

# **I said “I Love You” Before the First Date (And Other Fun Facts About My Marriage)**

*As of May 30th, my wife Kayla and I have been married for two whole years! Look at the big brains on us! In lieu of a sappy Facebook post, I decided to share 24 of the most interesting facts about our marriage, one for each month we've been married..*

In March 2014 Kayla was living in Nashville. I was living in Chicago. On March 25th, I asked her out, telling her I was coming to Nashville for Spring Break anyway (I wasn't). Our first date was to be April 13th. In the meantime, we talked every day through texting, phone and Facetime. By the time April 13th rolled around I knew she was the one I wanted to marry. Before the date I met her on campus and we sat on a swing and I told her that I loved her. I'm sure people thought (and think) that this was crazy. But she didn't run away and she married me anyway.

While we dated and were engaged she lived in Tennessee and I in Chicago. She is from Sesser, IL and I am from Tookeydoo, South Carolina. There was a stretch of five weekends where we were together but in five different places. At one point during that stretch we walked into a Target and I thought, “I have no idea what city I am in right now.”

Kayla and I were long distance from March 25, 2014 until May 7, 2015. In that time we traveled 40,000 miles to see each

other via car, plane and train.

Within the span of 15 months in 2014 to 2015, Kayla finished getting licensed to teach in Tennessee, started dating me, performed several shows as Maria in a production of *The Sound of Music*, ran a half-marathon, graduated college in Nashville, got a teaching job in Hendersonville, moved to Hendersonville, started her first teaching job, got engaged to me, planned a wedding, applied and took new tests to be licensed to teach in Illinois, resigned her job in Hendersonville, got married in Sesser, moved to my small apartment in Chicago, joined a new church, moved into a bigger apartment with me in Chicago, got a teaching job in Chicago and started that job.

I am 14 years older than Kayla. I am one of the youngest grandchildren on either side of my family. She is one of the oldest. As a result I have a first cousin that is 54 and she has a first cousin that is 8.

We got engaged on Saturday night, November 1, 2014. That night USC played Tennessee in football. Two of my brothers were at the game and could not hear me when I called to tell them I was engaged because the stadium is so loud. The Gamecocks blew a 14 point lead in the last few minutes and lost. (Not that I associate that game with my engagement or anything.)

After 3 years of being together my wife knows all the random phrases I will say out loud and she often will say them before me when she knows I am about to say them. For example, if someone mentions chicken wings, she knows I will say, "TOMMY LIKEY, TOMMY WANT WINGY" from the movie *Tommyboy*.

During our wedding and reception there were several subtle references to *Seinfeld* and *Harry Potter*. We did not want to distract from the reverence of the ceremony by making them overt but true fans knew them when they saw or heard them.

Kayla and I do not celebrate Valentine's Day but instead celebrate several of our anniversaries that are significant to us (the day we got engaged, first date, etc.). Included is March 6th because it was a date before we got together where I asked her a personal question over Facebook PM and her answer was so transparent and spiritually deep I said, "I have to ask her out." Only took me 19 days to do it.

In two years I probably have done the majority of the cooking but she has absolutely done the majority of the bug killing.

For her first birthday after we got together I gave my wife a Belle tiara and recreated the scene in *The Big Bang Theory* where Sheldon gives Amy a tiara to make up for being selfish.

I was so old when I got married that a man in my church, who had prayed for years for it to happen, gave Kayla a hug the first time he met her. I've never seen him hug anyone else in 15 years of knowing him.

During our first year of being married I was taking Kayla to school and a man with mental health problems jumped in our car

when we stopped at a stop sign. He wanted me to take him somewhere but I could not understand him. I kept telling him to get out and that I'd call for help but he would not so he rode the rest of the way with us to school and then got out.

My favorite random moment from early in our marriage was on Good Friday in 2016 when we were at her parents' house. I was upstairs doing something unimportant and I could hear her downstairs playing the guitar and singing Good Friday and Easter hymns in English and Spanish.

I've never beaten my wife at *Scene It Seinfeld*. But she refuses to give me a rematch of the rematch of the rematch.

If it weren't for Facebook, I am positive Kayla and I never would have gotten together. And in the words of Kramer, "That'll make you think."

I have always hated wearing jeans but my wife wanted me to wear them so she bought me some to go out on nice dates. So I would wear jeans on the nice dates and then come home and put on some comfortable khaki pants.

After a few months of marriage I put on 40 pounds and the jeans didn't fit any more. We didn't buy any new ones.

I laugh boisterously and fall on the floor quite often but the only time I've seen my wife do it was during an episode of *Parks and Rec* where Christ Pratt as Andy Dwyer ad libs a

line when Leslie is sick: "Leslie, I typed your symptoms into the thing up here, and it says you could have 'network connectivity problems'."

Marriage teaches you how self-centered you are for sure. If we are home and my wife says something from another room and I can't hear her, I get mad at her as if it is her fault. If I say something from another room and she doesn't hear me, I get mad at her as if it is her fault.

Probably the silliest fight we have had was recently when going to church and I asked if she wanted me to drop her off at the door or not, since it was a little cool outside. She said, "It's up to you," which means, "It doesn't matter". But I got mad and told her it was her decision and that I refused to decide it. But I really said that mumbling under my breath. And she asked me to speak up and so I said it very sarcastically. We both entered the church quite mad. Thankfully my wife is abnormally gracious and apologized quickly, even though it was my fault.

Speaking of mumbling, my wife's first trip to South Carolina gave her the chance to hear the Cannon men speak in our own personal garbled vernacular that only we can comprehend. My own mother can't make it out but we understand each other just fine. If you have ever heard Jeff Foxworthy talk about words in the South, you have an idea of what it sounds like: "How's ya mama an em?" "Aight." Sometimes when my dad and brother Jeremy have a conversation I'll translate for Kayla.

Occasionally, my wife will tell her story of fitness and

health by posting a picture with comments to social media after an insane 30-40 minute workout. Sometimes, if you look carefully in the background, I'll be on the couch eating a whole frozen pizza from Aldi.

I really do love my wife very much and I cannot get over how much better marriage is than I even dreamed. I am sure it will get harder (with kids, maybe?) but right now the great moments far surpass the frustrating ones.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, KAYLA!