

Q: How did you meet?

Ben: My friend introduced me to Claudia at a farewell party. I will say we started dating right after the first meet up; we went out more often gradually – it was very easy and natural.

Claudia: We met through a common friend and exchanged numbers... it was not a “love at first sight” thing. We went on a couple of dates and found out more about each other. I feel that even as an artiste he is quite down-to-earth and not the “party drinking” type. He is very close to his family, his grandmother, and he cooks really well; all of which makes him different.

Q: What made you realise your spouse was the one for you?

Ben: Once, we went clubbing at a club near my house, about 15 minutes away. Even though she stayed in the east, she suggested to send me back before she went back by herself. I was like, first time a lady is telling me this! This was from her heart; it wasn't *wayang*. Most girls are not like that – even if you stay next door, they will still expect you [the man] to send them back first. From then on I knew she was the one.

Claudia: It was a gradual thing. As we met up and got to understand each other better, we slowly came to that conclusion. We both knew we wanted a life partner to settle down with and start a family. If he wasn't thinking for the future and only living for the now, I probably wouldn't have continued the relationship.

Q: What's your favourite trait of each other?

Ben: Too many! I have to think! She's a very good wife, a good mother. Whether at home or on holiday, I don't have to worry about anything because she handles everything so well. She's very 细心 (meticulous) – that's the thing that I love about her most. Of course there's the feeling also *lah*. You can't just marry someone you “love”; you marry someone you can spend the rest of your life with, so that even when the romance is no more, there will still be a constant, consistent feeling. She gives me that.

Claudia: (Ben: “handsome *lah!*”) Both of us are very transparent. “I like” means “I like”. “I dislike” means “I dislike”. Even if we quarrel, we promise to talk out the unhappiness and not to leave it overnight.

Q: Do you think parenthood has changed your marriage, and if so, how?

Ben: I have more responsibilities now, so I have to be more mature, more patient with the kids and with Claudia. There are more things to think about, and we can't do whatever we want anymore. That's the sad part, but still we try to find some time just for the two of us. We don't believe in weekend babies. Sometimes my job requires me to travel, so I have to leave without them, and Claudia will stay to take care of the kids. She really sacrifices – no more travelling with her friends, or even just with me.

Claudia: Certainly it does! We have more arguments because of different perspectives. We talk about future primary schools. It pulls us

closer because we have something in common, a common responsibility. Ben parties less (laughs), and he goes to the gym so he can be fitter to better take care of them.

Ben: Now the kids ask, can we see your muscles? It's a fun thing!

Q: With two young children in the picture, how do you keep the romance alive?

Ben: The four of us sleep in the same room for family bonding. For how long, I'm not sure. When I was younger I slept with my parents too, so I like that family bonding. After the kids sleep, then we will do our own thing: chit chat, watch TV, family planning, and of course... the most important thing.

Claudia: Whenever they're in school, we try to spend time together. Sometimes when they're asleep, we'll catch a movie together. We're not romantic; he's not a romantic person and I don't like these things anyway. To me, it's the time spent together that counts.

Q: Any advice for newlyweds-to-be?

Ben: Give and take. Communicate always. Don't keep anything inside the heart [to yourself]. This is your lifetime partner, so if you don't communicate well, I don't think you should spend the rest of your life with this person.

Claudia: Give and take. If he's unhappy about something, he will tell me. If I'm not comfortable, we talk. You have to believe in the marriage. If you think one day you can always divorce, then I don't think you're ready for marriage.

“[Some] people don't have children; instead they have Lamborghinis and Ferraris. But I have those too: one Lambo (kid #1), one Ferrari (kid #2).” — Ben Yeo on the cost of raising children

Claudia Cheong
Homemaker, 37

Ben Yeo
MediaCorp Artiste, 37

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