

forum

local business

Reginald "Reggie" Rodgers is managing director and his wife, **Martha J. Ross-Rodgers**, is a managing member of R.R. Enterprise, which markets Rodgers' Banana Pudding Sauce

MARRIED BUSINESS PARTNERS MANAGE STRESS, CHALLENGES

We have been married 33 years. We are partners in marriage and business. We are so ingrained in our business ventures that topics related to business are most often the focal point of nearly every conversation.

Because the business is our passion, we may begin discussing a nonbusiness topic, but somehow some aspects of the business are intertwined into the conversation. Operating a business can be consuming, but for those in entrepreneur marriages, you know the additional stresses and challenges that come with the territory.

Those stresses and challenges can enhance or destroy your marriage and business. Below are two proverbs that we abide by. These proverbs might help entrepreneur marriages thrive and offer food for thought for couples who are considering starting a business together.

A ship with two captains sinks.

In an entrepreneur marriage, someone has to be the decision-maker because a ship cannot have two captains. In our food business, I am the decision-maker.

This does not mean that I disregard Martha's opinions. This means that I consider her opinions; however, with the information given me, making the final decision is my responsibility. Because of Martha's strong personality, this is difficult for her at times. She realizes though, that in any endeavor, two unyielding people with a captain's mindset can cause a business to fail.

Present a united front by doing the three C's: compromising, collaborating and communicating.

A house divided against itself cannot stand. Constant or unresolved conflict can eventually cause the dissolution of many entrepreneur marriages and businesses. This is why spouses in an entrepreneur marriage must present a united front by doing the three C's: compromising, collaborating and communicating.

Note that a united front does have benefits. One benefit, for instance, is the comfort of knowing that you have someone who understands the business aspects. Taking care of business, for instance, sometimes will have to go before pleasure. It is not a matter of if this will occur, but a matter of when it will occur. When it does occur, you would prefer not coming home to an angry and resentful spouse.

If you have to meet with clients or work on a project until the wee hours of the night, most often your spouse is working alongside you. At the very least, your spouse should understand; therefore, this helps to alleviate complaints such as not enough time spent together. Presenting a united front by sharing and working through problems together to find viable solutions can bring new insight and creativity. Without a united front, the house will eventually be divided.

Being in an entrepreneur marriage is not for everyone. Marriage is difficult as is, and being in an entrepreneur marriage brings additional challenges. Despite this, it works for us.

Reach Reggie Rodgers and his wife, Martha, at reggie@rodgersbananapudding.com or www.rodgersbananapudding.com.