

Lessons In Love From Crown Princess Mary of Denmark

Contributed by Dr. Janice Seto
Saturday, 21 January 2006

With the christening of Prince Christian of Denmark, the world once again saw the love and commitment that exists between Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary.

Almost six years after they first got together, our Correspondent Janice Seto takes a timely look at how this popular couple showed that, whatever the distance and social barriers, love can conquer all.

Saturday

saw a huge party spread all over Denmark. The infant firstborn son of Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary, known as 'lilleprinsens', finally received a name — Christian — at his christening.

For Mary, it is another milestone in a life which has seen her go from being a Tasmanian-born Sydney estate agent to meeting and then marrying a prince. Now, she is the mother of a prince.

Human

beings learn by example. Royal watching is learning vicariously – and what a lot of fun! Like all reality shows, we can all learn something from living royal. This episode:

How to win over your fiance's skeptical mother:

Lessons from the Danish Crown Princess

Mary

Donaldson, then 32, put in time to overcome the formidable queen's doubts, to marry in style Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark in 2004 May.

Queen Margrethe II of Denmark was initially very cool to the news of her elder son's newest girlfriend, an Australian he met in a bar. Nothing against foreigners — the Queen having married Henrik, a French diplomat, and her younger son's wife being the Eurasian Hong Kong-born Alexandra Manley — Margrethe was cautious.

{jumi [includes/jumies/rectanglew.php]}The last thing any Royal Family wants is their own personal Diana quagmire.

Did

Mary turn to Dr. Phil for help? The popular daytime US talkshow host, Dr Phil McGraw is a tall, middle-aged, bald Texan psychologist with a tell-it-like-it is style.

I am comparing his advice about getting married with what we royal watchers witnessed over the long years of dating for Mary and Frederik.

Let us begin....

1)""You complete me'...what a load of crap!". I have heard Dr Phil say this on his show. You have got to come into a relationship whole or it will not last.

In this way, Mary Donaldson was unlike the young Diana. A graduate in law and commerce from the University of Tasmania, Mary has worked in advertising, commercial real estate, and property management.

She had a social life, a good relationship with her siblings, her father John (a university Professor of Maths) and stepmother, the writer Susan Moody. This is not a teenager desperate for an identity.

When Frederik met Mary at Slip Inn bar, which was really hopping during the 2000 Sydney Olympics, she already had it together.

2)Dr Phil McGraw also says: "The basis of a strong relationship is a function of the friendship and the degree to which it meets the needs of the two people involved."

Friendship

developed between Mary and Frederik when they kept in touch via the phone, email (God, don't we love the internet?!), and sent each other CDs of favourite bands. They got to know each other as friends who had much in common. Like Frederik, Mary's family — including her late mother, Henrietta — are into sports, especially sailing. (How much did Diana have in common with Charles? Not much.)

As for meeting each other's needs, Mary is a lovely, intelligent woman who works hard. What a complement to Frederik. They are both now around the same age, same stage of life and ready to face the future with a life partner.

{jumi [includes/jumies/rectanglew.php]}3) According to Dr. Phil, intimacy is so important because it is when we let someone else enter our private world. Mary was cautious about the risks of a new romance, especially to someone high profile.

As Mary said of the time, in November 2001, when their relationship became public: "The time had come where we both felt it couldn't go on long distance. We decided to take the chance and see if we were meant for each other. That's when I left Australia."

4)

Forget whether you're right or wrong. The question is: Is what you're doing working or not working? How's that working for you?

To be in love as a Crown Princess in a foreign country takes work: language training, lessons in history and culture, and (considering she grew up in sunny Australia) learning to live in snow.

Mary then moved to Denmark, working for a Microsoft subsidiary in Copenhagen and learning Danish. For English speakers, Danish is a difficult language to master verbally. But any woman of intelligence with goals and elbow grease can do it.

{jumi [includes/jumies/rectanglew.php]}Witness the examples of the newest princesses of Denmark — Anglophone Mary Donaldson and Alexandra Manley.

The people of Denmark appreciate the hard work put in by these women and embrace them as their own. Frederik for his part had to get used to a new set of relations.

What is admirable is the way Mary and Frederik did not rush into marriage. Frederik had to want to change his bachelor life.

Mary had to decide if she wanted, and could cope with, the royal lifestyle for a lifetime, and if so could they carry the royal family workload with the Queen & Prince Henrik? For a woman meeting a fellow at aged 28, and then not walking down the aisle until age 32, she must have put her ticking biological clock in a bureau drawer!

6) You teach people how to treat you. You can renegotiate the rules.

Mary declared: "I will not tolerate infidelity." Good for you!

Dr Phil does advocate knowing each other's 'dealbreakers'. Frederik had a string of girlfriends, from model Katja Storkhom to fashion designer Bettine Oedum and rock singer Maria Montel, who penned a steamy hit song allegedly about their times together. He had to prove that he'd got this out of his system.

{jumi [includes/jumies/rectanglew.php]}Certainly Mary let her swain know what she is all about. We were all rather surprised by her blunt public statement about infidelity.

Then, only a few months after Mary and Frederik's nuptials, the Prince's younger brother, Joachim, and his wife Princess Alexandra officially announced their intention to divorce. The reason? Rumour (unsubstantiated, it has to be noted) has it that it was because of the Prince's dating of other women. Ahhh, now we know....

7) If your mother has a problem with your wife, it is your job to intervene and try to fix it.

Frederik knew of the Queen's unease and knew meeting Mary officially, if secretly, would be helpful. He had to prove that Mary was not only a catch for him but that she would put in the hard work to be a truly wonderful Queen for Denmark. This time, it was not a passing fancy, a fling with another party girl.

By the time of the fateful meeting in April 2002, Frederik had been courting Mary for almost a year and a half, and she had only just moved to Europe. Frederik respected Mary's steady hard work and go-slow approach enough to decide the time was right for the Queen to also fall in love with Mary.

{jumi [includes/jumies/rectanglew.php]}During her August 2003 holiday in the Royal family's summer home, Chateau de Caix in

France, the Queen admitted Mary would be a nice daughter-in-law, which was official blessing, indeed.

8) There can be no divided loyalties. Your loyalty needs to be with your wife.

Poor Diana could not count on Charles's undivided loyalty. Mary and Frederik are a team, a united one at that.

They plan to be hands-on with their new son, Prince Christian. Already, Frederik has publicly declared his desire to give his son a warmer childhood than that which he remembers.

As we saw at their wedding, and also the baptism of their son Christian, both Mary and Frederik aren't afraid to publicly show their love and commitment. As Mary would no doubt agree, a woman should never settle for less than 100 percent from the man she loves.

{jumi [includes/jumies/rectangle.php]}The future looks bright for this young couple, the hope of the Danish monarchy. This is perhaps in part because, as the Supremes put it, "You can't hurry love." It is a sentiment with which this clearly happy and adoring husband and wife would agree as, almost six years after their first meeting, they continue to be utterly devoted to each other.