

Finding words of wisdom from marriage mentors

Turning to the wise



RELATIONSHIPS
With Joanne Wilson

I COULD be wrong, but if you're an Aussie bloke, you're unlikely to ask for directions. If you're in a relationship, thinking about marriage or already married, you're both even less likely to ask for guidance. That is, unless things go bad.

Despite all the trends, media and hype, people do still care about marriage, and spend at least some time worrying about how to go about the whole lasting committed relationship thing. As the 'unmarried's' are constantly bombarded with failed marriage statistics, I'd be worried too. If our parents and any neighbours or friends didn't last the distance, it certainly warrants hesitation.

Unfortunately, we're very much in an individualist society and many have bought into self-sufficiency. I want to put it out there - there's no shame in cutting your own mistakes short by not repeating someone else's. Imagine if we sought guidance in the first place from people who know what they're doing and doing it! I wonder if our around one in three Australian divorce rate would improve?

Many of you are probably now thinking marriage counselling (hi!). It's definitely a great way to go. I'd be lying if I said much of Australian society still seems to be running under the impression that it's only your responsibility to sort yourself out. Then there's the stigma that if anyone seeks help, they're a few cents short of a dollar. It's absolutely not true. Why isn't your therapist in your well-being phone contacts along with your dentist and doctor (like many Americans)? But such is the environment we live in.

Luckily there's more than one way to shear a sheep, and that's with the help of marriage mentors. In plainer English, people who are in successful, long-term, committed



PHOTO: PEXELS

relationships that you can model your own relationship on.

Now, I understand — there's a lot of unsolicited advice from many oldies. I think everyone knows at least one granny who has a word of wisdom or a saying for each and every single thing that happens in your life.

Marriage mentors are more like people who realise that life isn't always a bed of roses and relationships require a bit of watering and word pruning.

Even if you meet the most wonderful person in the world, your

relationship is still going to require emotional attentiveness for life. Newly loved up couples may think a good relationship involves calm seas; an experienced couple knows it involves good seamanship.

What you want out of a marriage mentor is fairly simple: be around them, bask in their relationship and ask for their "pearls of wisdom".

The idea is to seek out and surround yourself with couples whose relationships you admire. By surrounding yourselves with and watching how these couples roll, you'll start to understand their thoughts and feelings and emulate their behaviour.

You and your partner may well seek their specific advice on certain topics for support. Each mentoring relationship takes on its own style and personality. The amount of time couples spend together and the content they discuss can rarely be prescribed. Here are the key benefits:

■ **They help keep you on track.** They'll remind you how wonderful life can be when you have a loving partner by your side along with the life-long consequences of bailing out too soon.

■ **They will not allow you to sweat the small stuff.** These wise elders can help put things back into perspective on what is really important.

■ **They will put a mirror in your face.** Is your spouse always at fault? It takes two.

■ **They provide a positive spin on marriage.** These winners are defying the statistics and the world is a happier, healthier place because of them. They'll help you ward off any negative thoughts and encourage you to keep fighting for the relationship you most desire.

Marriage mentors can help you to design your own version of happily ever after.

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Whatever your life stage, my team at Wealth Directions can work with you to explore your goals and personalise a plan to help you reach them.

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