H olywood would wish you like your husband wakes up every morning and suddenly he does not know you. Not even himself.

For many women, it’s something we usually see only in the movies. But when it actually happened to Beth, a 32-year-old expatriate from the Philippines, it did change her entire marriage life— for the better Beth and Richard, a 34-year-old Filipino expatriate, have been married for over 10 years and have been residing in Doha since 2007.

On December 24, 2011, something unusual happened to the young couple. “I remember seeing him sleep in the couch. Actually, he was just trying to get a nap, after coming back from work, around 8am. I noticed that he was already asleep. But he was staring blankly at one corner. I asked him whether he was awake. He didn’t know who I was. He didn’t even know his name. He could not remember anything. It just seemed as if he was like a Completely different Richard. Worsened and unhappier with this new experience, Beth formally brought Richard to the hospital. “When the doctor asked him what his name was, he said he didn’t know. He also could not answer when asked about his age. But his medical records showed that everything was normal. And there was no problem at all. Finally, the doctor and his case was caused by extreme stress,” Beth adds.

According to Beth, Richard suffered from a rare form of amnesia due to severe stress for almost two days. But if that was irony, being in that moment, it was hard to tell. His story could be ended by a sudden attack of memory loss. “It’s more of a severe stress,” Anthony Kassab, senior neurologist at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) Dr. Stuart Grant, a trauma expert, Richard, who has never had a single accident nor a head injury or had ever been in a serious collision or had ever been in a serious accident can be excluded. Richard’s amnesia was caused by extreme stress. The Mula couple celebrated Christmas at the hospital. “That was the beginning of our ‘two-day encounter with Richard’,” says Beth. “Today, the couple’s ‘two-day encounter with Richard’ is a testimony which is likely to be passed on to future generations. “We would want the people who will support you”. She said, “Our Christmas last year was different from the previous one. Since that experience, so many things have changed. We try to live in peace, even though we have tried to organise our time, to utilise your time to an optimum degree. But in the end, Beth has said that he had been having a normal life since the day-to-day functioning. It could lead to depression or anxiety disorders.”

She said, “If they’re unable to face the challenges and how they are too stressed, if they are unable to function socially within their home environment, they lose interest in going to friends because they feel too stressed. They lose appetite so they start to develop the biological and psychological symptoms of depression, they’re unable to sleep, because of stress.”

Advising residents on how to prevent stress, she said, “It’s a pity if you could not open up, if you’re going to think of it, you’re going to lose years of life.”

Many people may dismiss it as a thing of the past. But the old saying, “Behind every successful man there’s a good woman”, still rings true. And while feminism has been gaining ground and young women are becoming more independent worldwide, there is no dearth of women out there who consider devotion to their husbands as a noble role to play in their lives. For events and press releases related to Women’s issues contact Lani Rose R Dizon by email at qatar.editor@gmail.com or call (974) 44422077.

International Women’s Day on March 8 - a brief history

The official UN theme for International Women’s Day 2013: A Promise is a Promise: Time for action to end violence against women

International Women’s Day (March 8) was first observed in 1911 by the Second International Conference of Working Women in New York City. The date was chosen because it was the anniversary of a women’s rights convention that took place in 1857. In 1913, the first International Women’s Day was marked in France, the United States and Canada. In 1914, the first International Women’s Day was marked in the United Kingdom.

In 1975, the United Nations General Assembly declared March 8 International Women’s Day and the decision was adopted by the General Assembly on March 25, 1977. Since then, International Women’s Day has become a global observance to reflect on women’s rights and achievements and to recognize the role of women in development and social progress.

The conference declared a set of goals for the advancement of women and the conference called “the Platform for Action”.

The UN’s Programme of Action for the Decade of Women (1975-1985) aimed to achieve the following goals:

1. To bring about a change in the negative and harmful stereotypes of women and girls in education and training.
2. To provide equal opportunities for women and girls in education and training.
3. To bring about a change in the negative and harmful stereotypes of women and girls in politics and decision-making.

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