

Problems that can occur in the long term in Western/Filipina marriages, courtesy of an old friend of mine.....

Hi Jeff,

I have read your new immigration site and it seems very good. All the advice on it is of course valid and I hope potential clients will take the time to think about everything before embarking on a life changing course of action.

After thinking about what you have to say for a couple of weeks, I would like to mention one or two points concerning problems which arise in long-term marriages with Filipinas. Admittedly, most prospective couples and those in early marriages, should be concentrating on all the issues you mention. These, as we know from forums and from personal experience, are truly the source of most major conflict and are rightly addressed as early as possible in the relationship.

However, once a marriage has lasted twenty-five to thirty years, perhaps even twenty years, these contentious issues will have reached a stable state; if they have not then the marriage would probably have ended long ago. It goes without saying that a "stable state" may be far from what you or I would consider ideal or even remotely acceptable. Nonetheless, beyond a certain point the usual major issues will have been resolved, even if such resolution falls considerably short of perfect.

At the present time I notice several unfortunate instances of two preventable situations in older Filipinas. The first concerns health. High blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes and chronic joint problems are very widespread among even middle-aged Filipinas here. Of course, it is a worldwide problem, but I suspect that social conditioning plays a very big role with Filipinas especially. The average Filipino eats a diet sodden with fat, sugar and salt, which ingestion is worsened by exposure to appalling Western influence. None of them take exercise, let alone train. Indeed, it almost seems the less one has to move one's body the higher one's social standing.

Despite rigorous conditions, my wife's parents' lived to ninety, as did many of their contemporaries. Life forced them to be physically active and they never overate; they couldn't because they rarely had a surplus of food. I would be very surprised if any at all of their children reached ninety. While it might be a quaint custom, the incessant copious eating of white rice is a wonderful foundation for diabetes. As you mention, there is probably no way a Filipina will stop eating it, but brown rice, basmati rice and brown breads are a much healthier substitute. Again, there is this absurd social notion that anything white is somehow superior, and brown rice and bread is for poor people, and this fallacy is a major obstruction in getting a Filipina off white rice.

Exercise appears to almost court ostracism. It seems a mark of achievement that Filipinas do as little as possible, regard inactivity as a virtue, even to the ludicrous extent of having maids and servants. These are very deep social mores, supremely difficult to root out. Indeed, a new husband probably sees no reason to do so. He wants to shoulder burdens and be a traditional husband in the type of marriage not often seen in the West nowadays. On closer thought, however, the truth is that he also has a higher duty to preserve his wife's health into the distant future. After all, the age gap in most Filipina marriages means the wife will almost

certainly be left alone at some point.

This fact brings me to the second problem - an alarming incidence of conditioned helplessness and cultivated ignorance in Filipina widows. One would think that over twenty or more years of cohabitation, a dutiful husband would have had the decency to see his wife knew the skills necessary to exist in Western society. Sadly, in most cases, this is not so. Most of them cannot change a tap washer. Most do not realise that a signature is binding and that every document must be understood first. Many do not understand about probate, about wills, and in most cases actual will content appears not to have been discussed at all between wife and husband. The widow is left vulnerable to marauding relatives (how quickly the overseas vultures start to circle the kill !) and, in a depressed emotional state, becomes easy prey to manipulative men wanting anything from a quickie to a convenient doss house. I know because I have seen it, I have had to sort it out, and it annoys me immensely because it is totally unnecessary.

I repeat that I think your list of problems and so on is brilliant and far superior to all the rot that is talked about on most of the advice forums we've seen. I am sure you don't mind my mentioning these two serious issues, which concern the distant future, something hardly any couples even want to think about never mind discuss. Believe me, it's important though.

All the best to everybody,

Ted.

Ted is an old friend of mine whom I've known for probably more than 10 years. He has more than 30 years of marriage to a Filipina under his belt. I thank him for his willingness to share his insights with our readers and clients.