

Chapter One

MARRIAGE

PREP

THE FIVE FOUNDATIONS



The Meaning of Marriage

While your wedding lasts a day, you want your marriage to last a lifetime! So why not prepare for your marriage as you do for your wedding?

Five words that spring to mind when thinking about good foundations for marriage are:

Partnership, Commitment,
Respect, Individuality & Love.

My husband wrote in his vows;

"Marriage is an invisible bow that ties you together, forever."

How beautiful is that mental picture?! This brings me to my first point - partnership.



01

PARTNERSHIP.

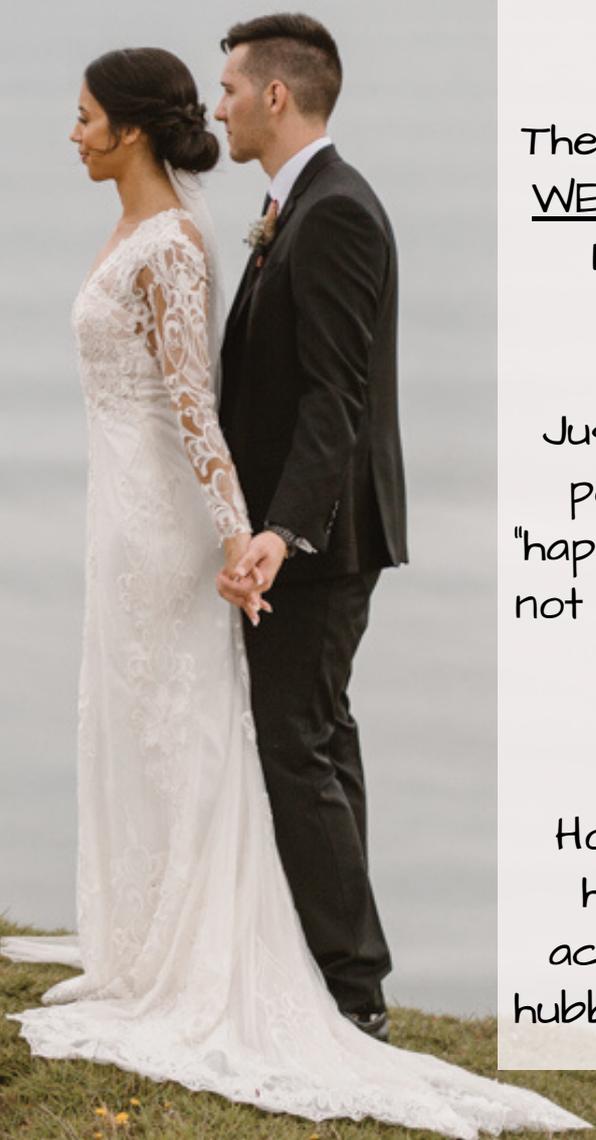
Marriage is the intertwining of two individuals who come with their own set of morals, experiences and baggage.

There is no more I in this relationship.. Only WE. If one of you falls, both of you fall. If you one of you thrive, you thrive together.

Just as importantly, marriage is a 50:50 partnership. I'm so sick of the phrase "happy wife, happy life". Does your husband not matter equally? Let's rephrase this to

"Happy spouse, happy house"

How can you expect to succeed or be happy if only one of your needs are accounted for?! Working together as a hubby-wife team sets you up for success.





01 | PARTNERSHIP

I want you to visualise yourself walking to meet your bride/groom half way down the aisle - both physically and metaphorically. Your wedding should symbolise the finding of "middle ground" & removing any pre-conceived expectations about what marriage should be like. It's knowing that you, and only you, are the co-creators of your future.

This comes down to knowing what you want and what you are both willing to bring to the table. It also means removing any toxicity or insecurities that will drag both of you down. It is going completely "all in" and investing your time & effort.

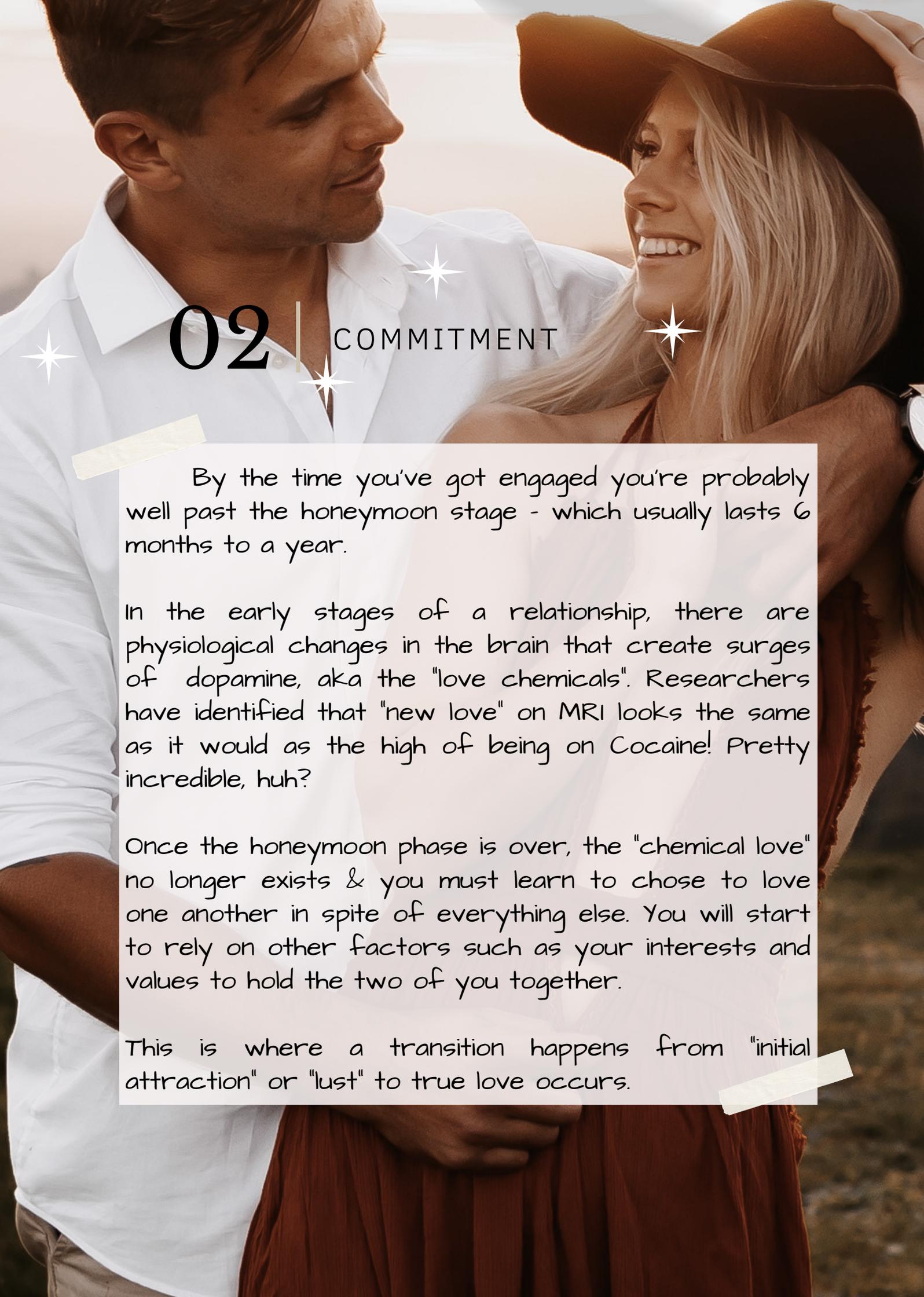
01

PARTNERSHIP

There is no dream without vision, right? For a moment, stop and reflect on all of the qualities you admire about other successful relationships. Without visualising what you want your marriage to be like, how do you expect to ever achieve it? With those features in mind, try picturing how you can imitate these attributes yourselves.

It's time to create your vision board! Take a moment to separately complete the next page and compare the similarities/differences. Then try to consider - how will you help one another to achieve our visions?





02 | COMMITMENT

By the time you've got engaged you're probably well past the honeymoon stage - which usually lasts 6 months to a year.

In the early stages of a relationship, there are physiological changes in the brain that create surges of dopamine, aka the "love chemicals". Researchers have identified that "new love" on MRI looks the same as it would as the high of being on Cocaine! Pretty incredible, huh?

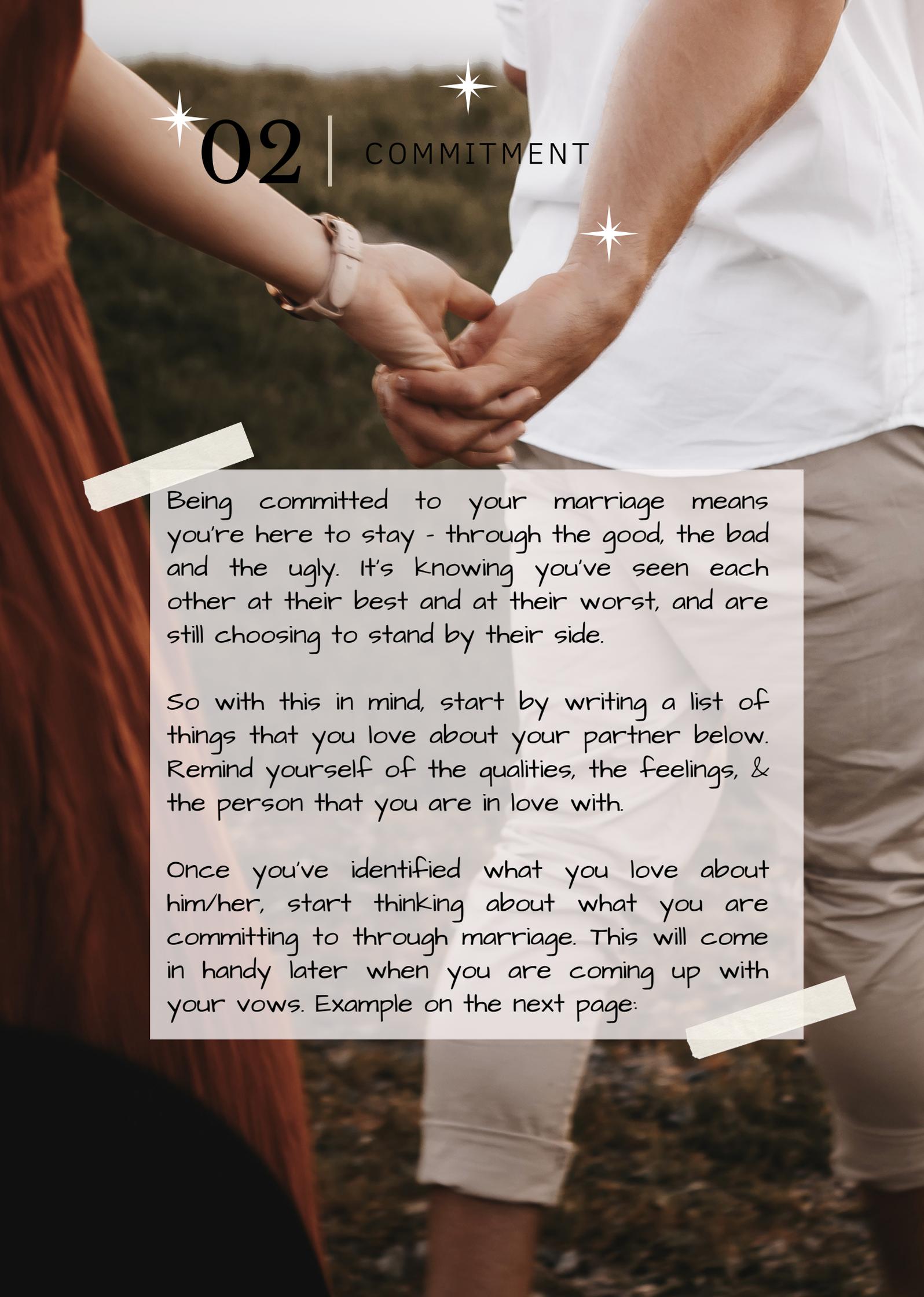
Once the honeymoon phase is over, the "chemical love" no longer exists & you must learn to chose to love one another in spite of everything else. You will start to rely on other factors such as your interests and values to hold the two of you together.

This is where a transition happens from "initial attraction" or "lust" to true love occurs.

Therefore, 'commitment' is knowing exactly who your partner is and what you're marrying into. It's choosing to accept them as they are and not trying to change or persuade them.

Marriage can't wipe away the past. Your insecurities, regrets, mistakes or opposing views all come with you to the altar. Marriage won't magically change you or the person you're marrying either. Which is a good thing - as that's the person you fell in love with after all!

Ultimately, marriage is commitment and having faith in the fact that you have both come this far in your journey together. You've built intimacy and trust. You've endured challenges and built resilience. You know exactly who one-another is and love them for it!

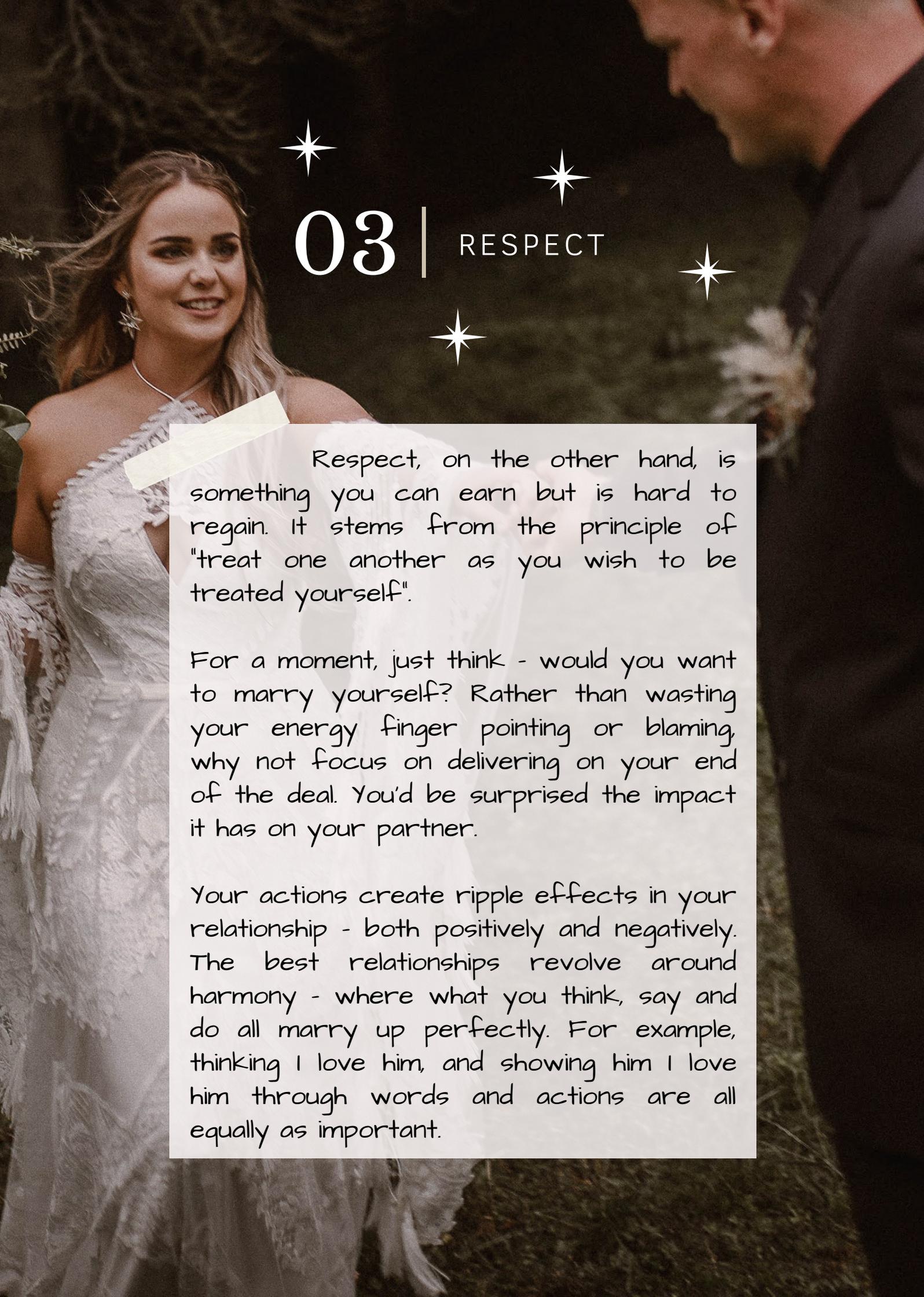


02 | COMMITMENT

Being committed to your marriage means you're here to stay - through the good, the bad and the ugly. It's knowing you've seen each other at their best and at their worst, and are still choosing to stand by their side.

So with this in mind, start by writing a list of things that you love about your partner below. Remind yourself of the qualities, the feelings, & the person that you are in love with.

Once you've identified what you love about him/her, start thinking about what you are committing to through marriage. This will come in handy later when you are coming up with your vows. Example on the next page:



03 | RESPECT

Respect, on the other hand, is something you can earn but is hard to regain. It stems from the principle of "treat one another as you wish to be treated yourself".

For a moment, just think - would you want to marry yourself? Rather than wasting your energy finger pointing or blaming, why not focus on delivering on your end of the deal. You'd be surprised the impact it has on your partner.

Your actions create ripple effects in your relationship - both positively and negatively. The best relationships revolve around harmony - where what you think, say and do all marry up perfectly. For example, thinking I love him, and showing him I love him through words and actions are all equally as important.

03

RESPECT

Furthermore, being respectful about what we say to others about our relationship or partner can make or break a marriage.

There should be some things you hold sacred between yourselves. Whether it's intimacy or finances, arguments or struggles, the stories we tell leave a permanent impression on others and opens the door for judgement/opinions.

Learning to solve conflict is another important tool to give/show respect. Being aware of your thoughts/emotions and being able to bite your tongue in the heat of the moment shows you care.

Acknowledging one another's point despite thinking that they're wrong is another sign of respect. While we tend to want to resolve conflict or find solutions, sometimes there really are none. At times your partner just wants to be heard, to cry or to hug it out.. So learn to listen, o agree to disagree and give them the time and respect they deserve will be key.



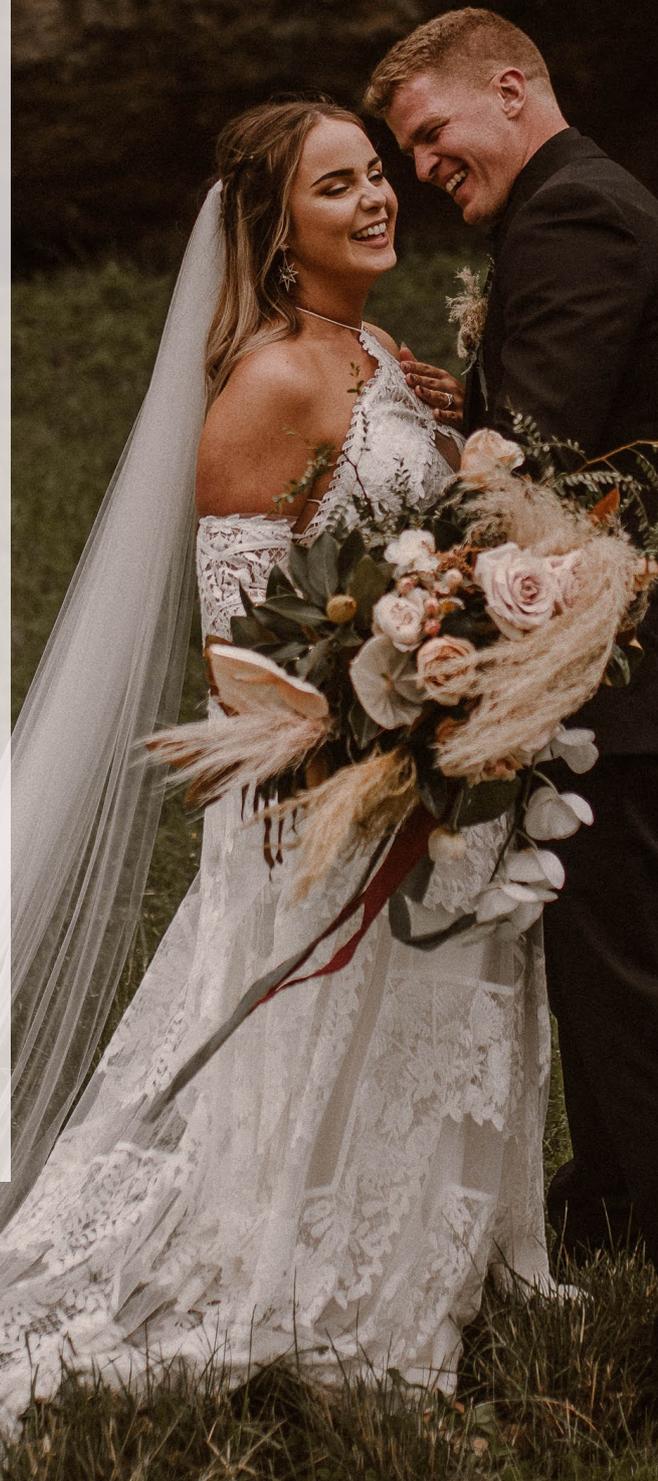
03

RESPECT

Within the realm of respect comes expectation-setting and roles. Will your roles change pre/post marriage? For example are both of you earning? Is there a baby on the way? Are you moving into your first home together? While roles will change throughout different phases of your relationship, learning to share the roles will be crucial.

Whether it's as simple as household duties, relationship roles or things you've always believed or done. There will be times you work as a team and times one of you has to step up.

Now is a good time to discuss your views about the roles that both of you play in the relationship, and if there are differences of opinion, use this chance to hash out any conflicting ideas



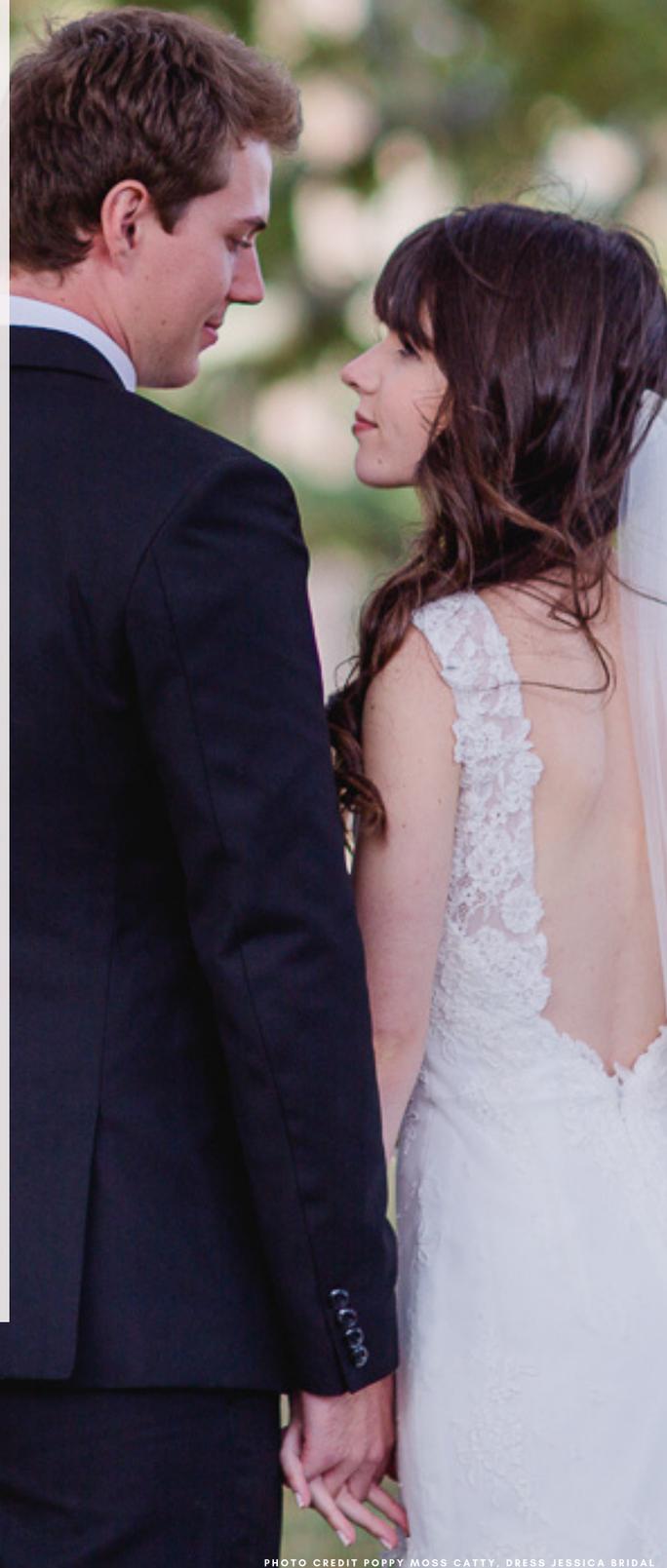
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INDIVIDUALITY

A sense of freedom and trust stems from a solid relationship, and is arguably one of the most important features to a long-lasting marriage. As per the quote "Love rests on two pillars - surrender and autonomy", our need for togetherness exists directly alongside our need for separateness".

It's all about finding the delicate balance between companionship and individuality. It's having time to miss one another and to thrive in all aspects of your life. And it's not about setting boundaries or restrictions to restrict our partners' independence or make them feel trapped or isolated.

Human's crave individuality, so allow your partner to be their true, authentic self. This is where the above practise of values/goals-setting becomes so important. You should want to support one another to achieve their goals, both separately and together. This is what makes us feel fulfilled in life and on track!



Tips to enhance individuality

01

It's healthy to encourage him/her to spend time with other people. Showing you trust them with their friends will draw you closer together. Plus it gives you a chance to miss one another!

02

Being "seperately together" means it's important to have your own time and 'spaces' at home. Whether it's a man cave or in the garden, you should have a place you can go when you need some "me" time.

03

How we behave and portray ourselves when our partner isn't around is very important. Set boundaries, be honest, and don't give your partner reasons to feel wary of your actions.

04

Focussing on achieving our own goals helps bring us a sense of achievement and life purpose. Not to mention, prioritising your partners interests/values makes them feel equally important.

05

Relying on your partner for happiness will not work in the long run. Happiness is an inside job - so do what makes you happy first, only then you can you be happy in your relationship.

06

You can't love him/her if you don't love yourself, so do those things that make you feel good about yourself. YOU should always come first in the relationship.



05

LOVE/CONNECTION

Relationships function at their best when we understand one another, and learning to speak the same language is the best place to start.

How often do you touch or kiss your hubby/wife-to-be? Research shows that daily physical touch promotes lasting bonding, attachment and connection with our loved ones. Hugging for just 10 seconds releases oxytocin - the "feel good hormone", all the while keeps the physical, emotional and spiritual connection between you alive.

It's important to know that women and men see intimacy from two different perspectives - otherwise known as the feedback loop. While males "have sex to feel loved", women need to "feel loved to have sex". Hence why learning to speak the same "love language" becomes extremely important.

05

LOVE/CONNECTION

First, I want you to think of your relationship as a hot mug of cocoa. As positive "love" experiences flood in, our mug keeps getting "topped up". Very soon it gets full, or starts overflowing, keeping the deep sense of "oneness", connection or unity.

Contrastingly, negative experiences or lack of "love top ups" in the relationship mug makes the level drop. The fuller your mug, the happier you feel - in your relationship and in everyday life. To feel love we need to keep pouring into one another's cup!

Filling the "love mug"

E.g. trip away together,
physical affection
or a birthday present,



Things that drain the "love mug"

E.g. unresolved conflict, lacking intimacy or communication



LOVE LANGUAGES

There are 5 main love languages, and everyone gives and receives love differently. They include:

Physical touch - which is the feeling of closeness or unity through physical acts i.e. non verbal gestures.

Words of affirmation includes acts of love through words or verbal/written communication.

Quality time may include having each others undivided attention or doing things together like sports or date nights.

Acts of service refers to gestures you make to show your partner you care or selfless acts you do because we love them.

Gift giving highlights that you are thinking of your partner while you are apart and wanted to bring them back a souvenir to show them this.

Take your love language test in your wedding planner to see which is your dominant way of showing/feeling loved. This will teach your partner how to keep pouring into your "love mug" for years to come!