

Living happily ever after you say 'I do'

By LEE LITTLEWOOD
Copley News Service

Wedded bliss? In reality, it's more like this: While most married people will say (and the knot is satisfying, it's not blissful all the time. Married life takes work. Being successfully, happily married requires a combination of luck, love, understanding, respect and lots of give and take.

Going pinball, becoming a "we," does indeed require adjustment. After the age of wedding and honeymoon, what can you expect from marriage?

"No matter how close you think you are when you're friends, lovers or engaged, there's something about becoming a family that transforms the relationship entirely," says Bonnie Altschul, Ph.D., a New York psychotherapist and author of "The Angry Marriage: Reclaiming the Rage, Reclaiming the Love" (Hyperion). "Making an effort to understand and prepare you for the inevitable bumps in the road ahead."

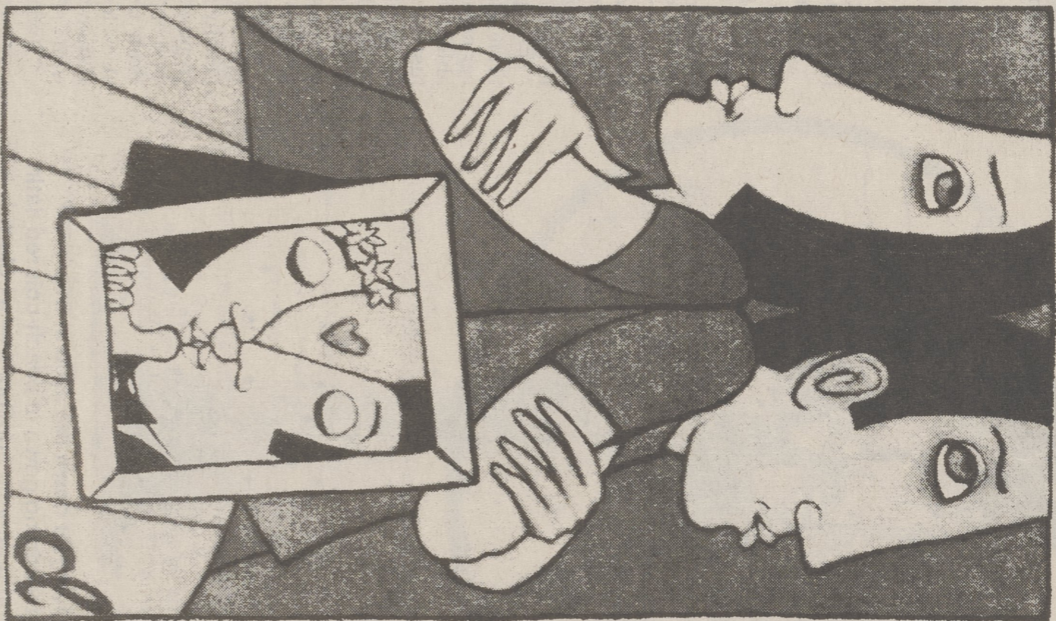
Here are some changes you'll go through following the wedding. You'll get domestic. Even if you've been living together, domesticity is much more serious when you're hitched: after all, now you share a home with a welcome mat that reads, "The Robins" or "The Radnisky-Domess." You'll have to learn to agree and compromise on financial styles and whether or not to throw out old particle-board shelves and hand-me-down La-Z-Boys. Consider your partner's tastes before wallpapering your bedroom in pink floral or covering every shelf with gold trophies.

You buy a home. With co-owner homeownership comes major responsibility. Though it's cool to wander your abode saying, "We own that window!" it's also serious when you've got to handle a mortgage and yard work. How do many newly marrieds handle house chores without becoming overwhelmed? By budgeting time each month for repairs, installing jacks, raking leaves and mowing the lawn.

Relationships with friends will change. Though you now really want them to, some friendships wither during marriage, while others grow. The biggest difference is that when you're married, you'll want to hang out more with other hitched pals. Most married couples love to check on how other married friends act, to see if they're experiencing the same ups and downs.

But it's also not smart to treat unmarried friends differently—they're still valuable people in your lives. You can stay close to all your friends by scheduling the occasional girls- or boys' night out.

*Going solo has an extra ben-



change. Now's the time to sit down and talk about how both of you want to handle your money. Unfortunately, there's no one-size-fits-all solution. The goal, says Heitler, is to balance independence and coordination. You could write all the checks while your husband does the bookkeeping on investments or you could have separate checking accounts. What's important is to stick to whatever arrangement you decide on.

In-law relations can be sticky. No matter how intrusive your mother-in-law may be (most father-in-laws aren't participating in the struggle for your spouse's soul), it's important to remember she's not your mother. Treat her with at least the same amount of respect and pleasantness you'd treat a co-worker. Try to maintain a sense of humor; this helps any situation remain brighter.

Sex and intimacy get better. Right, you say. What's better about it? For one, you don't feel like you've got to impress as much and you can simply snooze if you feel like it. As Heitler says,

"Although you lost the newness of discovery, you gain this really deep, incredible intimacy that you never had before." Your financial mechanics will

problems. Deciding if and when to have children. It's hard to stay happy in a marriage if you don't both agree on this one. One thing is certain, though: There's no right or wrong way to feel about possible parenthood. It's normal to feel anxious, excited, ambivalent or even scared when contemplating having children.

While parenthood is an enriching experience, there are many reasons, however, not to have children, such as because you're bored or lonely, because you want to save your marriage or please your family, because you plan on creating a genius or live out your fantasies through your children, and because you hate your job and are looking for something else to do.

"What to Do After You Say 'I Do,'" by Marcus Jacob Goldman and Lori J. Goldman (Prima Publishing), reminds readers that "if your marriage is on firm ground, you'll have plenty of time to work through the issues of child-rearing."

Their wonderful book would make a thoughtful wedding shower gift. The Goldmans' resource can help married couples ease into their lifelong commitment. Perhaps it's most vital advice may be that even five or six minutes you immensely with some minor pet peeve, kissing and making up, or listening and understanding, can bring you both closer together. Resolving differences takes time and patience.

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Registering for gifts helps avoid the guessing game

By PRISCILLA LISTER
Copley News Service

Wedding gifts are surely one of the great perks of getting married.

They literally are the icing on the cake, because even though someone accepted your invitation to join in the celebration, they are not absolutely obligated to send a gift.

"In general, everyone who receives an invitation to a wedding reception or to a small wedding in a hotel or home sends a gift," says Elizabeth L. Post in "Emily Post's Complete Book of Wedding Etiquette, Revised Edition" (Harper Collins). "An invitation to a church ceremony alone carries no such obligation. Neither does a wedding announcement.... People receiving an invitation who barely know the bride, or perhaps have not seen her in years, should feel no compunction in refusing it, nor need they send a present."

Still, wedding presents are to be expected, and the bridal couple can help their guests choose welcome gifts by registering at a wide variety of stores today.

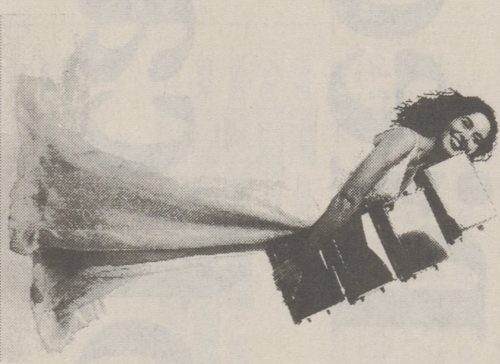
HELP YOUR GUESTS

Registering for gifts has become a wedding tradition.

"Registering is also a courtesy to guests - you spare them the time and effort of hunting for the perfect idea for you, as well as the possible disappointment of buying you something you don't want or can't use," say the editors of *Bride's* magazine in "Bride's Book of Etiquette" (Conde Nast Publications).

But wherever you register, do not announce any advance (re-)member: gifts are gifts, not obligations by listing the store or stores on your wedding invitation. "A shower hostess can note the store name on invitations, but you would never print it on wedding invitations," says the *Bride's* book. "Your mother, his mother and your attendants might also spread the word."

"Any mention of gifts, regist-



Listing your home needs in a gift registry helps gift-givers avoid duplicates.

and museums, hardware emporiums, gourmet supply stores - wherever their lifestyle or interests lead them," says the *Bride's* book.

"Since we thought you could only register at department stores and we had everything we needed to set up a household together, we didn't register," says Leah Ingram in "The Bridal Registry Book" (Contemporary Books). "I wasn't until months after we got married that we found out my husband could have registered at Home Depot and the music fan in both of us could have registered for our favorite CDs at Tower Records."

Registration can really aid out-of-town guests who may be able to phone the store where you've registered, choose one of your specified wishes, and have it delivered to you, instead of carrying it themselves to the wedding.

"Look into registering at a store that has a toll-free service so guests can do their shopping by phone," suggests (begin with) *WeddingBible's* (entitled) magazine. Many stores today have branches nationwide or even on-line registries and on-line purchasing.

Ingram's book also details dozens of bridal registry operations in specific department stores, specialty stores, home improvement stores, hardware stores and even unconventional stores.

REGISTRY DETAILS
It's perfectly fine to register at more than one store.

"By registering at more than one store, you're giving your guests additional options in buying you gifts," says Ingram.

And keep in mind a wide price range of possible gifts. It is extremely handy to register only for very expensive items, such as china settings that cost \$250 apiece or a silver pattern in which a fork costs over \$100.

"By all means, register for a few expensive things if you think someone might actually buy them for you. But be sure you vary your registry list so your graduate student friends and retired annu-

and unless alike will be able to find something they'd like to give and can afford to buy," says Ingram.

DON'T FORGET THANK-YOUS

For every present received, whether the bride has thanked the donor in person or not, she must write a thank-you note," says Post.

To be sure you thank every gift-giver, make your own registration list of all gifts received. You can even buy wedding gift record books that include stickers to assign numbers to each gift received, then listing the gift number with a description, giver.

WEDDINGFACTS

Setting the date

Numerous factors determine when the big day will be. Making both bride and groom happy is the main objective.

Consider getting married on the same day as your parents, grandparents or other couple significant to both of you. The anniversary of a first date, a famous date in history or the date the question was popped are good choices.

Plan the date according to your budget. If you are saving to pay for the wedding, figure the cost of the wedding and divide it by the amount of money you can save monthly. Consider your profession. April would be a bad month to get married. Students would be a good time for professors or schoolteachers, etc.

Most vendors will give discounts for non-Saturday weddings and for those occurring off-season. Holiday weekends are good if you will have many out-of-town guests. Professionals recommend at least a year to plan a wedding.

SOURCE: <http://pawweddings.com/WEDDY>

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