

Why . moving OUT is HARD to do

MUM SAYS: When Lizza told us that she was going to Canada to live with her boyfriend, I thought that there was no point stopping her. I knew she was just going to do it anyway. I didn't want her going away feeling any animosity towards me. The only positive thing I saw about her going away was that she would gain more independence and overseas experience for her career. Her dad didn't say anything to her, but we talked about it in private. He kept asking, "Why does she have to go overseas?" He thought that she was going overseas to marry her boyfriend. Even our friends were saying that she was going to end up married. There was even more talk when I went to visit her in Toronto with her brother. I told them that Lizza doesn't even want to get married until she is at least 30 and that now has changed to the age of 35. They started saying that 35 is too old, what about having babies?

"I'm trying to go with the flow."

I wouldn't have done what she did. I guess it's because of Filipino tradition that still sticks in your mind – even if you're not living in the Philippines anymore. To me, you only live with your partner when you are married. And, if you're not married, then you're living in sin. That's what I've been brought up to believe. It has to do with growing up with old fashioned values and as a strict Catholic.

Even though I've got these beliefs, I'm trying to go with the flow. Of course, I'm trying to change as well because it's a different type of environment here in Australia and people are different. I can't stick to the old ways, I have to change, di ba? That's why I allowed Lizza to go.

Australian born journo LIZZA GEBILAGIN, challenges her Filipina mum Fe on the topic of moving in with a partner before marriage.



SHE SAYS: I remember when I first announced to my parents that I was not only leaving home, but that I was going to go live with my boyfriend who also happened to live across the other side of the world in Canada, I was pretty shocked when all they said was, "OK". I was expecting at least a sad, "Ay, Langga" from my mum or a look of disappointment from my Manila born dad who had told me all of my life that I wasn't allowed to have a boyfriend until I had finished studying (and he meant until I graduated from uni). It wasn't that I felt guilty that in my parents' eyes I may have been living in sin. I just thought that in this case my Aussie upbringing would clash with their traditional Filo values.

I've always believed that I would never marry someone without living with them first. How horrible would it be to have the keys thrown away after you've been legally and symbolically handcuffed to another person for eternity and then find out months later that you're stuck with a moron who doesn't believe in flushing a number one no matter how disgustingly yellow it is? I don't want my house smelling like a pub toilet! Granted, that's a stupid example, but there are so many things about the other person that you won't discover until you're living together. That's why I don't believe it's worth risking an entire life's happiness on a feeling that everything will be fabulous from the moment you say "I do" to the time you're getting your makeup done by a mortician in a funeral parlour.

I should point out that I was only going to Canada for a year at the most and that the topic of marriage was never broached. It's a good thing that I lived with my boyfriend without getting married too. Otherwise I would now sadly be a divorcee living back home with my parents. **AF**