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### Summary of How I Learned to Love Football

In the article “How I Learned to Love Football”, Felisa Rogers asserts that her ability to change her outlook on football was the catalyst for an improved marriage. Growing up in a home where there was no interest in sports, contributed to the fact that she never really learned to like football or even understand the rules of the game. Rogers claimed that she never was competent in sports or PE, but often pretended to be interested just to keep up her social status. She acknowledged that her marriage to an avid football fan hit some turbulent times when she did not want to hear about football. She reported that financial concerns and family problems also contributed to the discord in their marriage. Only after coming to the realization that football fans actually had a camaraderie that gave each person a valid opinion, was she able to begin to understand her husband’s interest in football and improve her relationship with her husband. This article suggests that an interest in football changed the relationship of this marriage. In my opinion, it wasn’t necessarily the fact that the author became interested in football that made the changes in this relationship. I believe that the basis of this article shows how important communication is in a relationship.

Felisa Rogers suggests that her relationship with her husband suffered because she had no interest in football when they were courting and first married. She couldn’t understand the amount of time he spent thinking about football. She notes “You think you know someone. Then you discover that he squanders 80 percent of his available brain power thinking about Brett

Favre” (532). Felisa asserted that his interest in football drove her crazy and she stopped paying attention to him. Ultimately these attitudes lead to a strained relationship between them.

Rogers is surely right when she points out that her disinterest in football probably contributed to the strained relationship in their marriage. Her family background did not help her to be able to understand the sports world. She acknowledges that her family did not care for sports. In fact, she writes her parents felt that “football and baseball were the province of Neanderthal types who didn’t know the difference between Carl Jung and Carlos Castaneda” (530). My own experience in life has made me realize that family attitudes and interests often are the foundation that helps to define an adult’s personality and that this is often a critical part of how we react in our relationships later in life.

There are often many other factors that can cause problems in a relationship and I contend that it is very possible that the lack of interest in sports may not have been the biggest cause of discontent in this marriage. There were several other issues that may have caused the relationship to be strained. The couple had encountered tight finances, the loss of a pet and a grandparent, car repairs, and health issues with other family members were problems that occurred. When families encounter stresses such as these, simple things that would seem minor are often blown out of proportion. I believe that while sports may have been a factor in the breakdown in their relationship, I also believe the other issues that were happening in their marriage actually complicated their ability to communicate.

Rogers suggests that it was only when she started to look at how her husband reacted to all of these pressures that she realized she needed to focus more on some of his interests. He had a very difficult time with the financial problems and came very close to a break down. She suggests that her observations of how his expression became more animated when he began to

talk about football caused her to begin to listen more closely to him. This created a bridge that opened a way for them to communicate about something that wasn't focused on their problems. It encouraged her to begin to look at the person he had become in their marriage and see how this interest had influenced the person he used to be. She claims that this interest was the impetus to helping to create a better marriage.

Though I concede that Rogers wrote this article based on the idea that her interest in football was the reason they were able to change their relationship, I question if the interest in football would be the only reason their marriage changed. My own experience in relationships makes me realize that stressors such as finances, death, and health issues are often very difficult for couples to deal with. A common interest may be a good way to start to bridge discontent in a relationship, but an even greater factor would be the ability to learn to communicate with each other. As Rogers asserted it was when she started to listen to her husband that the relationship changed. According to Rogers, "It was as though by listening I was affirming some part of him that was safe from the cold realities of survival" (534). Communication involves being able to send a message and then being willing to stop and listen to the communication partner to see how they received the message and how they felt. This involves making sure that the communication partners are respectful and accepting of others ideas and opinions. I contend that the reason this relationship changed as the author listened to her husband and expressed interest in football was because she opened up and began to use good communication skills that showed him she respected him.

Rogers celebrated the fact that her marriage was improved as she became more interested in the subject of football during a troubled time in their marriage. She reminds us that we may often need to look beyond our own interests to begin to understand another person in a

relationship. I support the idea that finding a common interest may be a vehicle for couples to actually begin to bridge difficulties that may arise. I argue that an even greater factor in helping to overcome differences in a relationship lies in the ability to communicate with each other.

Communication forms a basis for couples to give each person the respect and understanding that they need to be able to express their own opinions and ideas. I recommend that couples looking to improve relationships would benefit from further research into the art of communication.

Work Cited

Zinczenko, David. "How I Learned to Love Football." *They Say/I Say: the Moves That Matter In Academic Writing*. Ed. Cathy Birkenstein, Gerald Graff, and Russel Durst. New York: W. W. Norton, 2012. 391-393. Print.