

The relationship contract: love with a clause

Remember when you said, “I do”, and then those vows – along with your marriage certificate – ended up in a bottom drawer or box in the garage? It's a shame, because navigating any terrain requires road maps and GPS direction. Love is just the same. Growth, evolution, and change are all natural parts of life. Our thoughts, beliefs, feelings, bodies, environments, friends, and hobbies are just some aspects that may change. So, what about your primary relationship? Wedding vows are great, but what about all the updates and revisions as we ourselves evolve?

Most fights come from expectations we have of our partner. If you had the chance, wouldn't you want to clarify as much as possible before settling in? At first glance, it might sound unromantic, but a relationship contract can help you flesh out all aspects of your dynamic to set the bar to mutually agreeable standards and a mutually beneficial shared life where love can flourish. It is a co-created love blueprint – a living, flexible document designed to support you both as your relationship grows, shifts, and evolves.

So, what goes into the contract?

Everything and anything that helps define your partnership. Below is a list of topics. Sit with your partner and discuss expectations and desires around each. Work towards a negotiation that works for both.

- **Mission Statement:** Why are we doing this? (Besides your undeniable charm.)
- **Values:** What principles guide us?
- **Finances:** Who pays for Netflix?
- **Family & In-laws:** How do we survive holidays with Aunt Carol?
- **Housing:** Curl Curl mansion or Blacktown apartment?
- **Kids:** Yes, no, maybe, or “let's get a dog first.”
- **Travel:** Thrill seekers or homebodies? Together or alone?
- **Quality Time vs. Personal Time:** Togetherness vs. breathing room.
- **Sex & Intimacy:** What feels good? What do we need more of? Limits? Desires?
- **Friends & Social Life:** How do we balance “us” with everyone else?
- **Cultural Expectations:** What matters to you?
- **Future Vision:** Where are we heading?



A lasting relationship requires getting your clause in

- **Division of Labour:** Who does what, and are we both cool with it?
- **Boundaries & Agreements:** What keeps us feeling safe and respected?
- **Technology & Privacy:** Phones, passwords, and devices.
- **Termination & Deal Breakers:** Yep, even this. It's not pessimistic; it's realistic.
- **Review Dates:** Because Life Happens

There may be other things that are important for you both to negotiate up front. Who is responsible for planning dinners? Who pays the bills? Does the dog sleep in the bed? Regardless of whether you are newly together or 30 years deep, there are several benefits to gain.

- **Clarity:** No mind-reading required. This also greatly reduces perpetual conflict.
- **Harmony:** Less friction, more flow. Reduced tension, irritation, and sensitivity to being reactive.
- **Resilience:** Navigate changes with grace. You'll have more patience, compassion, and empathy.
- **Communication:** Built-in opportunities to talk about the big (and small) stuff.
- **Growth:** Celebrate evolution, both individually and together. Move out of surviving or existing into thriving.

So, why not draft your own? Pour a glass of wine, grab some snacks, and dive in. It's not about bureaucracy; it's about building a love that's conscious, intentional, and tailored to you. And hey, it's way more fun than signing a rental agreement.

Words: **Scout Smith-O'Leary**

Scout is a Relationship Therapist providing counselling to couples & individuals. Based in Manly, Telehealth available. Visit thelovescout.com or call **0410 030 463** to book a session.



Cromer's Bounce Inc, wet weather heaven

The OonaVerse

Crazy rainy days

We are so blessed to have incredible nature all around us on the Northern Beaches but when the rain sets in, the wind becomes gale force, and your children are climbing the walls, you need a backup plan. Yes, I am the child who climbs the walls, but I feel my youthful perspective is worth grown-up attention so that all generations are the winners, rain, hail or shine.

So, during the summer break, which included many days of wild weather, I was delighted when The Tawny challenged my Ooniversal understanding to find my favourite wet weather location for holiday fun.

The candidates for my “Crazy Rainy Days” challenge were Bounce Inc, Crockd, Glen Street Theatre, Rockhouse Indoor Climbing Centre, and Andrew (Boy) Charlton Pool. And my judging criteria included five categories: Value for money, Hospitality, Engagement, Age Diversity and, perhaps most importantly, Free Time for the parents/carers that the activity provided.

Crockd and Rockhouse Indoor Climbing Centre were great fun, narrowly missing out on a podium finish. Glen Street Theatre closed the curtain in third place, and Andrew Boy Charlton Pool ticked many rainy-day boxes, making a splash in second place.

The winner? Bounce Inc! Value for money, hospitality, engagement, age diversity and free time for parents and carers all landing in the sweet spot on the Bounce Inc's springy floor goodness. This crazy rainy day Cromer gem is a must, lots of fun on sunny days, but especially so when the heavens open.

Words: **Oona Du Vernet**

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