

Five *on*
Friday

Musings on Mental Health

Mimi and David Say I Do

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As this Five on Friday is posted, I will be toasting my son and his fiancée who will be married on Saturday. My first child to marry. It is a joy beyond measure to know that someone loves my child so completely that she wants to share the rest of her life with him. And it is a gift to welcome Mimi into our family and know that in their union our families become mishpucha.



When two people marry, it is an exquisitely personal decision and a fabulously shared reality - shared with extended family and friends who ultimately represent the community who are nourished by the love of the bride and groom and who embrace them through good times and bad.

1. Something Old. Marriage is one of the most ancient institutions in human civilization. Although the particular details vary by culture, and expectations have evolved over time, marriage has always been about ties that bind. From the historical strategic alliances between families to the relatively new idea of a love marriage, the common denominator is that marriage is a personal-public commitment that serves as the foundational bedrock that stewards society from one generation to the next.

2. Something New. With over 107 billion people who have ever lived on earth, we can figure there have been literally billions of marriages in one form or another. Nonetheless, there is something new with each "I do." It is the first time that this couple marries, and their union offers optimism for an unfolding future. It offers potential for a unique mix of genes that will carry their dreams into a future they will never see. Two distinct but related constructs, [hope and optimism correlate with greater mental health and wellbeing.](#)

3. Something borrowed. No matter how prepared we are as we approach our wedding day, each of us is incomplete. As spouses, we help complete each other, but even still, a marriage in a vacuum lacks the oxygen it needs to grow. We borrow lessons learned from our elders, we borrow comfort at times of hurt from our friends and family, we borrow lawn mowers, sugar, and extra chairs for holidays from our neighbors. We take our turn weaving and repairing the fabric of community.

4. Something blue. Why blue in this traditional verse? Well... "blue" rhymes with "new." It could be that simple, but the tradition holds that blue symbolizes purity, love, and fidelity - virtues that inspire us to embark on this marital journey. But none of us is pure and infidelities are common, so perhaps something blue is meant to remind us that despite our imperfections, love can be as deep as the blue ocean and as expansive as the blue sky.

5. And a sixpence in your shoe. Clearly a wish for good fortune and prosperity. In fact, historically matchmaking was fundamentally rooted in economic concerns of leveraging assets and protecting family wealth and inheritance. In today's marriages, money matters are a common source of conflict. Right up there with

different views on parenting, [financial woes](#) tend to be intense, significant, and often hard to resolve.

[Marriage and mental health](#) are well correlated. Of course, correlation does not mean causation, but married people report higher levels of emotional and psychological well-being, lower rates of depression, anxiety, and loneliness, and even greater life expectancy than their non-married peers. Mimi and David - old, new, borrowed, blue - may you find your own joyful mix of this traditional English verse. I love you.