

FIVE WAYS TO ... MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR LUNCH BREAK

DIARY ENTRY

1 Making sure you take a lunch break is a good start. Schedule it in your diary.

SAVE TIME

2 Decide where you're going to buy lunch beforehand, so you don't waste time looking.

FRIENDLY DATE

3 Make lunch dates with friends. This will ensure you go and enjoy your break.

LEAVE THE DESK

4 Don't eat at your desk. The temptation to check emails, make phone calls and read reports will be too much.

RELAX AFTER MEAL

5 Take a walk, read a book or enjoy sitting in the sun if you finish eating before your break is over.

Lasting love secret

RELATIONSHIPS

Caroline James

FAIRYTALES often feature sweethearts who fall in love young and live happily ever after.

In real life, relationships are seldom quite that easy. Career ambitions and other people often spell the end of a youthful romance.

So why is it that some couples forge happy unions early in life and stay together until they reach old age?

Melbourne-based psychologist Meredith Brown says romantic relationships "can grow up with you", but both parties must place a high value on long-term commitment to protect the bond from myriad challenges.

"In today's fast-moving society, where everything can be upgraded, replaced or exchanged, it can be easy to forget the value of long-term relationships and the richness they bring to our lives," says Brown, who practises at LifeWorks Relationship Counselling and Education Services.

"Growing up, maturing and ageing together can create vibrant and mutually satisfying relationships.

"And a long-term relationship also allows you to develop meaningful rituals such as Christmas, enjoy regular holiday spots and share rewarding experiences such as grandparenthood together, making and sharing common friends and family throughout key life events and stages."

Brown says most couples face the following challenges on their way to "happily ever after":

■ **THINKING** you know everything about your partner.

Just because you've been together for a long time doesn't



Overcoming couples' challenges

■ Ensure you have some "own time" and individual pursuits. This refreshes your relationship and allows you to develop into your own person, Meredith Brown says.

■ Stay up-to-date with important things in each other's lives and be familiar with each other's worlds.

■ Keep any fighting fair and respectful by avoiding the "four

horsemen" – criticism, contempt, defensiveness and stonewalling. Brown warns these habits are predictors of relationship breakdown.

■ Acknowledge the value of the relationship and its history, celebrating the milestones.

■ Maintain respect, fondness and admiration for each other.

These are essential if a couple wants a happy future together.

necessarily mean you know everything about each other. Don't assume you do and don't get stuck in the past. You need to constantly adapt and update the construct in your head.

Recognise the person they are today, not the person they were when you first met.

■ **TAKING** each other for granted. It can be easy to slip into domestic routines, daily

patterns or work schedules that consume time and focus, to the detriment of your relationship.

Don't lose sight of your partner and the importance of your relationship as an entity in itself. Recognise your relationship needs to be nurtured, and even when life is busy, you can show appreciation, care, affection and respect for each other. Respect is fundamental for longevity.

■ **ASSUMING** the grass is greener elsewhere.

When you've been in a relationship for a long time, it can be tempting to romanticise what the alternatives may be.

Don't assume the grass is always greener elsewhere or on your own. Often it's not and such energies may be better invested in your current relationship.

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Kid's tale

Robyn Leach,
Croydon Hills

Our adorable three-year-old grandson Will has always been drawn to all creatures great and small. Many hours were spent on our beach holiday exploring the rocks and finding crabs. When asked what his