

# JUNE, GROON, MOON, SWOON

By ANN ROSEN SPECTOR

**H**ELLO, young lovers, whether you are . . . getting ready to walk down the wedding aisle.

Engagement party. Check.

Bridal shower. Check.

Bachelor party weekend.

Check.

Bachelorette party weekend.

Check.

Destination wedding so the party goes on for at least three or four days. Check.

Photos and videos. Check.

Matching table linens, party favors, exquisite floral arrangements (so what if the blooms have to be flown in from Tahiti?) The colors must be PERFECT), the BEST band money can buy, a cake that costs more than your parents' first car (wedding cake and groom's cake). Check.

Today's weddings are like Hollywood productions. They frequently require wedding planners to help with all the arrangements. What would happen if the chartrouse in the trim on the bridesmaids' dresses wasn't exactly the same shade as the leaves of the bouquets?

And, if you don't know what I'm talking about, you're the groom.

You must have noticed the wide variety of magazines with "Bride" in the title that are published every month. (There are really no equivalent versions for men, unless you count the limited sections in the June issues of *GQ* and *Esquire*.) It's her day, the chance to be the star in her own show. The day she's been dreaming about since she played dress-up, using her mother's half slip as a veil. (He hasn't been playing groom.)

As I recently told a prospective groom, "You're a prop. A lovely wonderful prop, but if you don't show up, they can substitute anyone in a tuxedo. Not that they would — but they could. At least for the photos."

Of course, he knew I was kidding. He's marrying a wonderful woman in July, and they're (sigh) in love, so what could go wrong?

The short answer? Everything. Our society focuses so much attention on the wedding, and so little attention on the marriage. For no matter how great the party, eventually the celebration is over, and the phrase "Till death does you part" really kicks in.

Negligees are sexy, but marriages are not only about gossamer and lace. Like much of adulthood, there's a lot of monotony.

After the party is over, someone will have to clean up, decide which gifts to keep and which to return, write the thank-yous — and that's before you start doing the laundry, buying groceries, paying bills and all the other chores needed to run a household and assume the responsibilities of adulthood. Life is primarily about the allocation of resources: time, energy, money.

None of this sounds like work that should be done by soul-mates, does it? Shouldn't they just gaze adorably into each other's eyes and just feel the end-

less love?

I love the idea of soul-mates. If I understand it, you've found the perfect person for you. The one who completes you, as if you were an IKEA bookshelf with just one itty-bitty part missing.

There are more than six billion people in the world. Yet most people find their one true soulmate in their own zip code. That's unbelievably fascinating. Even odd.

The most perfect person for you in the whole world lives in the same neighborhood, or goes to the same school, or works at your company. Why is that one person never living in Bantun, Botswana or even in Canada?

The other thing I don't understand about the soulmate mythology is why Liz Taylor, Jennifer Lopez and Ivana Trump have had so many. After every marital dissolution, they're able to find yet another perfect soulmate. I have trouble even finding matching shoes at Payless.

A woman in her early 30s told me she was now ready to settle down and find a husband. Did I, as both a psychologist and veteran wife, have any advice for her? Yes, I said, being quite serious —

"Lower your expectations."

"But I'm no longer looking for the perfect man," she said.

"Lower," I replied.

"But, he doesn't need to be..."

"LOWER."

Anyone married a long time knows what I mean. We may aim for the stars, but we live on earth. We need to get more grounded.

In the old days, say the 20th century, you proclaimed the permanence of love with monogrammed towels. Today, we

Carey's new husband branded himself with her name across the entire top of his back. Angelina Jolie did the same with Billy Bob Thornton, and you can see how helpful that was. No wonder that an emerging 21st century career is tattoo removal.

I may be old, but I can still remember my husband's name without having to check my own body. We, too, were married in June, almost 30 years ago, and have worked to make this marriage a success.

Of course, in a pinch, I just call him "Honey." ★

Ann Rosen Spector is a clinical psychologist in Center City.



Associated Press

After the party is over, someone will have to clean up, decide which gifts to keep and which to return, write the thank-yous — and that's before you start doing the laundry, buying groceries, paying bills and all the other chores needed to run a household and assume the responsibilities of adulthood. Life is primarily about the allocation of resources: time, energy, money.

None of this sounds like work that should be done by soul-mates, does it? Shouldn't they just gaze adorably into each other's eyes and just feel the end-

less love?

I love the idea of soul-mates. If I understand it, you've found the perfect person for you. The one who completes you, as if you were an IKEA bookshelf with just one itty-bitty part missing.

There are more than six billion people in the world. Yet most people find their one true soulmate in their own zip code. That's unbelievably fascinating. Even odd.

The most perfect person for you in the whole world lives in the same neighborhood, or goes to the same school, or works at your company. Why is that one person never living in Bantun, Botswana or even in Canada?

The other thing I don't understand about the soulmate mythology is why Liz Taylor, Jennifer Lopez and Ivana Trump have had so many. After every marital dissolution, they're able to find yet another perfect soulmate. I have trouble even finding matching shoes at Payless.

A woman in her early 30s told me she was now ready to settle down and find a husband. Did I, as both a psychologist and veteran wife, have any advice for her? Yes, I said, being quite serious —

"Lower your expectations."

"But I'm no longer looking for the perfect man," she said.

"Lower," I replied.

"But, he doesn't need to be..."

"LOWER."

Anyone married a long time knows what I mean. We may aim for the stars, but we live on earth. We need to get more grounded.

In the old days, say the 20th century, you proclaimed the permanence of love with monogrammed towels. Today, we

Carey's new husband branded himself with her name across the entire top of his back. Angelina Jolie did the same with Billy Bob Thornton, and you can see how helpful that was. No wonder that an emerging 21st century career is tattoo removal.

I may be old, but I can still remember my husband's name without having to check my own body. We, too, were married in June, almost 30 years ago, and have worked to make this marriage a success.

Of course, in a pinch, I just call him "Honey." ★

Ann Rosen Spector is a clinical psychologist in Center City.

★ ★ ★