Seems like just a short time ago I was juggling, work, play and planning a wedding reception. Now we've tucked five years under our belt and feel pretty good about things. What we find fantastic about it is that we've been together for 16 years. That's a long time, I don't care who's counting.

I've found the secret to a good marriage is knowing when to listen and when to talk. That doesn't mean I always do it but now that it's in black and white, I guess he knows now, too.

The secret within the secret is picking your battles carefully. Is it really that big a deal he throws his washcloths on the floor instead of hanging them up? Well, yes, it is. However, it takes a lot less time to hang it up than tracking him down, showing him the error of his ways and going over the whole silly thing again. I'm pretty sure he heard me the first time and has made his choice.

I know there are things that I do that drive him absolutely crazy. For example: I generally have my stuff in a bucket at work but I'm a hot mess at home. Things aren't as tidy as they could be and I know, I know, I left a water glass on the headboard in the bedroom — again.

Sorry.

The last five years have been filled with challenges, good times, sorrow and love. Seems like a pretty good mix to keep you connected and humble at the same time. The last 16 years have had a whole lot of those and more. A lot can happen in 16 years — good and bad. What doesn't kill one of you — or both — makes you stronger and closer.
Here is some marriage advice from one of my faves, John Tesh:

— Follow the 5-to-1 rule. Studies show that the happiest couples do 5 positive things for every negative one. That's because we have a negativity bias. Which means bad interactions weigh more heavily on our minds than good ones. So you need far more good things in your relationship, to counteract the occasional bad thing. So, for every eye roll, throw in 5 smiles, shoulder touches, or compliments.

— Family expert Stephanie Coontz says that husbands and wives should both work at least part-time. Why? In areas where 70 percent of married women work outside the home, the divorce rate dropped because sharing household chores boosts couple satisfaction. On the flip side, Coontz says couples following the old-fashioned marriage model, where the man works and the wife stays home, are less likely to feel satisfied and more likely to get divorced.
Rats. Guess that means no bon bons and soap operas for me. Oh, well. C'est la vie.