

The Building Experience

(Submission copy)

Appears on page 37 of *Super Singles, Activate!: Testimonies to Inspire and Uplift the Single Woman.*

My name is Carmen L. Fletcher and I am a graduate of Clark Atlanta University with a degree in Public Relations. I am currently unemployed, but actively seeking employment and writing on the side. I have been in a beautiful, challenge-filled, and growing relationship for the last four years.

Over the past four years we have experienced some of the greatest joys and hardships. For the last two years it has been a financial struggle that affected us both mentally and spiritually. This struggle led to sickness, frustrated unnecessary arguments, depleting happiness and faith. But as we enter in to our fifth year of being together, we walk together in confidence and joy.

As we continue to grow in our relationship we remember to love unconditionally to the best of our ability. If the love is real, one should be able to love the other at their best, their worst, and their in between. At one point in our relationship, I saw him floundering in his life **regrettably** thought about leaving him. I chose to stay because I realized that is was a moment of fear and that was not of God. A few months later we found ourselves in the longest and hardest challenge we have ever had to face. But because we loved each other through it all our relationship is stronger than ever. We yelled and cried, but we also laughed, prayed, and held each other enriching each other's strengths bestowed by God. One should not suffer unnecessarily. Do not take *all* hardships as a sign of building a successful relationship. If the season is too rough without ANYTHING (the situation, the love, the bond, the spirit, or finances) getting better then it is time to cut the rope and build a bridge in to the future.

Since we all face challenges, sometimes we have to pick what is worth fighting for and what is not. Ladies here are some no-no's: fighting *every day* about the EXACT same thing, you will NEVER move forward and be miserable. Picking a fight with your significant other just because *you* have an issue. Fighting about every minute thing (silly habits, routines, etc.). The devil's tongue is wicked and slick and can work through you or others to jeopardize your blessing. Fortunately, I have not experienced the overly petty fights in this relationship. But unfortunately I have lashed out and caused an argument because whatever insecurity or issue I was currently experiencing. However when your companion is a true not "churchin" Christian, they know something so powerful that just may save your life. Forgiveness. Here are some examples of a good battle: Selfishness, Infidelity, Withheld Anger, Trust, Spirituality, Abuse, Laziness, and Untrustworthy actions with finances. Understand what is meaningful enough to fight for and not waste time or energy on something that will not matter in the next minute, hour, or day.

When it comes to spirituality with your companion do not be afraid to share it. If the man is for you, it is imperative to understand your relationship with God and theirs. If they are lacking in their faith or vice versa then that is not a sign to run. Take it as a growing experience and grow with your significant other. The relationship with God must be strong to withstand what the world may bring to you. While in the midst of our financial troubles, I began to lose faith. But God sent me this man to keep my head up and pray for and with me to get stronger. I am blessed with **true love**. Love God and love a man that loves God.

There is indeed a time for everything under heaven as it says in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. There is a time to plant your seed for a new life and a time to uproot it. There is a time for love and war and a time for hate and peace. In order to continue building yourself and your companion follow the theory that was shared with me by my best friend and lover Rashad. "Life is hard. Live harder. Love is hard. Love harder." And that ladies is the God's honest truth!