



Keith and Karla Emmerson

I met Karla on December 17 2001 while I was vacationing in my hometown, Cebu, Philippines. I had just finished my first diploma, straight out of high school. We met at their college end of year Christmas party at a local restaurant La Chapelle, she was the first face that greeted me before the door as she was one of the organisers of the party. I guess at the time you could say it was love at first sight, for me anyways because as soon as I got there, all I could think about was this girl who greeted me with the most lovely smile. Sounds pretty cliché but I guess that's how most love stories sound.

I almost didn't make it to that party as I was at the beach earlier having a few beers and having to drive home on a motorbike carrying two other passengers with no helmet, as you do in the Philippines.

My brother was actually dating another girl at the time who was a close friend of Karla's, hence why I was at the scene. If it weren't for my brother we may have never met.

Since I was just on holiday I tried to spend as much time as I could with her during the couple of months there. So we tried the long distance relationship thing, at times it was tough especially when we were so busy with our own studies and so on. I went back home again at the beginning of 2003 for a couple of months, came back and it was unbearable to be apart so we decided to get married. With the reluctance of a few of her family members, I had to talk to her dad over the phone and let him know what we planned to do. Surprisingly it worked out alright. She came over, we had our civil wedding here.

My brother gave us holiday to the South Island for our wedding. So we had a nice little honeymoon driving around the South Island, a long drive, and a good test to our patience with each other.

We spent a lot of time going out fishing and camping, it was a good way for Karla to see a lot of the country. We used to go out and have dinner once a week just to treat ourselves for slogging our way through our jobs.

We went back home again in June 2005 to have our traditional Filipino church wedding, since her parents couldn't attend our civil wedding here. It was a pretty momentous occasion for all of us.

And then in March 2006, Karla became pregnant with our little Joshua who's now 2 years old. I kept on kidding Karla and the rest of my family that we wouldn't have kids till I was 30 or till I caught a 20+kg kingfish, I'm not 30 yet and I still haven't caught that big kingie.

I guess, with having a child there isn't much time for ourselves since most of it is devoted to looking after the little terror. But as a family you find the pleasure and satisfaction in doing things together as a team. As with all couples we have our moments, but we always try to sort them out ASAP.



Todd and Pip Williams

It was romance all the way when Todd Williams proposed to Pip in Scotland two years ago. Todd had been working at a school in London for two years, when Pip was sent to the same school - "out of all the thousands of schools in London," says Todd. "We were part of a huge group of friends who did a lot together, including going to performances of my band 'Flow.' Pip had to fit in with my music lifestyle!"

The proposal was carefully planned for Christmas Eve, spent in Scotland with a group of friends - first Todd called Pip's parents in New Zealand to tell them of his plan. They had to go through Christmas Day with family, unable to tell anyone about the proposal. Todd bought a stack of phone cards for Pip to call everyone after she accepted his proposal (though he admits, it was nerve wracking until she said 'yes'.) Unaware of his plan, Pip used the cards up with calls for Christmas and her parents had to keep the secret when she called them.

With friends standing hopefully by with champagne, Todd walked into the room wearing an orange Scottish wig, playing his guitar and singing a song he had written previously for Pip, with the chorus altered to the words 'Pip, will you marry me?'

"I was crying so much I couldn't say anything at first," recalls Pip. "When I looked around the room, all our friends had tears in their eyes."

After such a moving beginning, what are Todd and Pip's tips for a happy marriage?

"Have your relationship as a passion, but have things outside too that you're passionate about and give your partner the freedom and support to do whatever they want to do. It's also very important to make time for each other and to talk openly about what's on your mind."