

## Marriage Week

## Golden couple shines a light on love



**RELATIONSHIPS**  
With Joanne Wilson

You're forgiven if you haven't heard of Marriage Week, however it's exactly ten years since its inception and starts tomorrow. With all the current discussion around marriage, I thought it remiss of me not to feature a few couples in the coming weeks who've not only lasted a significant distance but renowned for their inspiring relationship.

Meet Janice and Lester Neideck. They were married 50 years ago at the Methodist Church Maroochydore. Janice was just 18 and Lester was 21. Here are a few questions I posed to this beautiful couple:

**How and where did you meet and marry?**

Lester: Janice and I first met when she was 16 and I was 18. We were introduced by a mutual acquaintance on the corner of Maude Street and Aerodrome Road Maroochydore just outside my workplace. I was working as an apprenticed TV technician at a repair shop on Aerodrome Road and Janice's family lived just around the corner in Maude Street.

**What were the first things that attracted you to each other?**

Lester: It was love at first sight. Janice was my first love and still is. It took Janice two dates to come to the same conclusion. Aside from her stunning beauty, the thing that attracted me to Janice was her reserved quiet nature, simple old-fashioned country girl charm and not to mention her 1960s beehive hairdo!

Janice: What attracted me to Lester was not so much his good looks, but his unassuming nature and being respected.

Lester: Our first dates were attending the Methodist youth group Maroochydore. In the 1960s there wasn't that much to do around Maroochydore. Most of our dates were to the old fashioned Star Picture Theatre on Beach Road Maroochydore. The most trouble you could get into was having Mrs Comino shine a torch on your face trying to figure out who was rolling Jaffas down the sloping floor under the seats or throwing Minties from the back row! Sometimes we went to the speedway at the Exhibition Grounds in Brisbane. I had asked her to marry me on our second date. She said yes!

**Did you have children along the way?**

Lester: We have two sons aged 39 and 35, and one daughter aged 36. They have wonderful spouses and partner and we are blessed with four beautiful grandchildren. We are all very close.

**What has been the most surprising thing you've learnt about each other?**

Janice: The most surprising thing was his ability to stay calm in stressful situations, to keep sight of 'the big picture', and be treated with such love and respect. As in all marriages, we can become quite annoyed with each other, however we have never had a 'stand-up' yelling and screaming argument.

Lester: How Janice easily became part of my large extended family including seven siblings, as if she was born into it. I admire her ability to read the personality of others, empathise with their situation and offer friendly counsel. I also discovered she is an excellent cook.

**What has been the most challenging part of being married?**

Lester: We can't recall any real relationship challenges in our marriage. As with many marriages, we did have financial difficulties. Raising children, especially through their adolescence was extremely challenging.

Janice: After the teenage years, the love for our children and grandchildren grows deeper each day and our hearts burst with pride. My advice is never give up on them when they seem to be causing you grief in their early years.

**How do you keep the romance alive in your marriage?**

For us, the original passion of 'falling in love' matured and developed into a much deeper and lasting kind of love. As C.S Lewis wrote, "Being in love first moved them to promise fidelity: this quieter love enables them to keep the promise. It is on this love that the engine of marriage is run: being in love was the explosion that started it."

**What advice would you give newly-weds?**

It seems many young people today have a much higher sense of entitlement and independence than in previous years. Whilst we maintained different interests in life, the marriage vows 'two become one' are crucial and came naturally to us. We didn't need to work on this. We are interdependent not independent.

**If you could provide one line on your secret to a thriving and harmonious marriage, what would it be?**

There is a tendency for young people to put off marriage until they are financially secure and have all their ducks in a row. Being able to start married life in a new house is fine, however a



► Janice and Lester Neideck on their wedding day in 1967.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED



► Renewing their wedding vows 50 years on.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

house is not a home. A home is where the love of a family is, so don't put off marriage and children too long.

In March this year we renewed our marriage vows before God, along with now quite a large extended family at our golden wedding anniversary. Whilst I do realise that Christians do not have a guarantee on a strong and successful marriage, for us personally, our strong Christian faith has been a very large stabilising influence in our married life and raising a family.

Why not make your marriage or relationship a little extraordinary this week with some of my top tips found on the Marriage Week tab on my website. You can find a beautiful collection of similar inspiring couples in my *Pearls of Wisdom from the Thriving Thirties* book there too.

**WIN:**

For your chance to win coffee and brunch for two to the value of \$55 at Hungry Feel Eating House, Buderim, email Jo with how long have you been married and what is your secret to a thriving and harmonious relationship? Entries close Friday, September 15 at 5pm.

Joanne is a neuropsychologist and relationship specialist of TheConfidante Counselling. Email [jo@theconfidantecounselling.com](mailto:jo@theconfidantecounselling.com) or visit [www.sunshinecoastcounselling.com](http://www.sunshinecoastcounselling.com).