

Laughs will keep us together

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The title's your tip-off: "You Say Tomato, I Say Shut Up" isn't your typical marital how-to, even if it is subtitled "a love story."

But how many marriage guides are written by a couple of cutups? We speak of Annabelle Gurwitch and Jeff Kahn, comedian-writer-actors who've been married 13 years yet can't sit together on a plane — which partly explains why she flew into town from LA this week in first class, he in coach.

Somehow they've managed to produce one child and this hilarious, occasionally heartbreaking book. Sure, their pals Ben Stiller and Judd Apatow blurbed it ("So funny because it is so accurate," says Stiller), but why take their word for it?

Here are a few highlights (and lows) from the couple's conversation with The Post — a dialogue they'll continue tomorrow night with a performance at Joe's Pub.

THE SECRET TO TOGETHERNESS: Stay apart!

HE: Everybody talks about "intimacy." You know what? Intimacy isn't always good.

SHE: Yeah, keep a little mystery. There are some things you don't want to know. I don't go on Jeff's computer. I don't look at Jeff's phone. Once I friended Jeff on Facebook and found all his friends were women and saw his flirty status updates. I had to unfriend Jeff.

HE: I'm very flirty.

SHE: We operate on a "don't ask, don't tell" basis. It didn't work for the military, but it works for us. There's too much sharing! We make boundaries.

HE: Boundaries? She just leaves! She goes to New York for three weeks. Who knows what she does there?

SHE: The boundaries are flexible. There's something lost when you can reach each other instantly. I'll get a text from Jeff — "Where's the TV remote?" — when I'm out of town somewhere.

HE: Well, she hides it.

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?

SHE: We're not kidding when we say Jeff's the romantic one. There's a framed copy of our wedding invitation on our kitchen wall, so I can remember the date. For Valentine's Day, Jeff got me an iPod Nano engraved, "Don't worry, I'll program this for you."

HE: Me? I got nothing.

SHE: I forget. I'm just not that person. But I've got a great earthquake kit if we ever need to evacuate.

SO WHY MARRY?

HE: I was going to have a lot of sex.

SHE: And how has that worked out for you?

HE: It hasn't. I thought it would be fun and romantic to be married to the woman of your dreams.

SHE: I'm gonna sound like a buzzkill but I slept with everyone I ever met.

HE: That's not true!

SHE: OK, I was a romance refugee — it wasn't about sex, but companionship. Jeff won me over with his idea that we could have a family together . . .

HE: What she doesn't remember is what she said to me when we were dating: "If you don't want to get married and have kids with me, then get out now." And I thought, Wow, that's a lot for the first week of going out! I guess I'll throw in my hat.

PARENTING: Let the contest begin

SHE: I had a rule that I didn't want anyone to give Ezra (their son, 12) any toys that turned into guns. I'd stay up all night, cutting off the little guns from his toy soldiers.

HE: She didn't get that thing about all boys wanting to play with guns. The first thing he built from Legos was a gun!

SHE: Finally I gave in. It really is fun to shoot a nerf gun. Though it hurts when you get hit in the face. We have a rule, no hitting in the face.

HE: She's stricter than I am about homework and TV. I'm more laissez-faire.

SHE: Jeff will say, "It's not TV, it's sports." Or, "It's not TV, it's 'The Simpsons!'"

HE: When she said no TV, no video games — I thought I'd married an Amish person!

SHE: Someone asked us once, "What do you do if your child walks in and sees you having sex?" What's important here is, "Congratulations — you have a child old enough to notice and you're still getting laid!"

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS (that drive us crazy)

SHE: He's like Stalin behind the wheel: Other drivers, pedestrians, squirrels — you name it, he'll honk at it.

HE: Because I'm driving with you, that's why! She calls on my phone to start a fight, then hangs up. That drives me insane.

SHE: What? I don't know what to say to that.

HE: Also the way she treats my espresso machine — like it's her coffee bitch! It's covered in coffee grounds and old soy milk. She does laundry and leaves it in the dryer for three weeks. How can you do that?

SHE: Jeff can't stand the way I load the dishwasher. He has to reload it . . . If we could have two houses joined together by a small passageway, that would be ideal, but we can't afford it.

HATE WILL KEEP US TOGETHER

SHE: We always say, "It's not that you like the same things that draw you together, but your dislike of the same things." When we watched "Crash," we looked at each other and said, "I hate this movie!" at the same time and walked out!

HE: If I ever wondered if I met my soul mate, that night I knew it. While everyone else was weeping and loving that movie, the fact we hated it and shared it is so funny and perfect.

SHE: We often hate me together. We hate our marriage together often, which is good, because if one of us loved it and one of us hated it, that would be confusing. But this way it's healthy! I do feel being married to Jeff makes me a better person.

HE: Which compensates for the fact that being married to Annabelle has made me a worse person!

SHE: You were too good, Jeff.