

DAWN O'PORTER



“A relationship shouldn't be restricted by a set of rules”

Just before I married my husband, I made him sign a document with the following clauses:

- 1) You will not gain more than 20lb and still expect me to have sex with you.
- 2) You will wash up on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. On the other days, you will take me out for dinner.
- 3) You will tell me you love me three times a day and let me have sex with you on Thursdays at 10am, because that's my most receptive time.
- 4) You will not cheat on me, but if you do, you have to give me £500k.

OK, I didn't really, but say I had? Imagine designing your marriage before it starts, then signing a contract committing to what your fantasy of a good relationship will be. Sounds a little unhinged, doesn't it?

Well, it's a thing. It's called a 'Love Contract', and America is hot for it. Apparently, Mark Zuckerberg's wife, Priscilla Chan, had him sign a contract saying he'll spend at least one 'non-virtual' night with her a week. And if Michael Douglas cheats on Catherine Zeta-Jones, she gets a \$5million bonus on top

of her \$2.8million-for-each-year-of-marriage divorce settlement. I guess this was meant as a deterrent, since Michael was an alleged sex addict, but still, imagine having that conversation at the start of a marriage. Doesn't it stink of mistrust and fear to you? I think I'd be in the, 'Look, I don't trust you, can we talk about *that*?' camp, rather than the, 'I'm so sure you're going to cheat, I might as well get some cash out of it' school of thought.

Of course, we all know about pre-nups for acts of foul play. They aren't new, but it's the more day-to-day stuff I find bewildering – 'lifestyle clauses', such as not putting on weight and weekly sex quotas. And it's not just married couples putting them in place. One American girlfriend had a clause in hers where her partner had to 'defend her to his mother', as she was sick of her derogatory jibes.

But isn't this all just putting a lot of pressure on a relationship? No couple is the same at the beginning of a relationship as they ►

HEY, LADY

This one goes out to Ellen Page. The Canadian actress who, after coming out herself a while ago, has become quite the gay-rights activist. I particularly loved her slam-dunk Tweet at a douchebag Texan governor who was quoted as saying being gay could be avoided. Ellen wrote, "Are you for real? @GovernorPerry". Unfortunately, he was ;/ #GOELLEN



◀ are over time, so why would you want to restrict yourself with a to–do list?

Relationships have ups and downs, that’s normal. Trying to legally bind it as ‘perfect’ is unrealistic.

Of course, the thought behind these contracts is to save rows and hassle further down the line, but I’d feel really stressed out if I knew I had to behave a certain way for ever and ever. Surely the real answer is good communication and being able to tell someone when you’re not getting what you need? You don’t need a contract to do that.

I’ve only been married for two years (together for six), so I don’t know the recipe for eternal bliss. But what I do know is we wouldn’t be as happy today if we’d started out with a set of rules. My husband and I were both fiercely independent, and despite moving in together very quickly, we were both adamant about our own ways of living. So, there was a total lack of compromise that resulted in constant tension. Yet, for some weird reason (I guess this is the love bit), we were unable to stay away from each other.

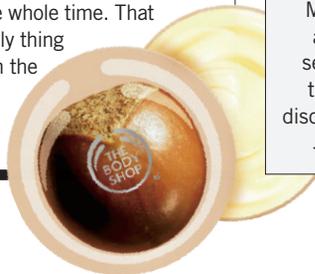
We are the best example for sticking with it you could imagine, and the reason is: we let nature take its course. We allowed ourselves to make mistakes, and it was only years into our relationship that we really knew what we wanted and needed from

I’m LOVING

After years of research, I’ve finally concluded the best body moisturiser of all time is the one I started with back in the ‘90s. The Body Shop Body Butters are bliss in a tub. Thick, luxurious and they smell delish. My fave is the Shea Butter. The search is over, it’s the best there is, and I should have just stuck with it the whole time. That might be the only thing

I stick with from the ‘90s, though.

fashion horror flashback



Auntie Twit

Dawn solves your problems (well, sort of) in 140 characters



@hotpatooties is it wrong to get really cross about wedding lists? All I can afford is a spoon, and that’s a rubbish present.

@holly_alexander I HATE THEM. I once got a good friend a cheeseboard. Screw the system and go rogue. Get what you want. Maybe just check it isn’t on the list tho!

@hotpatooties I need help finding some decent flat shoes to go with my wedding dress.

@josiecreates Easy, French Sole do a bridal range and they are really pretty. They’re good sturdy pumps, perfect for dancing all night.

@hotpatooties I’m an aspiring author and post my work on a Wordpress blog. How do I get my fiction/novels noticed (properly)? Help!

@sophie_bowns Good for you, you’re doing it all right. Most publishers are on Twitter, send them links, they do want to discover new writers. Just be polite.

In the NEWS

Fancy-dress shops are full of sexy nurse/police outfits – but in Russia, *real* policemen dress that way. Skirts have been getting shorter and shorter, and they even wear stilettos on duty.



But now the authorities are clamping down on officers who show too much flesh. Which I guess is bad news (and a genius deterrent) for the criminals who *liked* being arrested by ladies in miniskirts.

each other – freedom to be ourselves, but knowing we were indestructible at the same time. You can’t get that overnight.

Time taught us how to accept the things we didn’t like, to accept someone might not always do what you want them to do, and that that is perfectly acceptable. It taught us when it was right to storm out of the room, and right to sit down and talk it through. At the start, I think we both hoped the other would change to fit with our own ideals. As soon as we realised that doesn’t make for a happy relationship, everything improved.

A set of rules or preconceptions would have balled up that entire process for us. If we’d written a list of dos and don’ts before we’d worked out who we really were, they would have been all wrong. And that’s because the way to keep a relationship moving forward is to give it the freedom to grow, not to design it before it even starts.

Personally, I think love contracts could be more destructive than people think. We change too much to be tied in to silly clauses. Take me, for example: I’m never up for it at 10am on Thursdays any more. 8am on Fridays, on the other hand... ☺

What do you reckon? Tweet me @hotpatooties #GlamourMagUK

Love Dawn

Portrait by Matthew Eades. Make-up: Aimee Adams at Sixty One Productions. Hair: Tim Pateman at Phamous Artists. Dress Dawn’s own. Photographs: Rex Features