

## **Twin beds a path to bliss**

**By Ruth Ostrow**

I was particularly bemused last week to be at a conference where attendees were desperately discussing ways to stop themselves snoring for the sake of grumpy partners. Call me a rebel, call me a radical, but will someone please explain what on earth love has got to do with one bed?

Who made up that because you care about someone, even think the moon shines from their posterior, for eight hours a night you must be stuck in a small bed with one doona - in sickness and in health, in insomnia or somnia, in snoring, apnoea, bed-kicking, wetting, doona-hogging, elbowing or arm-flaying - till death do you part?

You must thereafter - because you are "in love" and married - share one main room called the living area; fight over the television and the toilet seat; travel together as if glued at birth; love all the same people or else fight continually about it; and monitor all comings and goings as if fused at the hip?

I'm not saying that such a practice doesn't work for some people. Clearly it does and clearly some people are blissfully happy in what could be regarded as co-dependency.

But it doesn't work for a lot of people who, sleep-deprived, privacy-challenged and hemmed in, choose divorce as the only viable solution. In fact, I often wonder why we even need to live in the same house. Why can't partners be neighbours?

Don't tell me it's bad for the kids. Many kids grow up under a barrage of arguments that could be stymied by a bit of breathing space.

In a bid to address the ever-increasing divorce rate, the British government commissioned a study into modern relationships called the DEMOS report, which canvassed different ways to love'n' live, including renewable options on five-year pair-bond contracts.

Meanwhile, young people are exploring unconventional ways to "wed". Several I know live in adjoining apartments or nearby semis; many are now embracing the Celtic Handfast - a pagan ritual where couples are bound for a period of time chosen by them. Pagans say this moving oath: "You cannot possess me for I belong to myself. But while we both wish it, I give you that which is mine to give . . . excluding my doona."

With most people still struggling to live by 2000-year-old biblical notions, I say forge your own path. In matters of love, one size does not fit all.

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