

Even fairytales come to an end

In all good fairytales the hero and heroine's love triumphs over adversity and it all culminates in that grand day at the altar, followed by those magical words "and they lived happily ever after".

If only things were as simple and clear-cut in real life. But alas, reality is not a fairytale, and our modern-day Cinderella and her prince often have a different reaction to the post-wedding period.

After the grand day, where they have been the stars of the show, married life together can seem a bit of an anti-climax. Yet they love each other and seem compatible, so why isn't post-wedding life more like the fairytale ending?

Take a moment to think about the process leading up to the wedding. There has been a long wait for the big day. Perhaps for 18 months you have expended huge amounts of energy and focus on the occasion and other things in your life have faded away.

Normal things in your life tend to be pushed into the background and neglected. It's exciting to have a project like a wedding to work on; many things to sort out and a hundred different choices to be made.

It's very easy for the wedding to become the sole focus of life, so when the great day is over it can be hard to pick up the pieces and resume the day-to-day routine.

You might have stopped playing squash once a week or not met your friends for coffee as much, and these activities need to be generated again because they have fallen by the wayside. And that's when post-wedding blues come into play.

It's important to recognise that we can get carried away with the whole pre-wedding preparation. That's why keeping up with some activities that are not wedding-related could be a saving grace, because it makes it easier to pick up the threads of your normal life.

It's also a good idea to talk about what will be happening in your lives in the months after the wedding, and perhaps making sure you have some special activities planned.

Pre-marriage education can be a help in giving you a reality check on what to expect after the gown and veil have been packed away. It can help you to explore issues, values and ideas about what marriage will mean to you, and also make you aware of any potentially sticky areas and how you might resolve them.

Another reason for post-wedding blues can be the simple fact that for most people, the living arrangements before the wedding are rather different from 30 years ago. Back then, you got married went on a honeymoon and then started living together.

Today most couples have lived together before marriage, so the practical side of marital life is not going to hold any special novelty for them. However, there is still a big emotional shift.

Marriage means something quite different; for many it is the serious end of living together with the escape clause.

If you're stuck in the post-wedding blues, allow yourself the indulgence of feeling a bit of let-down, because you have spent months organising this day and now it's over. Some people find the build-up so stressful that they are glad when the wedding day is over, while for others it's simply the best experience of their lives.

It's good to take the time to celebrate small anniversaries in the early days of marriage. Celebrate your one-month and six-month anniversaries as a way of building in special times to value your relationship.

If you nurture these early milestones, they are habits that will last through marriage, and this is important when things get a bit tougher further down the track.

Making time for celebrations is a way of building real value and respect and it can certainly alleviate any post-wedding blues for the real-life Cinderella and her prince.

Survival tips

- **Keep up some of your normal activities despite the focus on wedding preparations**
- **Acknowledge that there might be a bit of post-wedding let down and that it's normal**
- **Take time to celebrate and value small post-wedding milestone dates.**