

Chapter1_Wedding

Armenia: Break Bread

Want a glimpse of your future spouse? Chow down on salty bread. That's what single Armenian men and women do. According to the custom, if you eat a slice of the high-sodium specialty — which must be prepared by a happily married middle-aged woman or your grandmother — you will hopefully dream about your husband- or wife-to-be. Let's hear it for carbo-loading!

Australia: Unity bowl

An Australian wedding ceremony might feature the tradition of a unity bowl. Guests are given stones and asked to hold them during the ceremony. At the end, guests place the stones in a decorative bowl that the couple will keep and display afterwards to remind them of the support and presence of their friends and family.

Bali: Finding harmony

Balinese weddings, called pawiwahans, are meant to generate harmony, and create balance, between the material and spiritual realms. The sacred ceremony provides a chance for the bride and groom to testify before the gods, creatures of the underworld, and their community. The ceremony also solidifies the couple's citizenship in their village. The ceremony includes gift giving, and a procession through the streets. The couple undergo a purification ceremony, to clear their hearts and minds of negative thoughts and energy, and are then deemed ready to be married, in view of all of their neighbors, family, and friends.

China: Bridal sedan and red Umbrellas

A traditional Chinese wedding features a full procession, with the bride escorted to the ceremony in a bridal sedan. Red is a powerful colour in Chinese weddings, symbolising boldness, luck, and love. According to tradition, the bride wears a red veil to hide her face, and her mother or attendant holds a red umbrella over the bride's head to encourage fertility and grow her own family.

Cuba: Showing them the money in Cuba

Since it is still a communist country, weddings in Cuba are nonreligious, civil ceremonies. Even so, they can be extravagant affairs, earmarked by interesting customs, such as the money dance. Meant to help fill the newlywed's coffers, this interactive tradition is also tons of fun for guests. After the formal ceremony's pomp and circumstance has been completed, men who wish to dance with the bride must first pin money to her dress. This (highly profitable) custom is also common in parts of the southern United States, Poland, and Greece. Here's advice for a happy marriage that couples around the world could use.

Fiji: Toothy treasure

Get that wetsuit ready. In Fiji when a man asks a woman's father for her hand in marriage, he must present his future father-in-law with a whale's tooth. A nice tie would be so much easier.

French Polynesia: Stepping stone

On the Marquesas Islands of French Polynesia, once the wedding has come to an end the relatives of the bride lay side-by-side face down on the ground whilst the bride and groom walk over them like a human rug. Just, ouch.

Germany: Searching for Ms. Right in Germany

In some small villages in Germany, grooms aren't guaranteed that their brides will make it to the altar on time—or at all. Kidnapping the bride is an old custom, beloved by pranksters, and friends of the betrothed. After the bride's friends kidnap her, the groom is tasked with looking for his one true love. The best hunting grounds (of course) are pubs. There, the locals might provide clues, provided they are invited to the wedding. If the invite isn't forthcoming, custom demands that the brideless groom pick up the bar tab—for the entire pub.

Ghana: Jumping the broom

According to the African American Registry, this joyful tradition, strongly associated with American slavery, has its origins in the West African country of Ghana. The broom was used to symbolize the sweeping away of evil spirits, and past wrong doing, by the bride and groom. Sometimes, it was waved over the heads of the betrothed couple. Other times, the bride and groom would jump over it at the end of the ceremony, and whoever jumped the highest, was deemed the head of the household.

Greece: A close shave

Taking the term "groomsman" literally, on his wedding day, the groom's BFF becomes his barber when he pulls out a razor and shaves his face. But the groom's day also has a sweet side: His new mother-in-law will feed him honey and almonds.

Guatemala: breaking a white bell

At a Guatemalan wedding reception, the mother of the groom breaks a white bell to welcome the newlyweds to the party. The bell, filled with flour, rice, and grains, is meant to bring luck and prosperity.

Indonesia: Got to go? Um, no

Spending the first three days confined to their home together sounds kind of sweet, certainly not a hardship for Indonesian brides and grooms — unless using the bathroom would require leaving the house!

India: stealing the groom's shoes

In a traditional Indian wedding, the bride's sisters play a trick on the groom by stealing his shoes once he enters the wedding tent. The groom must bribe the sisters to return his shoes before he exits.

Italy: Confetti

In Italian, "confetti" doesn't mean scraps of paper to be thrown, but rather sugary treats, particularly sugared almonds, that wedding guests receive as favours at the

reception. Confetti used to be thrown at the bride and groom, but have been replaced by coriandoli, the tiny scraps of paper.

Ireland: Better keep those feet firmly planted

In Ireland when the bride and groom are dancing the bride must keep both feet on the floor at all times. Irish folklore states that if they don't, evil fairies will come and sweep her away. We imagine that this might make dancing slightly difficult...

Jamaica: Black wedding cake

At weddings, Caribbean countries often serve a dark cake made from dark fruits and rum. The same cake can be served at Christmas, and has a lot in common with a traditional Christmas fruit cake.

Japan: Sake-sharing ceremony

In the beloved Japanese tradition of san-san-kudo, the bride and groom take three sips each from three flat sake cups, after which their parents do the same, bonding the families together.

Kenya: spitting on the bride

In Kenya, as the freshly married bride and groom leave the village, the father of the bride spits on his daughter's head and chest so as not to jinx their good fortune.

Korea: A goose for the bride

According to Korean tradition, grooms give their new mother-in-laws wild geese or ducks. The monogamous animals represent the groom's pure intentions and loyalty to his bride. In a more modern reincarnation, brides and grooms exchange wooden geese and ducks on their wedding day as a sign of their commitment.

Lebanon: Party on!

In Lebanon, the wedding celebration, the Zaffeh, gets off to a rowdy start with music, belly dancing and shouting at both the groom's and bride's homes courtesy of the couple's friends, family and occasionally pro dancers and musicians. Eventually everyone ends up at the bride's house where the couple is showered with blessings and flower petals as they leave for the ceremony.

Niger: So you think you can dance

You've heard of the Chicken Dance. In the West Africa country of Niger, there's the camel dance done at the reception in the desert by a real camel. The humpback animal gets his groove on to a rhythmic drumbeat surrounded by wedding guests.

Norway: Kransekake

Norway has its own particular version of the towering layered Western wedding cake, in the form of a kransekake, a tower of iced almond cake rings. It's common to build the tower over a wine bottle so a nice treat appears as guests break off pieces of the dessert.

Mauritius: Go large or go home

Many brides-to-be in other countries go on strict diets to lose weight before the wedding. Not so in Mauritius, where young girls are forced to pack on the pounds before their weddings. The chubbier she is, the better for the husband who is thought to be wealthy with such a well-fed wife.

Mexico: Two bouquets

In Mexico, it's common for a bride to carry a bouquet for herself, and a second as a tribute to the Virgin Mary.

Mongolia: No chickening out

A Mongolian couple hoping to set a wedding date must first kill a baby chickens and cut it apart — holding the knife together — to find a healthy liver. They keep at it until they're successful. And you thought dissecting a frog in middle school was gross.

Papua New Guinea: Pigging out

What's the price marriage? In remote parts of Papua New Guinea, it involves a woman's parents handing over a negotiated number of pigs and shells to pay for a man to marry her. The porkers are then slaughtered and served during the wedding feast.

Poland: money dance

A Polish tradition invites guests to buy dances with the bride at the reception. Her maid of honour collects the charges and the donations go toward the couple's honeymoon.

Philippines: Releasing doves

At traditional Filipino wedding receptions, the bride and groom release two doves into the air to represent a long, peaceful, and harmonious life together.

Russia: Chew on This

Being a big mouth can pay off. Newly married Russian couples share a wedding sweetbread called karavaya(decorated with wheat for prosperity and interlocking rings for faithfulness). Whoever takes the biggest bite — husband or wife — without using their hands is considered the head of the family.

Scotland: Blackening

In this Scottish tradition, the bride, groom, or both are taken out on the day before their wedding, plied with alcohol, and covered in treacle, ash, feathers, and flour by friends and family. The celebratory mess was originally carried out to avoid evil spirits and bring good luck.

Romania: ransoming the bride

In Romania, a mock abduction game is common before wedding ceremonies take place. The bride is kidnapped by friends, family, or hired entertainers, and the groom must come to her rescue and pay her ransom through drinks, money, or romantic gestures. Bride-napping turns out to be a common trope across European countries, with versions in Russia,

Germany, and Wales. In the latter, a Welsh best man takes the bride to the pub before the wedding, and the groom-to-be must find them and pick up the tab.

Sweden: Live long and prosper

In Sweden, brides are decked from head to toe, in tradition. They often wear crowns, made of myrtle flowers, to symbolize virginity, marital fidelity, and good luck on their heads. In their shoes, they tuck one coin each—silver in the left shoe from their father, and gold in the right from their mom. The coins symbolize hope for the couple's marital prosperity.

South Africa: Tying the knot

South African weddings are steeped in ancient tradition. Twelve symbols, meant to represent the couple's life together, must be present at every ceremony. These include wine, wheat, a broom, honey, bitter herbs, salt, pepper, a spoon, spear, a cooking pot, and a shield, plus a holy book, such as a Bible or Koran. In addition to the 12 symbols of life, the bride and groom ceremoniously have their wrists tied together with grass, to symbolize their coming together as a couple.

Thailand: Stringing it together

Weddings in Thailand are filled with Buddhist rituals, meant to honor the bride and groom's ancestors, and to sanctify their union. During the ceremony, the couple kneels next to each other, in a prayer position. A trusted, beloved elder of their choosing (preferably one known to have had a happy marriage), places a traditional headpiece on their heads. The headpiece, called a Mong Kol, is made from a single piece of string, which has been blessed by monks. The bride and groom wear the Mong Kol for the rest of their wedding ceremony, to symbolize their union, and oneness. Here's a brief history on engagement rings.

Turkey: Flag Day

Friends of the groom plant the Turkish flag, which features a red crescent and star, in the ground at his home on the day he is to wed. Depending on the area, objects like fruit, vegetables and even mirrors are placed on top, signifying the wedding ceremony has begun.

Venezuela: Bride and groom go MIA

Don't wait until the reception's end to chat up a Venezuelan bride and groom — they could be long gone. It's good luck for the newlyweds to sneak away before the party's over without getting caught; it's also good luck for whichever guests catches on that they're gone.

Wales: When love blooms

Welsh brides think not just of themselves on their wedding day but also their bridal party. The bridal bouquet includes myrtle, an herb that symbolizes love, and the bride gives a cutting to her bridesmaids. The theory goes that if the bridesmaid plants it and it blooms, she'll be the next bride.

Chapter2_Seven Types of Love

Everyone seems to be hankering after romantic love, but few of us realize that far from being timeless and universal, romantic love is in fact a modern construct, one that emerged in tandem with the novel. In *Madame Bovary* (1856), itself a novel, Gustave Flaubert tells us that Emma Bovary only found out about romantic love through 'the refuse of old lending libraries'. These books, he wrote: we're all about love and lovers, damsels in distress swooning in lonely lodges, postillions slaughtered all along the road, horses ridden to death on every page, gloomy forests, troubles of the heart, vows, sobs, tears, kisses, rowing-boats in the moonlight, nightingales in the grove, gentlemen brave as lions and gentle as lambs, too virtuous to be true, invariably well-dressed, and weeping like fountains.

But there are many other ways to love, not all of which are consistent or consonant with romantic love. By preoccupying ourselves with romantic love, we risk neglecting other types of love that are more readily accessible and that may, especially in the longer term, prove more healing and fulfilling.

The seven types of love discussed below are loosely based on classical readings, especially of Plato and Aristotle, and on J.A. Lee's 1973 book *Colours of Love*.

1. Eros

Eros is sexual or passionate love, and is the type most akin to our modern construct of romantic love. In Greek myth, it is a form of madness brought about by one of Cupid's arrows. The arrow breaches us and we 'fall' in love, as did Paris with Helen, leading to the Trojan War and the downfall of Troy and much of the assembled Greek army. In modern times, eros has been amalgamated with the broader life force, something akin to Schopenhauer's will, a fundamentally blind process of striving for survival and reproduction. Eros has also been contrasted with Logos, or Reason, and Cupid painted as a blindfolded child.

2. Philia

The hallmark of philia, or friendship, is shared goodwill. Aristotle believed that a person can bear goodwill to another for one of three reasons: that he is useful; that he is pleasant; and, above all, that he is good, that is, rational and virtuous. Friendships founded on goodness are associated not only with mutual benefit but also with companionship, dependability, and trust. For Plato, the best kind of friendship is that which lovers have for each other. It is a philia born out of eros, and that in turn feeds back into eros to strengthen and develop it, transforming it from a lust for possession into a shared desire for a higher level of understanding of the self, the other, and the world. In short, philia transforms eros from a lust for possession into an impulse for philosophy. Real friends seek together to live truer, fuller lives by relating to each other authentically and teaching each other about the limitations of their beliefs and the defects in their character, which are a far greater source of error than mere rational confusion: they are, in effect, each other's therapist—and in that much it helps to find a friend with some degree of openness, articulacy, and insight, both to change and to be changed.

3. Storge

Storge ('store-gae'), or familial love, is a kind of philia pertaining to the love between parents and their children. It differs from most philia in that it tends, especially with

younger children, to be unilateral or asymmetrical. More broadly, storge is the fondness born out of familiarity or dependency and, unlike eros or philia, does not hang on our personal qualities. People in the early stages of a romantic relationship often expect unconditional storge, but find only the need and dependency of eros, and, if they are lucky, the maturity and fertility of philia. Given enough time, eros tends to mutate into storge.

4. Agape

Agape is universal love, such as the love for strangers, nature, or God. Unlike storge, it does not depend on filiation or familiarity. Also called charity by Christian thinkers, agape can be said to encompass the modern concept of altruism, defined as unselfish concern for the welfare of others. Recent studies link altruism with a number of benefits. In the short term, altruism leaves us with a euphoric feeling—the so-called ‘helper’s high’. In the longer term, it is associated with better mental and physical health, as well as longevity. At a social level, altruism serves as a signal of cooperative intentions, and also of resource availability and so of mating or partnering potential. It also opens up a debt account, encouraging beneficiaries to reciprocate with gifts and favours that may be of much greater value to us than those with which we feel able to part. More generally, altruism, or agape, helps to build and maintain the psychological, social, and, indeed, environmental fabric that shields, sustains, and enriches us. Given the increasing anger and division in our society, and the state of our planet, we could all do with quite a bit more agape.

5. Ludus

Ludus is playful or uncommitted love. It can involve activities such as teasing and dancing, or more overt flirting, seducing, and conjugating. The focus is on fun, and sometimes also on conquest, with no strings attached. Ludus relationships are casual, undemanding, and uncomplicated but, for all that, can be very long-lasting. Ludus works best when both parties are mature and self-sufficient. Problems arise when one party mistakes ludus for eros, whereas ludus is in fact much more compatible with philia.

6. Pragma

Pragma is a kind of practical love founded on reason or duty and one’s longer-term interests. Sexual attraction takes a back seat in favour of personal qualities and compatibilities, shared goals, and making it work. In the days of arranged marriages, pragma must have been very common. Although unfashionable, it remains widespread, most visibly in certain high-profile celebrity and political pairings. Many relationships that start off as eros or ludus end up as various combinations of storge and pragma. Pragma may seem opposed to ludus, but the two can co-exist, with the one providing a counterpoint to the other. In the best of cases, the partners in the pragma relationship agree to turn a blind eye—or even a sympathetic eye, as in the case of Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre, or Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicholson.

7. Philautia

Philautia is self-love, which can be healthy or unhealthy. Unhealthy self-love is akin to hubris. In Ancient Greece, a person could be accused of hubris if he placed himself above the gods, or, like certain modern politicians, above the greater good. Many believed that hubris led to

destruction, or nemesis. Today, hubris has come to mean an inflated sense of one's status, abilities, or accomplishments, especially when accompanied by haughtiness or arrogance. As it disregards truth, hubris promotes injustice, conflict, and enmity.

Healthy self-love is akin to self-esteem, which is our cognitive and, above all, emotional appraisal of our own worth relative to that of others. More than that, it is the matrix through which we think, feel, and act, and reflects and determines our relation to ourselves, to others, and to the world.

Self-esteem and self-confidence do not always go hand in hand. In particular, it is possible to be highly self-confident and yet to have profoundly low self-esteem, as is the case with many performers and celebrities.

People with high self-esteem do not need to prop themselves up with externals such as income, status, or notoriety, or lean on crutches such as alcohol, drugs, or sex. They are able to invest themselves completely in projects and people because they do not fear failure or rejection. Of course they suffer hurt and disappointment, but their setbacks neither damage nor diminish them. Owing to their resilience, they are open to growth experiences and relationships, tolerant of risk, quick to joy and delight, and accepting and forgiving of themselves and others.

In closing, there is, of course, a kind of porosity between the seven types of love, which keep on seeping and passing into one another. For Plato, love aims at beautiful and good things, because the possession of beautiful and good things is called happiness, and happiness is an end-in-itself. Of all beautiful and good things, the best, most beautiful, and most dependable is truth or wisdom, which is why Plato called love not a god but a philosopher:
He whom love touches not walks in darkness.

Chapter3_Vow

As long as you have at least one person caring for you, life isn't a waste. So when things go wrong and you feel like quitting. Please remember you've still got me.

If I didn't adore you and if I didn't cherish you, then I surely don't deserve you.

You came into my life when all was dark, but you gave me the light and I found my way.

I've never been so certain of anything in my life like I am of us.

They say people in love can be foolish well, I don't mind being a fool for you forever!

Please let me know what I did to deserve you ... I want to make sure I keep on doing it!

You are the reason I am breathing, but yet sometimes you take my breath.

They say fall in love only one. That is a lie. every time I look at you, I fall in love all over again.

Every single day, I am grateful for you.

I fell in love because of all the little things you never knew you were doing.

When you read this note come over and give me the tightest hug and the longest kiss we've shared.

Missed you all day. Come give me a kiss.

When I talk about you, I fall in love with you all over again.

I don't promise you a perfect relationship. What I promise you is that if you're trying. I'm staying.

If you were a library book, I'd never give you back.

I won't follow you into the dark. I'll walk ahead and go light the way up for you.

Love can be expressed in many ways. On way I know is to send it across the distance to the person who is reading this.

You look great today. how did I know? because you look great everyday.

I used to think that dreams never came true. But this quickly changed when I met you.

A lady is a woman who makes a man behave like a gentleman. You're such a lady to me.

Perfect pairs are rare indeed, but I found mine in you.

If, out of time, I could pick one moment and keep it shining, always new, of all the days that I have lived, I'd pick the moment I met you.

Things worthwhile, never come easy. and that's why my love, you are worth all the struggle.

Chapter4_What Does the Bible Say?

Romans 13:8: "Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law."

1 Corinthians 13:4-5: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs."

1 Corinthians 13:2: "If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing."

1 Corinthians 16:14: "Do everything in love."

Song of Solomon 8:7: "Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned."

Psalms 143:8: "Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life."

Proverbs 3:3-4: "Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man."

1 John 4:16: "And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them."

Ephesians 4:2: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love."

1 Peter 4:8: "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."

John 15:12: "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you."

1 Corinthians 13:13: "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

Song of Solomon 4:9: "You have captivated my heart, my sister, my bride; you have captivated my heart with one glance of your eyes, with one jewel of your necklace."

Peter 5:6-7: Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Ephesians 4:1-3: I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Matthew 5:22: But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

Ephesians 2:4-5: But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved

Zephaniah 3:17: The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.

Proverbs 30:18-19: Three things are too wonderful for me; four I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a virgin.

Luke 6:35: But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil.

Proverbs 3:3-4: Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man.

John 13:34-35: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.