

marriage licenses. I have done pre-marital counseling for hundreds of couples considering marriage. With this experience of conducting pre-marital counseling and weddings, I have seen with my own eyes how marriage enormously shapes the lives of the couples who choose it, as well as the lives of their families and friends. Marriage changes everything, in ways unmatched by many other choices in life. With this in mind, I take the pre-marital counseling very seriously, with an intense focus on whether the couple communicates effectively so they can be more successful with the momentous choice of getting married. I draw upon my own committed relationship with Mark to provide examples of how to stay together for better or worse.

5. I love Mark, and he loves me. We want the same things that straight couples want when they choose marriage, no more and no less. For over eleven years we have lived by the vows that in our role as pastors we ask others to make to each other at weddings, but we cannot express those same vows in a legal commitment of marriage. To give one example of living by the vows, when my Dad developed a serious long-term illness, all of the kids got together and decided that we would take turns caring for Dad in our own homes for two-week periods. That way Mom would have several breaks during the year and be able to rejuvenate. Mark supported me just as any married spouse should, and likewise helped with the care when Dad was staying with us. Dad viewed him as he would a son-in-law. Mark's support is one example of what I think of when I consider what the marriage vows mean. But we are blocked from getting the legal status of marriage that would clarify to the world that our relationship should be treated on the assumption that the serious marriage vows are being honored.

6. It is insulting that I should have to explain why we are like any straight couple in terms of the importance of choosing marriage, and should be treated equally, especially when a straight

couple could be together for one day and get married.

7. Mark and I have made a commitment for a lifetime, and we want that commitment to be reflected in a marriage, which best expresses the level of our particular commitment. Marriage may not be for everybody, but it is what we choose.

8. On June 17, 2002, Mark and I went to the office of the City Clerk of Union City, which is the appropriate marriage licensing office for where we reside. We requested a marriage license. At the time we made our request, each of us was over the age of eighteen, not married, and not adjudicated mentally incompetent or infected with a venereal disease in a communicable phase, and we were accompanied by a witness over the age of eighteen and were prepared to tender the fee of twenty-eight dollars (\$28). The clerk responded to our request by saying no, explaining that the clerk's office was not allowed to give licenses to "same-sex people."

9. Attached to this affidavit is a true and correct copy of a photograph of Mark and myself.

10. I hereby declare, under penalties of perjury, that the facts stated in this affidavit are personally known to me, and that they are true.

Dennis Winslow

Sworn to me this _____
day of September, 2003.

Notary Public