

# MARRIAGE

WHAT'S THE SECRET to a long and happy marriage? That's the question I sought to answer from those who achieved success and longevity in marriage. Is it just a lot of work and compromise or are some couples just made for each other? Is it a combination of work and compatibility? And how do people define a long and happy marriage? Is it a love affair, a functional partnership, something in between or something else all together?

Some couples described their marriage as a functional partnership, a lifelong arrangement for mutual benefit, while some others said their marriage started out as a love affair and evolved into a functional partnership. For a few couples the love affair was still evident as one couple in their eighties batted their eyes and smiled affectionately at one another while we spoke. It's part of the mystery of marriage.

Of the over three hundred people interviewed, seventy-four percent had been married only once. This does not disparage those who were married more than once because many breakups were due to various factors that will be discussed shortly. But it was those who managed to sustain a single long term and happy relationship that had the most light to shed on the subject. Of those married only once, eighty-three percent said they were happily married while seven percent said they were not and ten percent said it was fifty-fifty.

## **TOP TEN REASONS GIVEN FOR LONG AND HAPPY FIRST MARRIAGE**

- 1. Compatibility
- 2. Loving each other / caring / considerate
- 3. Being friends / having fun / doing stuff together
- 4. Working together to build a life
- 5. Seeing your partner as a good person