecting us from the cruel world.

Now, decades later, I hear them, little feet running down the hall calling out his name, Papa. I see him as he wrestles with them on floors covered with the dirt of our lives. Together we watch the closing of their eyes and the beating of their hearts as they drift off to sleep, a reflection of our children's faces.

Tears fall as I grieve the loss of the little things. The things I missed along the way. The conversations that now belong to my children's children.

Was I too busy to recognize that it was the little things that counted?

Call unto me, and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known. Jeremiah 33:3

There are so many things I did not know about the people I love because I was too busy to really listen and draw them out. I was so focused on my own needs. I'm working on being more present with my family now but it saddens me to think of the time I wasted.

The same goes for my relationship with my father God. He says in the Bible that if we call out to him he will answer and tell us great and hidden things that we have not known before.

I am finding that to be true, especially now. As I sit in his presence and just listen. As I look for the little things to praise him for. As I ask questions and search the scriptures instead of allowing others to hand feed me. I am growing and changing. I'm not perfect, Yet! But I have the hope that one day I will be like him and ALL His mysteries will be revealed to me.

I will know everything about Him!

And oh how this girl wants to know everything!!

Thanks for listening.

I'd love to connect with you. I'd love to hear your story. You can find me on Instagram @robinmarie59 and on my website at www.robinmarie.org where you will find transcripts of this podcast and my children's podcast "Different Isn't Bad"

Until next time remember, It's the little things that count. Open your ears to hear more. Open your eyes to see more and look beyond what you think you know to embrace the truth of what is.

See you next time.