

We go through life and we think we've got it. We have been growing, shifting, facing our periods of change. We got used to our habits, created a nice life for ourselves. But we may also have boxed ourselves in. And then suddenly we realize that there is more to life. It is calling us. And we break, or we allow ourselves to break, because we know there is no other way. We face the honest truth about ourselves, and it hurts. But what is waiting, is us stepping into what we were born to be and do.

breaking



The soulmate

Sitting here thirty-seven years after we first started this romance, thirty-something years after we became a more permanent couple, it seems strange that there was ever a time we were not together. Now it seems like none of the other men ever existed, like there really was only one and that is him. And since we got serious, I have not been sexual with another man – monogamy for that many years after using so much of my early life engaging in men. There has not been the need to. There was no way I would risk breaking the beautiful relationship we have. He is the symbol of male, of the masculine for me, my soulmate who transformed me, as I transformed him.

In the early days, the doubt was still here. Can we do this? Will this last? Can we reconcile the problems along the way? Will we have to part? It is a leap of faith to entrust yourself and all your vulnerability to someone else because you have no security that he will safeguard it and not use it against you later. You open the most inner parts of yourself and hope for the best. No relationship will grow if you are not fully present with this degree of honesty, and that's scary. You start a conversation and if you want pure love to shine, you stay present in that conversation. It will get tough along the way, as it did for us, but that's where real growth is. If we are able to work through that, we can embrace our individuality and stand strong together.

What we really worked on was how to be a new kind of family, a family that was not defined by what we grew up in and all the patterns and pain we had in us because of

The point of marriage is not to create a quick commonality by tearing down all boundaries; on the contrary, a good marriage is one in which each partner appoints the other to be the guardian of his solitude, and thus they show each other the greatest possible trust. A merging of two people is an impossibility, and where it seems to exist, it is a hemming-in, a mutual consent that robs one party or both parties of their fullest freedom and development. But once the realization is accepted that even between the closest people infinite distances exist, a marvelous living side-by-side can grow up for them, if they succeed in loving the expanse between them, which gives them the possibility of always seeing each other as a whole and before an immense sky.

Rainer Maria Rilke, 'Letters to a Young Poet'

that. We were among the first generations to define gender equality from the beginning of our family life. We had to figure out what that looked like. First all the practicalities: How would we share them? How could we each take responsibility? How could we raise our boys to embrace equality, being equal in our family and respecting and embracing the female?

We are always role models, so it was important that they saw us both do housework. I made a big point in teaching them to clean, wash their clothes and cook, and I am proud to I see them embrace all of that in their adult lives.

But there was an even harder battle that took time for us to engage in. How do we protect our family on an emotional level so that it's different from what we were raised in? There were pressures from grandparents about what family life should look like, expectations to us as a family, old patterns that came up. We insisted together on forming a new kind of family defined by our values. And more than anything, that value was about emotional openness. We did not want to hide the difficulties we had, we wanted to find a language to talk about what was going on inside of us and our kids. An empathetic emotional language that could grow us as human beings. That fight more than anything is why our love relationship is so strong. It grew from the insistence of honesty and transparency. It was not always easy, it hurt like hell to face all of who you are, and I did slam some doors when there were no words left in me. But the reward was priceless because it meant we were able to develop as independent strong persons on an inner level. We were able to release our hurts and grow on a deep personal level.

We were the eyewitnesses to each other's lives for all those years. There is nothing we don't know about each



other. We were there for the happy times and for the sad moments. We celebrated together and we cried together.

We were there when we each graduated, and when we got our first real jobs. We moved together and decorated a couple of homes balancing our different tastes and energies. We made the decision to be parents and we made those children, followed them growing in the womb and saw them be born, welcomed them into this world. We bought our first car together and our first house. We fought over money and balanced our relationship with them. We lost parents and cried over that. And we've had to remodel ourselves.

Then we got married. After many more years together and two kids. And it turned out to be the perfect time to get married. Where we knew without doubt that it was us. Not bending to rules that told us what to do before we were ready to do it our way. We turned it into a big family reunion with kids all around us and bathed ourselves in so much love.

Those years with babies seem like they were in a haze, like they passed by so quickly. Like we never really had time to be present in our lives. Because we insisted on also having two careers with ambition. Insisted on us also being adults with purposes. I don't have any regrets. We did our best and were there for our boys. Maybe just less for each other and even less for ourselves because there was no time for that. And there came a time we had to reclaim that.

There were difficult periods. Times with depression. Times with stress. Times with Saturday migraines. I remember coming home and just sitting in my car in front of the house looking in, wondering what mood to expect, and just dragging my feet going in. That small moment of just being myself before I had to take responsibility for



three other persons' lives. I remember enjoying traveling just to get a bit of space for myself at some hotel room in a strange city, to just see something new and drink some wines with colleagues. I also remember walking the beaches of Tel Aviv crying because I longed for my baby. And there was a time where I took a job far away and had to stay by myself in a summerhouse. I escaped and was in heaven two evenings a week for some years, because heaven was having no responsibility and doing absolutely nothing. And he let me do it and took care of the boys at home. I am not sure our marriage would have lasted if he had not given me the freedom to do all of this. To let me have time by myself and get wind under my wings. And every time I was in doubt, I asked my heart, and it always answered that love was at the core, and that I was still there willing to do the work to find connection again. There is no pink glazy picture. It is hard work. But it is meaningful to do the work, when love is still at the core.

The easiest and quickest way to grow personally is to have children and be in a family. You cannot stay there without growing, you are forced to look at yourself and learn – if you want love to keep being part of it.

When the kids start leaving home, you are left behind another person. There is a big risk that you will look at your partner and ask, “Who is this person? Do I really want to spend my life with him/her?” It is a breaking point. A moment of truth. Are we still meant to be? Are we willing and able to take the next steps and move forward together? If we don't ask ourselves these questions at that moment, we are not being true to ourselves. Marriages and relationships die and are reinvented many times in order to be alive. We can't use our relationships to hide as that will only cause pain and kill them in the end.

I consider myself extremely lucky that in my case we looked at each other and said, “Finally. We can be lovers again. We can move forward with our dreams.” We fell in love all over again. Had date nights, went out and had fun. Started to travel. Built up a new space at BIRCA. And made the move back to Copenhagen. We consciously said goodbye to our family life and started instating something new in our lives.

Love is the strongest force
in our world.

It is the shield to protect our
spirit: the masculine protects
the feminine.

IT was what helped me
survive my battered and
abused childhood

Tina Robinson