



Roz and Michael White

Ted and Sophia O'Brien

Allan and Barbara Pease

Clinton Power

John Aiken

Dr. Rohan and Dr. Sophie Poulter

Jo Desmond and John Smeaton

Matt and Karryn Thiele

Jo Wilson with Graham Sharp and Jacqui Clarke

# WORDS OF WISDOM

INFLUENCERS ENCOURAGE, MOTIVATE AND FACILITATE GREAT RELATIONSHIPS

WORDS: JOANNE WILSON

Just couldn't get enough of the great Australian Relationship Influencers I've featured in recent months. They've either encouraged, motivated and facilitated great relationships, set a fine example of being in one – or both!

I'm finding it difficult not to call back all those human dynamos to observe and bask in their wisdom over a glass of wine or two. They might find that a little creepy, so I've taken the liberty of producing a summary of their "best of" words of wisdom.

**Constantly engage in little rituals that connect** advises John Aiken, psychologist of Channel Nine's *Married at First Sight* reality TV show.

Successful couples make time or prioritise each other in activities such as morning coffee, walks or a debrief together in bed at the end of the day.

It's the little things that count!

**Beware of virtual infidelity** warned Clinton Power, fellow relationship therapist and one of my mentors, Clinton Power & Associates.

Many of us hold our screens as an extension of our arm.

They're rarely out of sight and can lead to the temptation of secret flirting or sexting with someone outside your relationship.

**Be an open book with each other** decided the charismatic, motivational speakers and authors Barbara and Allan Pease when they first met.

They also affirmed their relationship would always be on an equal footing together financially, as business partners, lovers and as parents.

**Shower and wear deodorant** was an important and funny tip from humble Pastor Matt and Karryn Thiele from Immanuel Lutheran Church.

Are you retaining the best version of yourself for your partner that allured them in the first place? You both deserve a fit, healthy and enticing partner to come home to.

**Prioritise the parents** was also great advice they were given.

"Keep your relationship strong and your children will be secure.

"Never let the children divide you or think that they come first.

"Their security comes from knowing that you two are strong.

"When you get home, kiss each other first before giving the children attention."

As we struggle to avoid producing the next "entitled" Generation Z, it's not uncommon for couples I counsel to have lost each other as they gratify their children first.

Inherently, they are the most demanding

and noisiest, however succumbing to this too often can compromise the foundation of the family – the love between the parents.

**Relish and learn from the example set by role models:** Jacqui Clarke, marriage celebrant, and accompanying husband roadie, Graham, both enjoyed incredible parental influences.

It is such a gift when we've had the benefit of watching fine relationship and life mentors.

My fervour for counselling is fuelled by the positive ripple effect couples instil in their children.

My greatest desire is for couples to be comfortable to disagree and show future generations how to navigate these challenges with kindness, patience and respect.

**Establish the ritual of quality dinner time as a family:** Joanne Desmond, Channel Seven news presenter, and husband John Smeaton, owner of the Hampton Chair Co, have established habits that ensure research proven benefits for their children.

These include improved speech, better mental health and healthier eating habits. One outstanding ritual is regularly eating together at the table.

It's their favourite part of the day and allows them to share thoughts and opinions while having a good laugh which facilitates an open and honest relationship with their four boys.

They know nothing is off-limits and they can talk to them about anything without judgment.

**Compatible work ethic:** A theme that shone through from Roz and Michael White, IGA proprietors.

Together they've honoured friendship while having children and honouring the same tenacious, hardworking ethic in a highly competitive industry that has produced three IGA stores on the Sunshine Coast with expansions on the way.

**Choose your life partner wisely** recommended Ted O'Brien – federal Member for Fairfax and wife Sophia, lecturer in law at Sunshine Coast University.

Ted is grateful he got it so right, however emphasised this single biggest and impacting decision that can change the course of the rest of your life!

I love the way Sophia uses technology to their advantage to ensure Ted receives cute updates from their daughter and son while he's away in Parliament.

Another "gem" from Ted's Mum was, "Think of marriage as a shiny, golden ball. Every harsh word or thoughtless gesture creates a dent or a scratch that may be hard to erase".

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