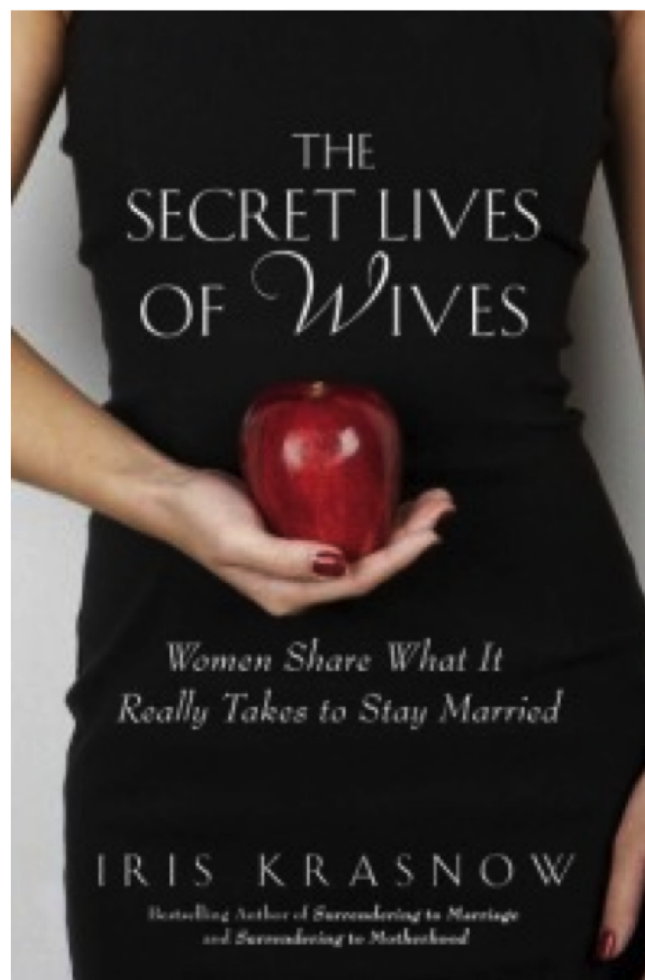


# The Secret to Staying Married



By Marianne Beach, [GalTime.com](http://GalTime.com)

Ever wonder the secret to staying happily married? Why some people make it look so easy, while you're feeling like you're in a struggle for your life? A new book, *The Secret Lives of Wives: Women Share What it Really Takes to Stay Married*,

rounds up a diverse cast of happily married characters who have the tenacity and audacity to make their marriages work.

We interviewed the author, Iris Krasnow, who calls her book “an antidote for divorce”, and asked her to spill her own secrets of wedded bliss.

**What made you decide to write on this particular topic?**

Marriage can be hell, we need to know that truth, and not be fooled by the gauzy myth portrayed throughout much of modern history – that a wedding is a ticket to perpetual bliss. After reading this book, every young woman will know that there’s no happily-ever-after, there’s happy, there’s sad, there’s heaven, there’s hell.

You do throw a dish once in a while and hope it misses your husband’s head. You do storm out the door in your bathrobe some mornings and perhaps call a divorce lawyer on your cell phone while driving around the block. You may loathe your in-laws. It can be disgusting to share a bathroom. Alas, then there’s the peace and the contentment that comes with knowing you don’t have to date anymore, that you can count on someone, that you have found a partner to be by your side while you navigate child-rearing, your parents’ illnesses and the woes of the world.

I love my 23-year imperfect marriage that has produced four perfect sons – that’s when I don’t detest it!

**You call the book an antidote for divorce – tell us what that means.**

The Secret Lives of Wives is THE book to pick up if you feel like you’re on the brink of divorce. You’ll read stories in here of cheating and lying and frustration and even emotional abuse. Still, many of these wives in those situations have weathered the storms with guts and tenacity and come away with better marriages than ever.

One of the big problems with the myth of happily-ever-after in marriage that has prevailed for decades is that brides and grooms go into the institution believing that getting hitched is going to fix their lives. They believe there's a gold standard marriage in which the man and the woman become soul mates, that they become twined as one. My book delivers the raw and real truth: There's no gold standard marriage toward which we all should aspire. Couples who seem blissful and hold hands all the time and call each other "sweetie" may be flinging pots at each other at home. No one knows what goes on in a marriage except the two people in it.

And that's good news! That means you get to write your own rules, create a marriage that's based on individual needs and desires and not feel like you have to surrender to pack mentality. I interviewed a wife of 30 years who swings with other couples! Do I want her marriage? No. Does it work for her and her husband? Yes. Who are we to judge? You'll hear plenty of other juicy strategies and secrets that are hardly status quo, but they have helped wives stay in long marriages and have it both ways: A committed marriage and adventures in uncharted territory. People get divorced often because they're bored or frustrated with a perfectly good spouse. Lower your expectations: Don't expect someone else to make you happy, you must do that for yourself, and this book shows you the way!

**Talk a little bit about the women you interviewed for this book.**

They're an awesome and assorted cast. They were rich, poor, black, white, Muslim, Jewish, evangelical and old hippies. They were diverse in backgrounds and experiences, yet they share this common and significant trait. All the women in *The Secret Lives of Wives* are determined to make their marriages last, and some of them are sustaining their relationships in conventional ways and some of them need to be naughty once in a while.

I'll tell you about one of favorite stories in this book that really speak to the resilience displayed on these pages. Beth's husband routinely told her she was fat and ugly and when they argued in the car, he would pull over to the side of the road, open the door and push her out. This went on for years. She was beholden to him with three small children and no job of her own so she stuck it out. That's until one day, when her kids were older, she got really smart, really angry and decided she had enough. She started losing weight, got a job, started to stash her money away and began to hatch a getaway plan. Then one night when he was belligerent, she fired back. Beth told her husband that she and the children were leaving and if he kept acting like an ass, he'd be a sad and lonely old man without any family ties. She spewed all the pain and anger she'd stored up during the entire course of their marriage. And, well, he crumbled. He cried. They talked. Over time he realized he didn't know how to give or receive love because of the cold family he was raised in.

Beth and her husband on that day were re-born. They spent evenings together, talking and drinking wine. They started to have great sex again; hot, hot lovemaking. They even texted during the day about sex. "My kids would die if they knew what their parents are doing at night!," she said. She's one of the heroes of this book.

**If you could only give one vital piece of advice to a wife – what would it be?**

At every stage of your marriage, make sure you have your own work and projects that are yours alone. Stay engaged in YOUR life. The happiest wives I've interviewed over a 30-plus year journalism career have their own sense of purpose and passion and adventure outside of the home. It's a cliché, but true: Get a life! The first question I ask every woman who writes me about her dissatisfaction with her spouse, is this: "What are YOU doing to make your life better, richer, more exciting?" No one can make you happy in the long run, that

must spring from within.

**There are a lot of women struggling with their marriages right now. Is there hope for them?**

If Beth can turn an ass into a prince and turn a lousy marriage into a steamy love affair at midlife, most women can make their marriages succeed. We all hit periods of malaise in long-term love relationships. Often there's an eggshell-thin line that separates love from hate; there's even a very fine line that separates staying married from initiating divorce.

After reading this book, I believe that most wives will find strength and wisdom from the stories about older women who have pushed through waves of sadness and rage and are now deeply grateful that they have loyal mates at their sides. Life is tough. Our parents die. Our children grow up and leave home. I love knowing that my husband, Chuck, who watches too much hockey and doesn't talk enough, is loyal, predictable and wants nothing else than to keep our family intact. For better or for worse, and yes I've thrown a dish or two, we've been able to stay married and create a safe harbor for ourselves, for our children, for their children.

The book is available Monday 10/3! Connect with Iris on: [www.iriskrasnow.com](http://www.iriskrasnow.com)