

LOVE &

MARRIAGE IS SEXY THE NEW MILE HIGH CLUB

APHRODISIACS
LEGEND? OR
LEGENDARY?

ALERT:
DIVORCE IS
CONTAGIOUS

MUST
HAVE
KITCHEN
TOOLS

THE
PILL
& ITS
ELUSIVE
99%

HELP!
THE
ECONOMY
TOOK MY
SEX
LIFE

SLEEP
NAKED

HEALTH BENEFITS FOR
SLEEPING IN
THE BUFF

5 CRUCIAL
FINANCIAL
MISTAKES

NEWLY MARRIED
COUPLES
MAKE

THE
ULTIMATE
HOME BAR

FULFILL
YOUR SEXUAL
FANTASIES



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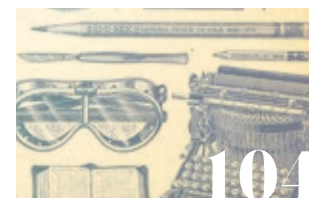
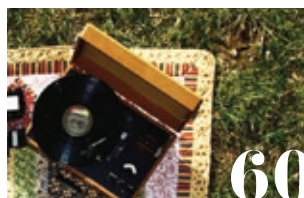
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MARRIAGE IS SEXY, DAMN IT.

Welcome to the first issue of LOVE& Magazine. Let me answer your first question. Yes, you need this magazine. If you're reading this you're likely married, about to get married, or thinking about getting married. First off, welcome to the wild, amazing, emotional, unpredictable world of marriage. You may already know that it's quite a roller coaster ride, to say the least. At the moment you're coasting down the free fall, out of breath, having the time of your life. Or perhaps you're on the uphill trek hoping to make it through to the other side. Or maybe you're just stuck at the loading dock waiting for something—anything to happen.

We are here to tell you that marriage can be, and frankly is...sexy. Boldly, intrepidly we are champions for marriage. If you're on cloud nine still loving every minute of your marriage, we are here to encourage you and tell you how to make it last forever. Make it contagious. Not obnoxiously of course. We all know those couples. If you're in a season of a drab seemingly lifeless marriage, we are here to pull you out and inspire you to do it better.

You've likely spent tens of thousands of dollars on your wedding and consulted countless bridal books, magazines, planners, and friends. And now you realize...where is that advice, encouragement, and motivation to spur me on to live a sexy and rewarding marriage? It's here. In your hands. Finally.

Sex questions? We have therapists for that.. Communication issues? We have counselors for you. Financial queries? We have solutions for you. Need tips on travel, health, cooking, home life? Yup, we have that too. Everything you need to live a fulfilling, fun, faithful, and sexy marriage you'll find in here.

Our hope is to be a part of your life. We want your readership, but more importantly we are looking to change the condition of marriage in America. You need us, and we need you.

We are here to be honest.

We are here to be educational.

We are here to inspire you.

We are here to equip you.

We are here.

LOVE& is here.

ANDRE NIESING
PUBLISHER

THE NEW MILE HIGH CLUB

THE LANDSCAPE OF MARRIAGE



By Chad Coltman

My wife and I have joined the mile-high club—but it's not what you think. We haven't engaged in lewd acts of passion in a cramped airplane lavatory. This is a mile-high club of a completely different kind, albeit if done right, it is just as thrilling.

On a recent trip from Chicago back to my hometown airport in Orange County CA, our plane spent a few minutes circling the area until we landed. As we flew over the cities that make up the OC, I was impressed with both the magnitude and the beauty of my hometown. I've always appreciated it from the ground, driving down manicured streets and through pristine neighborhoods, but now at 30,000 feet, those boulevards and boroughs took a different shape. The streets became a massive grid of interconnected asphalt that crisscrossed the landscape linking communities to one another. Dense neighborhoods disappeared into rolling foothills and open spaces that I never knew existed. Suddenly out of my tiny airplane window the master plan of Orange County came into view, there was a level of forethought and intention that I simply could not see from the ground.

As I stared across the suburban sprawl out towards the ocean in the direction of my own house, I couldn't help but think of my wife and me and how our lives must look like from 30,000 feet. In that moment I decided it was

time for us to join the mile-high club: To be a couple that is committed to regularly flipping the perspective from which we view our lives and our marriage from the ground to the air.

I'm convinced that this is something we naturally don't do. Our lives are so consumed by distractions and schedules, ruled by cell phones and GPS, and enslaved to "the next thing" that we often fail to take a step back from it all and seek out the larger picture. Our heads are down as we go about our day, missing the cues and signs that chapters of a larger story are being played out. Because of this narrow-focused point of view we have lost sight of the massive master plan that makes up our own lives.

We have to take time in our marriages to ask some of the 30,000 feet, or "mile-high" questions (I know that 30,000 feet is more than a mile—but you get the analogy). These are questions that cause us to take our eyes off of the day-to-day and onto the bigger picture. They help us move from just seeing what's on the ground in front of us to seeing across the entire landscape of our marriages and relationships. They help us make sense of all the things that we are experiencing and connect the dots of our seemingly isolated and separate experiences. They help us evaluate our lives. Most importantly, they bring us perspective, connection and cohesion.

Sometimes these mile-high conversations need to happen in the moment and sometimes they need to happen with some planning. My wife and I try to take time on special occasions, like birthdays, anniversaries or New Year's, to talk about where our relationship is heading, whether or not we are accomplishing our goals, and to ask some deeper questions of one another. At LOVE& Magazine, we want to encourage you to make going mile-high a part of your everyday lives. Each issue we'll look at a question or two that you and your spouse can talk through to help you practice the art of mile-high conversation. The hope is that you'll get into the habit of asking these questions yourself without any prompting.

Join the mile-high club today and start with this question: As you look over the last few months of your marriage, what is one thing that you are encouraged by? It can be anything, from something you accomplished together to a character trait you see in your spouse. Talk about why you are encouraged by this and what you hope to see in the next few months related to it.

As you have these conversations, watch as a master plan is revealed that you never saw before and allow your new perspective on marriage take you to a new height of oneness and intimacy. &



SLEEP **NAKED!**

Strengthen The Marital Bond

By Dr. Ann Kirlin

Got your attention, didn't I?

At least I have the attention of the men perusing this publication. Their skimming has now come to an abrupt halt. Carefully removing this page, they've promptly displayed it on the fridge with the nearest magnet.

I may be detecting a frown on the ladies who have retired their nocturnal uniform of the single life. Gone are their Victoria Secret PINK Tee-jamas, flannel dream pajamas AND their favorite Fireside Long Jane jamas. They've been exchanged for the slinky intimate apparel received as lingerie shower gifts. Who knew that the lovely, revealing, push up, erotic lingerie intended to promote successive nights of spicy sexcapades would cause pinching, scratching, ill fitting rib poking, and dermatitis from the metal on that perky underwire bra? Who knew it would require the skills of Houdini to get into and out of such "spice garments?"

Don't get me wrong, ladies. I'm all for creating a date night of luxurious romance, mystery, and seduction infused with the thrill of a fresh conquest on which men thrive.

But when, in the midst of your love-dance, you trip over that Damaris Chiacchiere Tulle gown, all that romance can be interrupted by an excursion to the ER! So do we have another option that can provide both the comfort of your PINK jammies and the spice of your lacy lingerie?

I have a suggestion that should satisfy everyone. It's as spicy as your sexiest lingerie gift and as comfortable as being in your own skin! In fact, that's exactly what I'm suggesting. Sleep naked.

Here are a few great reasons: The first is to strengthen the marital bond. It has been shown that skin-to-skin touch increases the release of the hormone oxytocin— a naturally occurring hormone that has positive effects on bonding and attachment. In Volume 3 of the *Encyclopedia of Human Behavior*, Elaine Hatfield and Richard Rapson discuss how the release of this hormone increases feelings of trust and attachment with one's partner, decreases stress, and regulates healthy sleep patterns. Four benefits from the release of just one hormone: increased trust, increased attachment, decreased stress, and better

sleep patterns.

The second advantage—and ladies you should be excited by this—is that you can reset your fat loss hormones when sleeping naked. Dr. Natasha Turner, author of *The Hormone Diet*, says the number one thing you can do at night to burn away fat is to sleep naked. Sleeping naked encourages your body to cool down. As the body cools down during sleep, fat-burning hormones are released. During your nightly snooze, these hormones help rebuild skin cells, bone cells, and muscle cells. Speaking of fat burning activities, if you do sleep naked, your skin-to-skin cuddling could lead to a 200-calorie-burning activity called sex!

The last reason is more for the ladies, actually the lady-bits. We know that cotton panties are better than synthetic for vaginal breathability. Nighttime commando-sleep allows the opportunity for the healthiest option in that department. So be kind to your "downstairs- abbey" and allow the best possible air-condition for her each night. ♥



Chili Peppers & Cayenne

This one is tricky. Because of a chemical called capsaicin, eating chili peppers generates responses in our bodies (e.g.: sweating, increased heart rate, and circulation) that are similar to those experienced when having sex. BUT, the draw-back here is if eaten in large quantities, the irritants contained in spicy foods could lead to discomfort and trigger scatological responses that are not-so-sexy.

The science behind Aphrodisiacs

BY CHRISTINA OCHOA
ILLUSTRATION BY MATTHEW ALLEN

Okay, full-disclosure; that headline is slightly misleading.

Here's why: scientifically speaking, there really are no food items capable of raising your libido, per se. Stay with me, though. See, the term aphrodisiac, named so after the Greek goddess of love and beauty Aphrodite, has been used in cultures across the globe to coin the term for food, drink, or supplements capable of triggering desire in a lover. Unfortunately, according to science, there is no such thing. We are almost at the good part, bear with me.

Now for the good news: Science DOES believe there to be select items in your kitchen to psychologically and physically "aid" your dinner date's brain into relaxing, letting go of inhibitions, and opening up to the pleasures that come after dessert (no pun intended).

As we all know, the mind's control over our bodies is crucial in the physiological process of arousal. Starting with that, we can already

get some basics out of the way. If you eat healthy, energizing food, you are probably feeling sexier than if you chowed down on two bags of donuts, right? Spicy food, for example, is also proven to increase heart rate and circulation (same as...er, let's call it intimacy). So whipped cream may not have any effect on your lover's brain-chemistry, but pull out the wine, candles, and sweet accoutrement, and watch their eyes widen while they receive the ever-clear message: TONIGHT, ITS ON.

So whether because of the social or historical implications, their effect on the body, or even perhaps their phallic form (really no other way to put it here - we DO eat with our eyes first), below is our LOVE& list of proven libido enhancers and the science behind them.



Oysters

Good news oyster lovers! Research unveiled that oysters and other shellfish can raise sexual hormones like serotonin in men and women. They also contain high levels of zinc which stimulate and increase blood flow!

Nutmeg

There is no evidence to prove of the aphrodisiac effects of nutmeg in humans, except in quantity, nutmeg can produce a hallucinogenic effect, but in ancient China, women prized nutmeg as an aphrodisiac, and researchers have indeed found it to increase mating behaviors in mice. So maybe, in moderation, it is worth a shot?



Ginger

The fiery root has long been an esteemed booster in Asia but is little known as such in the West. According to expert Amy Reiley: "It's one of my favorites because its effects are pretty much immediate. It makes the tongue tingle, the lips swell and look just that much more kissable." It also helps raise your body temperature a bit.

Honey

In medieval times, people drank mead, a fermented drink made from honey, to promote sexual desire. In ancient Persia, couples drank mead every day for a month (known as the "honey month" (a.k.a. "honeymoon") after they married. Honey is rich in B vitamins (needed for testosterone production) as well as boron (helps the body metabolize and use estrogen). Some studies have suggested that it may also enhance blood levels of testosterone.



Chocolate

The Valentine's Day favorite has, in fact, been found to correlate with a higher libido in women (that is to say, chocoholics are also statistically more inclined to get frisky) but researchers still don't know why. The placebo effect seems like a likely candidate, but you can't ignore the fact that melted chocolate is perfect for a little body painting.



KITCHEN MUST HAVES

For The Aspiring Home Chef

By Andre Niesing



CITRUS SQUEEZER

Used by master bartenders for decades, these will give you the juice you need, sans the seeds, quickly and cleanly. Hand juicers and electric juices all pale in comparison to the speed and efficiency of these little bad boys.

Surlatable.com



EPICURAN CUTTING BOARD

Believe it or not, in the kitchen, cutting boards are just as important as knives. Things to look for in a cutting board? Light, strong, dishwasher safe, stain free, with a good resistance to bacteria, and a quick and true cutting surface. Search no more: the Epicurean Kitchen Series.

Epicurean.com



CAST IRON SKILLET

Even with an arsenal of non-stick and stainless cookware, a cast iron skillet is a must-have. Iron doesn't conduct heat as well as copper or steel, but once it gets hot, it stays hot. They're perfect for searing steaks, cooking potatoes, and roasting vegetables. They're also easy on the wallet and last a lifetime.

Williams-Sonoma.com



GOOD TONGS

Not just for the BBQ. Tongs can and should be used more than you think. Turning, picking, stirring, serving. These OXO tongs with plastic tips will do the job while not scratching your Teflon pans or piercing your delicate salmon steaks. Locking mechanisms ensure they won't take up awkward space in your kitchen drawers.

Oxo.com



STAND UP MIXER

This tried and true beast has been around for almost 100 years. The 5 quart capacity is perfect for most home recipes, and the durable and powerful motor is strong enough to whip egg whites to oblivion and gentle enough to fold them into your soufflé.

Kitchenaid.com



MICRO PLANE GRATER/ZESTER

This tool was originally a wood working tool. It's perfect for topping pastas and salads with Parmesan or zesting citrus for delicate flavoring. They come in different sizes and colors for all your kitchen needs and aesthetic whims.

Surlatable.com



SANTOKU KNIFE

Perhaps the most versatile knife in your cutlery arsenal. It slices, it dices... you know the rest. With generally a thinner blade, it is ideal for chopping veggies or light duty foods. The low profile blade gets more contact on the cutting board.

Shun.com



GARLIC PRESS

Most purist chefs will advise you to use a sharp knife, but when you have a recipe that calls for a small amount of garlic and you don't want to experience large garlic chunks in your food, these are a life saver. Perfect for a tzatziki sauce, salad dressing, or guacamole.

Surlatable.com



GOOD KITCHEN SHEARS

Necessary? No. But these will make your life easier. You can use these for everything from snipping herbs, to splitting a chicken, to opening crab legs, to cutting open that bag of chocolate chips. Just make sure they are durable, heavy, and dishwasher safe.

Shun.com



HEAVY DUTY PEPPER MILL

This separates the real cuisinier from the novice. 95% of homes have a pepper mill somewhere in their cupboards, but nearly none of them use it regularly. Savor the delicate nuances of freshly ground pepper and never buy ground pepper again.

Surlatable.com



LA CREUSET RAMKINS

Professional chefs keep their cool by using a practice called *mise en place* (translation: set in place). It means that before they start cooking, they prep and measure all of their ingredients so everything is ready and within reach when they fire up the stove. A set of glass custard cups, like these Pyrex 6-ounce versions, can organize measured quantities of minced garlic, chopped herbs, olive oil, vinegar, and other small amounts of ingredients. You can also use them for serving crème brûlée or puddings, or for holding condiments at the dinner table like dipping sauces, flaky sea salt, or grated Parmesan cheese. Bloomingdales.com &



DECANT YOU CAN!

By Gianna Cardinale Gaudini

I believe one can never have too many decanters – those funny shaped decorative vessels used primarily to let wine breathe before serving. Because a decanter is often displayed as a showpiece in addition to providing aeration, people are now purchasing decanters with extravagant shapes and qualities intended to draw attention but I encourage you to use your decanter and not let it collect dust or act as a vase for flowers.

1 DETERMINE WHETHER THE WINE NEEDS TO BE DECANTED

The two veritable reasons to decant wine are to remove sediment and allow the wine to breathe. Typically, older, red wines are classic candidates for decanting, while young wines and white wines do not usually require it. Many older wines will inevitably have sediment and as anyone who has ever reached the end of their glass only to have the last sip full of a gritty, bluish gunk will tell you, it's no picnic. However, it's sometimes an appealing touch as a hostess to decant a wine for guests and not purely for aesthetic reasons; I'd endorse decanting a younger full-bodied red or white wine to allow oxygen to get into the wine and accelerate the release of its aromatic and flavor compounds.

2 LEARN HOW TO PROPERLY DECANT WINE

The trick to decanting wine like a pro is to pour the wine into the decanter slowly and steadily. Before you begin, hold the decanter and wine bottle up to a light to allow you to see the sediment in the bottle. Slowly open the wine, and with a cloth, clean the mouth of the bottle. Next, place either a candle or a light beside the decanter. As you pour the wine into the decanter, allow the light to shine through the neck and shoulder of the bottle so you can see sediment as it starts to make its way into the neck. If you choose to use a candle, be very careful to not position the flame too closely to the bottle so you don't warm the wine as it makes its exit. As the sediment starts to approach the neck of the bottle opening, this is your sign to stop pouring the wine into the decanter. Once this happens, carefully set the bottle down and let it settle for several minutes. If you're keen on it, you may then try again, to potentially squeeze a little more clear wine away from the remaining sediment.

3 DETERMINE WHEN THE DECANTED WINE IS READY TO DRINK

Now that the wine is safely in the decanter, its rich color can be viewed through the clear glass and its aromas can be generously released into the air. The decanter is shaped specifically to allow the maximum amount of surface area for air to hit the wine. While during the years of aging you don't want the wine exposed to air due to oxidation damage, now that you're ready to drink it, getting oxygen across a good surface area of a wine will draw out its aromas, which enhances your ability to taste the wine completely. Thirty minutes to one hour is a good amount of time to let the wine fully open up, and you will continue to see the wine flavors change throughout the evening as the wine continues to breathe. Generally speaking, as soon as an older wine is opened there's a fine timeline between it opening up and losing its character, so leaving it in the decanter for several hours (as you might with a younger vintage) will not benefit the wine or your palate. ♥



5 FINANCIAL MISTAKES NEWLY MARRIED COUPLES MAKE

1. NOT COMBINING FINANCES

His and her shampoo? Sure. His and her towels? Maybe. His and her bank accounts? Bad idea. As much as marriage is about love, it's also about partnership. And nothing needs more goal oriented trust than financial management. By keeping finances and spending completely separate, you lock that person out of something which you should be working together on as one unit.

2. DEBT IS OURS NOW... NOT JUST MINE ANYMORE

This is, of course, a conversation that should be had before the alter. If one of you has compiled a ten thousand dollar credit card bill, or has to pay off students loans for the next 20 years, then this should be a major discussion. If you ever want to own a car or a home together, BOTH of your credit scores will be examined. Figure a way out of debt and be open and honest about what you owe.

3. ONE OF US IS THE SPENDER, THE OTHER THE SAVER

This is the case with about 9 out of 10 married couples, after all opposites attract! When it comes to spending, one person will be the gas and the other the brakes. Blame it on cultural differences, upbringing, propensity for name brand bottled water, either way, this is a major hot spot in marriages. Find out who is the spender and who is the saver. Discuss why. Then figure out good compromises that allow you to live comfortably with your purchases and each other.

4. KEEPING SPENDING SECRETS

One thing that should stay outside of marriage is secrets. After all, becoming one in matrimony means that nothing is hidden. One of the worst secrets that divides couples is how you spend your money. Keeping that \$700 show purchase or \$500 golf round to yourself can build resentment, cause hurt feelings, and, worst of all, divide

your financial goals and partnership. Set (reasonable) compromises in spending so you both feel the freedom to occasionally splurge on whatever you want.

5. THINKING YOU'RE YOUNG AND YOU DON'T NEED TO SAVE FOR EMERGENCIES

Insurance is expensive. Until you need it for that house burglary or major medical procedure. It's not an uncommon thought for married couples to think they don't need to save for a rainy day. You can always make more money, right? Well, just as devastating as it is to have to pay out of pocket for that totaled car because you didn't have insurance, it's the same to have to sell one of your cars, or your home to have to pay for unexpected costs, a loss of a job, or even worse.

—By Andre Niesing

SAVE ØR \$PLURGE

Whether you're heading out for a romantic overnight road trip to wine country, or taking a three week tour of Western Europe, your luggage should be functional and stylish. These days hard shell multi-roller suitcases are ubiquitous among fashion forward

couples. The polycarbonate, or metal alloy shells offer protection for your goods, both from impact and weather. The multi spinning wheels glide effortlessly from your driveway, through the terminal and into your hotel room. Here are two great examples. One

for those on a smaller budget who maybe want to spend extra cash on martinis and massages, and one for the couple that wants to look like James Bond and Miss Money Penny.



**DELSEY HELIUM EXPANDABLE AERO
29" SPINNER TROLLEY**

\$400

Durable, light, and fashionable, the Delsey Helium is made from a polycarbonate shell and expands 2 inches for more capacity. It comes in slightly lighter at 12.5 pounds and has TSA approved locks. Zippered Divider. Available in Brick Red, Cobalt Blue, and Titanium Silver. Manufacturer's limited 10 year warranty.
Available at [Bloomingdales \(Bloomingdales.com\)](#)



**RIMOWA TOPAS STEALTH
29" MULTIWHEEL**

\$1,500

Lets face it, The Germans make the slickest stuff. Stronger, lighter, faster. With a black anodized finish, made from an aluminum magnesium alloy, this large, but super lightweight multi-wheel roller weighs in at only 14.6 pounds empty. TSA approved locks. Flex divider system. Manufacturer's 5 year warranty.
Available at [Bloomingdales \(Bloomingdales.com\)](#) ♥&



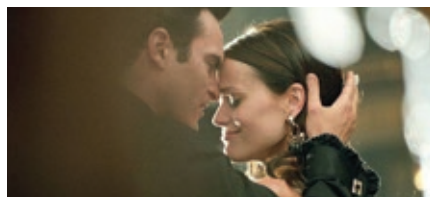
12 MOVIES THAT HONOR MARRIAGE (THAT DON'T SUCK)

Are you sick of the media making marriage out to be a farce? How about movies glorifying scandalous affairs? And TV shows about dopey husbands and nagging wives? We found these 12 movies that will surely give you a renewed confidence in your marriage vows. (And we did everything in our power not to compile a list of cheesy and formulaic ubiquitous romantic comedies.) Some of these flicks are funny, some are sad, but all will entertain you while leaving you with renewed assurance in the beauty of marriage. —By Andre Niesing



CRAZY, STUPID, LOVE

Ryan Gosling. Women want him, men want to be him. That may seem to be the premise of this movie, but alas it's more about the undying love of a couple going through a divorce. Lesson: If you give up on seducing and wooing your wife, she'll surely sleep with Kevin Bacon. Not really, but maybe in a sixth degree kinda way.



WALK THE LINE

The story of Johnny Cash and June Carter. Cash, one of music's grittiest personalities is the unlikely hero in the world of loveless relationships. This couple's beginning stages is certainly far from ideal, but the passion they bring, and the commitment they endure is amazing.



KNOCKED UP

We all focus on the hilarious hijinks of the impregnated couple for which the movie is delicately named, but focus on the relationship between Paul Rudd and Leslie Mann. This is real marriage with real problems that are exposed and ironed out. You can't help but cringe then laugh while relating to the unglamorous and messy side of marriage.



GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER

This movie shows how a couple deeply in love can transcend society's antagonism and their families' opposition to their love. If you think *Meet the Parents* was a poke on the awkward introduction to the in-laws, then you gotta see this.



FATHER OF THE BRIDE

Is there a more quintessential uplifting movie about marriage and weddings out there? The whimsical journey of Annie and Brian is dripping with romantic clichés, but let's not forget to give credit to the Banks', George and Nina. They gracefully endure the dramas of wedding planning, extraneous spending, a night in jail, and of course superfluous hot dog buns.



WHEN HARRY MET SALLY

You've heard people say they want to marry their best friend. Well this movie honestly (and hysterically) paints that picture. A highlight of this film is the "real-life" interviews in-between scenes that showcase older couples still in love after decades of bickering and finishing each other's sentences.



JUST MARRIED

The honeymoon is literally over before it begins for this couple. Rich girl and her goofball slacker husband traverse through Europe while fighting, arguing and brawling leaving a trail of bitterness, hurt, and animosity. Believe it or not, it ends well.



FOOLS RUSH IN

A dorky white boy and a sultry Latina get to know each other well in this movie. AFTER they are married. Yes, this movie might unrealistically show the success of infatuated couples getting married too soon, but issues of differing families merging, conflicting personalities, and contrasting goals are conquered by love and sacrifice.



THE FAMILY MAN

Classic riches to rags story here. (If there is such a thing.) This isn't the first time a movie shows the fleeting happiness found in material accumulation over love and family. But the genuine love and foresight that obscures the issues this couple faces completely reassures you in the beauty and honor of marriage.



HALL PASS

Here is a movie about the frivolities of extra-marital affairs. Why does this movie belong on this list? Look past the crudity and initial implications and you'll find real issues that are worked through, yes comically of course, that ultimately bring committed couples closer together.



UP

Look beyond the flying house, robot dogs, and curmudgeonly antics of the old man towards the annoying kid, and you find a heart-felt tale of ever-lasting love and commitment. I don't know a single person that doesn't bawl their eyes out just from the opening scene alone.



THE NOTEBOOK

A great movie based on one of Nicolas Spark's pre-cliché -soaked and formulaic romances. We can't give anything away by talking about it, but utter devotion and love-driven perseverance is the main theme of this tear jerker. Seriously, if you don't cry at the end of this movie, you're dead inside. ♡



DATE NIGHT

BY SARAH SCHIFF

We're not suggesting that there isn't something romantic about firing up the Netflix queue, ordering takeout, and having a pajama party on the couch with your favorite face. We get it. The week is long and tiring, so it makes sense that the weekend is often spent recharging and readying to start all over again on Monday morning, but in the hustle and bustle of day-to-day life, it's essential to carve out some special time for you and your partner and to remind yourselves why you're the two luckiest people in the world for getting to fall asleep next to each other every night. Take a look at the calendar, pick a day that works for both of your schedules, and get out there and rekindle your dating life.

\$50 Picnics seem really lavish and lovely but really require very little effort. Pack a picnic tote - plates, knives, glasses, napkins, a bottle opener, and a blanket should do the trick- and then head to the grocery store for the basics: wine, cheese (our go-to wedges include: double-crème brie, camembert, a tangy blue, and then a "mystery" selection, meaning we pretty much just close our eyes and pick), and a baguette. You could call it a day and head to the checkout line, but I'm a firm believer in the attention to details, meaning we usually throw some additional accoutrements into our basket:

apples, almonds, honey, dried cranberries, grapes, dried salami- the options are limitless. Find a grassy knoll, lay out your blanket, and feast away. Swoon.

\$100 Take a class together. Whether it be mixology, photography, dance, cooking, or art, there are innumerable activities for you and your partner to master together. HowAboutWe.com recently launched a new component to their website designed for couples; each month, they send a personalized DateBook with beautifully presented, one-of-a-kind dates curated for their users at a discount. Couples pay an \$80 monthly subscription, which can be applied to the first date booked each month, essentially translating to a free date! (Paddleboard Yoga, anyone?) Visit couples.howaboutwe.com for more information.

\$200 Say what you will about the clichés surrounding a couple's day at the spa. The truth of the matter is, everyone benefits from a relaxing rubdown. Bask in the glory of scented candles and scattered rose petals and lemon infused water and let that rainforest ambiance soundtrack melt away your worries about the workweek. To get the most bang for your buck, book with a spa that has a sauna or a soak and make an afternoon out of it. You both deserve it.

DATE IDEAS



1 Leisurely peel yourselves out of bed, put on your Sunday best, and treat yourselves to a fancy brunch. Turn off your cell phones, order a round of bottomless mimosas, and lovingly stare at each other for a while.



2 Visit a gallery or a museum. (Most offer free admission at least once a month, so do some Internet investigating beforehand!) Ooh and awe over the art and then talk about which pieces moved you the most and why.



3 Spend an evening at the theater. Don't feel like you have to go to a ritzy venue either. Try out community theaters and local playhouses and be open-minded to never-heard-of productions.



7 Want to get physical? Why not try indoor rock climbing? (IndoorClimbing.com has an extensive list of Rock Climbing Gyms all over the country.) Shimmy up those walls and celebrate the sweet sound of that victory bell.



11 Meander around a used bookstore. Pick something new-to-both-of-you and start a two-person book club.



4 Track down one of those silly pop-up carnivals and make out at the top of the Ferris wheel. Share a funnel cake piled high with whipped cream, try your hand at winning a giant stuffed animal, and laugh until your stomach hurts.



8 Put preconceived notions aside and go to the opera. Extra credit if it's in a different language and you have to read along to projected subtitles.



12 Have a multi-course meal at a bunch of different restaurants. Find a stretch of street with numerous options for eateries and get an appetizer, a main course, a dessert, and an after dinner drink at four different locations.



5 Take a day trip to a winery. Soak up some sun while sipping on a wine flight with your sweetheart. Bonus points if you sign up for a membership - each delivery is an excuse for date night!



9 Just wander. I'm shameless about my love of Yelp, but there's something fun about not relying on the recommendations of strangers and just going wherever the wind takes you. Walk around a new neighborhood and pop into places that spark your interest.



13 Go to a coffee shop and finish a crossword puzzle together. (Get a Monday paper if you two are newly treading on crossword puzzle territory. They get harder throughout the week, and I've never finished one published past Thursday.)



6 Track down a recipe that makes both of your mouths water, find a local farmer's market, and go to town. Put on some music, shake up some cocktails, and learn how to use all of those kitchen gadgets together.



10 Do something active outside. My beau is a runner. I am not. Our compromise? Hiking. Slather on some sunscreen, fill a backpack with water bottles and granola bars, and hit the trail. Exercise releases endorphins and you know what they say about endorphins.



14 Go to a nude beach. Hey, no tan lines! ♥

SEASONAL TABLE:



FALL *with Eat DrinkAmericano*



EAT DRINK
AMERICANO



EAT DRINK
AMERICANO



By: Elizabeth Johnson / Photos by: Andre Niesing

We caught up with Michael Burke, the man behind Eat Drink Americano, a gastropub in the teeming Arts District in downtown Los Angeles, to gather some inventive ideas for a seasonal harvest table. Michael, who hails from Liverpool, pulled out all the stops, including hard-to-find beer and wine selections showcasing his love for Northern California. Chef Ryan Grimm cooked up a storm for our readers. A graduate of the California Culinary Academy, Ryan shares with us that his love for culinary arts came from spending time in the kitchen with his grandmothers when he was young. He believes that

food is so much more than just nutrition and fuel for our bodies. He elaborates: "It can alter a person's attitude and affect their entire day. I believe that if a guest comes in and is having a bad day, I can turn it around for them with great food and amazing service. That's my goal every time I have a guest walk through my door; everyone leaves with a smile on their face." The domestically sourced and artisanally produced American pub style food encourages foodies and romantics to definitely try this at home so their guests walk out the door with smiles on their faces. Eat Drink Americano, enjoy!

Recipes



**RASPBERRY
ENDIVE SALAD**
By Chef Gary Walsh

6 oz Baby arugula
2 White endives
2 Purple endive
1/4 C Toasted Pecans
2 oz Raspberries
3 Parmesan crisps
2 oz Raspberry pecan vinaigrette

RASPBERRY PECAN VINAIGRETTE

3 oz Raspberry vinegar
5 oz Vegetable oil
2 oz Pecan oil
1/4 tsp Salt
1/8 tsp Pepper
Combine vinegar, salt, and pepper.

Then slowly whisk in the oils.

PARMESAN CRISPS

8oz shredded parmesan
1oz chopped parsley
Preheat oven to 300 degrees. Combine parmesan and parsley, spread out on an oiled baking sheet, about a 1/4 inch thick and bake between 5 to 10 minutes, until lightly browned, and let cool.

PILGRIM

2 oz corn foam
4 oz stuffing
5 oz pulled turkey
1 oz cranberry sauce

TURKEY

1 Turkey Breast
1 Turkey Thigh
1 qt Chicken Stock
1 tsp rosemary
1 tsp thyme
2 bay leaf

WHITE WINE STEAMED MUSCLES WITH WHITE TRUFFLE AIOLI

By Chef Ryan Grimm

12 oz muscles
1 Tbs minced garlic
1/2 oz shaved shallot
2 oz halved cherry tomatoes
Pinch red pepper flakes
Heavy pinch salt and pepper
1tsp of chopped thyme
3 oz white wine
2 Tbs butter
1/2 oz lemon juice
1Tbs chopped parsley
In a hot sauté pan, add the olive oil and shallots, follow with the muscles, garlic, salt, pepper, and chili flakes. Deglaze with white wine and cherry tomatoes, cover and let steam for 3 minutes. Add remaining ingredients except the parsley and cook for another 2 minutes. Finish with parsley and remove from the heat. Garnish with white truffle aioli.

WHITE TRUFFLE AIOLI

1 whole egg
1 egg yolk
1 oz lemon juice
1 tbs Dijon mustard
1 tsp salt
9 oz vegetable oil
1 oz truffle oil

In a blender add eggs, salt, lemon juice and mustard. Turn blender on lowest setting and in a slow steady stream begin adding the oil. Be careful not to over work or the emulsion will break.



Braise all ingredients on low heat for 6 hours; remove rosemary, thyme, and bay leaves, let cool and pull turkey with reserved juices and combine.

CORN FOAM

12 oz heavy cream
3/4 corn kernels
1 tbs salt
2 CO2 cartridges

Heat corn, cream, and salt together strain in chinois and put in creamer, add 2 CO2 cartridges.

CRANBERRY SAUCE

12 oz can cranberry sauce
1 oz water
Blend until smooth and chill.



BRAISED LAMB SHANK WITH CELERY ROOT PURÉE AND SHAVED FENNEL

By Chef Ryan Grimm

4 8 oz Lamb shanks
12 oz Onion-medium, diced
12 oz Celery-medium, diced
12 oz Carrots-medium, diced
1 oz whole Thyme
8 cloves Garlic
Salt and pepper
1 oz Vegetable oil
16 oz Red wine
24 oz Beef stock- hot
Preheat oven to 325 degrees, place the onion, carrots, celery, garlic, and thyme in the bottom of a braising pan. Season and sear the shanks in a pre-heated pan, taking care to sear each side of the shank. Once seared, place shanks in the braising pan and deglaze your sauté pan with the wine. When the alcohol is cooked off, add the wine to the shanks and use your hot beef stock to cover the shanks the rest of the way with liquid. Cover the pan with foil and place in oven for 2 to 3 hours, until tender and ready to fall off the bone. Strain the remaining liquid and use as the sauce.

alcohol is evaporated. Add vinegar and sugar and reduce for 2 minutes. Pour hot vinegar solution over blueberries and cover. Let sit until cooled to room temperature and strain liquid, leaving just enough to cover the berries. Reduce the liquid to a syrup and reserve for garnish.

CELERY ROOT PURÉE

24oz Celery root-medium, diced
6 cloves Roasted Garlic
2oz Butter
2oz Cream
1 tsp Salt
1 tsp White pepper
Blanch the celery root in slightly salted water until fork tender. Puree in blender with remaining ingredients. Adjust seasoning to taste.

SHAVED FENNEL

Fennel- thinly shaved
Ice water
Red wine vinegar
Extra virgin olive oil
Salt
Hold shaved fennel in ice water until needed. For service, drain fennel and lightly toss with vinegar, oil, and salt.

PICKLED BLUEBERRIES

4oz Red wine
6oz Red wine vinegar
3oz Sugar
1 pint Blueberries
Preheat small pot, add wine and cook until

Eat Drink Americano
923 E 3rd St #101, Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 620-0781
EatDrinkAmericano.com

YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT BIRTH CONTROL ANSWERED!

Cutting through the mythology, hearsay, and urban legendry of the notorious Pill.

The question of how to prevent inadvertent baby-making is a timeless one. In this day and age, thanks to good old science, the options abound. In fact, the options can be overwhelming: there's intra-uterine devices good for 5-10 years of birth control, a small implant under the skin good for a few years, a shot good for a few months, an intra-vaginal ring good for a month, and then there's daily pill taking. And no one should forget condoms which are still the only method that provides protection against sexually transmitted diseases. Then there are non-medical birth control options such as the rhythm method and the ever popular and ever failing method popularly known as the Pull-Out Method. Not a birth control method at all, just ask your friends with babies. What's a girl to do?

Is Birth control-99% effective?

Technically, the pill is 99.9% effective, according to research in a lab. And, if you're serious about NOT making a baby this year, you're probably wondering what kind of 99% they're talking about: am I going to get pregnant 1 out of 1000 times I have sex? Or is it 1 out of 1000 women become pregnant while using the pill? Luckily, it's the latter. So if you use the pill exactly how you're supposed to, you could have sex 1,000 times a month and still not get any more pregnant than if you had sex once a year. So go at it.

In reality, only 92% efficacy of the pill is seen. Why is that?

Because we make mistakes! Women miss pills, skip pills, double or triple up on pills, or forget to start their pack on the right date, oops. That 8% margin is human error. So if remembering to take a pill at the same time every day no matter what seems like a daunting task to you, this method of birth control may not be right for you.

I've been on the pill for years, is that going to affect my ability to make babies when I'm ready to have kids?

There is no documented correlation with taking the pill and decreased or delayed fertility of women. And this method of birth control has been around for decades, long enough to see generational patterns. After discontinuing the pill, 70-95% of women will become pregnant in the next year, and this rate is identical to the rates seen with non-hormonal family planning, such as condom use. Declining fertility is seen, however, as we get older and this is seen in both women who have been on the pill or who have never been on the pill. If you are concerned about delayed fertility, the birth control injection or implant may not be for you, as these methods can lead to delayed fertility from around nine months to a year.

What about the pill where you only have four periods a year? Isn't that bad?

Many folks have a hard time with the idea of not having regular periods. It is a natural function, yes, but not an essential function. It's like having the hiccups: natural, yes; necessary, no. For people on this type of pill, a non-menstruating uterus is still a healthy, happy uterus. Even some women on standard oral birth control (21 days on, seven days off) don't have periods, or have very light periods, and that is not a sign of a problem. It can, though, be a little pesky when you are looking for reassurance that you aren't pregnant. If you aren't on birth control, however, not having periods could be a sign of a hormonal problem, and you should see your doc.

Am I going to gain weight on the pill?

Quick answer: It's likely. More accurate answer: Not because of the pill. Contrary to what some women say, the pill is not what's behind these extra pounds.

Many studies have shown that rates of weight gain are similar in women who are on the pill and who are not. The pill doesn't make you fatter, calories do. Progesterone can be to blame because studies have shown it to increase appetite. It is also known to cause you retain water. Luckily, this isn't usually permanent, and your body adjusts to the new hormones after a month or two. As long as you don't adjust to regularly popping cupcakes and ice cream in your mouth, your weight gain should be manageable.

Who is the pill NOT recommended for?

Generally, the pill is safe in women under 35 years old. This is because the risk of cardiovascular events, such as stroke or blood clot, go up with age. If you are above this age, I would consider non-hormonal methods of birth control. You should also be a non-smoker if you are on the pill, because smoking + the pill = increased risk of having a possibly fatal blood clot. There has also been a correlation with migraine headaches and increased risk of blood clot on birth control. If you have a history of breast cancer or other gynecologic cancers, I would not recommend hormonal birth control. Same goes for liver disease. Talk to your health care practitioner about any of these issues. Don't forget, if you have trouble remembering to take a pill at the same time every day, you would be doomed to sweating bullets for your period to come every month. Not that a cute chubby new baby is a bad thing, but that's the whole reason you were taking the birth control, right? ♥

—Tamara O'Nan, MSPA, PA-C

Your Friendly Neighborhood Medical Practitioner

YOU
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GET FILLED AT FORD'S FILLING STATION



BEN FORD

THE URBAN FORAGER

By Emily Nordee

When meeting Chef Ben Ford for the first time, you might find yourself thinking of an Indiana Jones movie, not just because of his rugged good looks and his finesse with kitchen knives, but mainly because he has an uncanny resemblance to his father, who you may have heard of, the great Harrison Ford.

Seven years ago, Ben and his now wife Emily opened Ford's Filling Station, a regional gastropub on the main drag of the once gritty neighborhood of Culver City. The restaurant focuses on innovative American cuisine bridging the gap between fine and casual dining, and has helped pave the way into the resurgence of the area while creating a sense of community for locals and visitors alike.

The devoted family man and father of two earned his kitchen stripes at several distinguished California institutions, from Chez Panisse in Berkeley and The Farm of Beverly Hills to Opus and Campanile. He also opened, and later closed, the acclaimed Chadwick in Beverly Hills, and ultimately decided to return to his basics when starting Ford's Filling Station, drawing from the skills he learned from his mother's kitchen and his time behind the line.

As a chef, Ben believes in utilizing the finest local ingredients, proving that truly good food doesn't have to be overly complicated. He prides himself on being an urban forager, frequently finding ingredients in public areas surrounding the restaurant and his home.

"I am an intuitive chef and the exploration of cooking is an active and creative process for me. I believe in a culture of reciprocal teaching



and learning, the craft of cooking, and old school techniques. This artisan approach is time consuming but I find that the more creatively involved I am in the food I cook, the more satisfying it is for me."

In true "family business" fashion, Ben holds court in the back of the house; Emily handles the other half of the business, from staff scheduling and training to the branding and marketing of the restaurant. They share a similar food philosophy and believe in giving back to the community.

"Emily and I have been married for five years, from raising our children to operating the restaurant, we are truly a cohesive unit. The secret to maintaining balance for us is to keep "work" outside the front door, and we never take the smartphone to bed," says Ben.

At home, Emily makes family favorites such as linguine with clams, while Ben experiments with new recipes and ingredients.

"I am kind of the mad scientist in the kitchen, as a result she is the cleaner cook at home," joked Ben.

The power couple donates their time to charitable organizations including Share Our Strength, whose goal is to help end childhood hunger in America. They have launched a garden at Farragut Elementary School in Culver City, which is dedicated to teaching students about planting and harvesting an organic garden. 🌱

Visit Ben and Emily at Ford's Filling Station:
9531 Culver Boulevard
Culver City, CA 90232-2618
310-202-1470

You can also visit the second branch of Ford's Filling Station at LAX Terminal 5.

HE PRIDES HIMSELF ON BEING AN **URBAN FORAGER**, FREQUENTLY FINDING INGREDIENTS IN PUBLIC AREAS SURROUNDING THE RESTAURANT AND HIS HOME.

**PEOPLE ARE 75 PERCENT MORE LIKELY
TO DIVORCE WHEN A CLOSE FRIEND
THROWS IN THE TOWEL**





IS DIVORCE CONTAGIOUS?

UNDERSTANDING THE CULTURAL EPIDEMIC

By Andre Niesing

Everyone seems to be catching it these days. It's estimated that this year approximately 75% of the population in California will have it and unfortunately the numbers are growing. Some consider it to be the worst it's ever been and the more it hits, the more people get taken down.

Nope, we're not talking about the flu.

The latest epidemic to hit our generation is divorce, and not only is it a nasty strain, it seems to be highly contagious. Committed couples are dropping like flies.

But why?

A 32-year study recently resulted in a paper entitled, "Breaking Up is Hard to Do, Unless Everyone Else is Doing It." Published by Rose McDermott, James Fowler, and Nicholas Christakis, the paper concluded that infidelity, and ultimately divorce, can actually spread amongst friends and family. Researchers discovered that people are 75% more likely to divorce when a close friend throws in the towel. And apparently the chance of divorce increases by 22% when a

sibling divorces.

We'd like to think of ourselves as independent thinkers, free spirits who aren't influenced by the "trend du jour," so to speak. We pretend we are past the days of joining our friends in jumping off the proverbial cliff, and yet deep down we know that something rings true to "everyone else is doing it." If we are so easily swayed in the smaller areas of our lives, why wouldn't it translate to our relationships?

I had a friend who would always talk about how amazing her husband was, how she had found the love of her life, and how nothing could ever separate them. That was until three of her closest buddies decided to trade in their marriages for the bar scene they had missed due to marrying so young. Suddenly she was riddled with angst over how she never got to party, and how if she didn't follow her dreams now, she would forever be an old maid who never had any fun.

This is surely a case of the "grass is always greener" syndrome. When seemingly happy

couples witness friends or family divorce and start to covet their new freedom, so to speak, they begin to put less effort into their marriage. Rather than seeing divorce as a last resort option, they tend to see it as inevitable.

The good news! You are in control of your marriage. Sure there isn't much you can do when everyone in your household and workplace is suffering from that flu bug, but there are things you can do to get your marriage back on track. You have complete reign in how you process divorces in your immediate circle.

If you are discouraged by the rate of divorce around you, find new couples to surround yourself with who value marriage. The most important part here is honesty. If you are feeling anxious about all the divorces and separations of your peers, talk openly and honestly about it. Find common ground that will get you back on the path to a faithful, fruitful, and exciting marriage. 💕

MORE ORGASMS, LESS PAIN,

SEX IS NOT ONLY SEXY, IT'S HEALTHY!

By Dr. Shannon M. Chavez, Psy. D

Forget pain relievers and sleep aids—have an orgasm instead! Self-medicating with an orgasm can cause relief from insomnia, generalized muscular pain, and even migraines. If you have one at the beginning of your migraine it is possible at times to stop it from progressing. Orgasms are also amazing stress relievers. Of course when you are in pain you may not feel like having sex, but using it therapeutically can be very beneficial.

Sex releases endorphins, the body's natural painkillers, which helps manage pain – causing a 70% pain decrease on average. Who wouldn't want to have an orgasm over taking Aspirin or Ibuprofen?

When you have an orgasm it has a natural pain killing effect on the body. Immediately before orgasm, levels of the hormone oxytocin surge to five times their normal level. This activates the release of endorphins, which alleviates the pain of everything from arthritis to irritating migraine headaches. For women, sex also prompts the production of estrogen, which can reduce the pain of PMS.

When sex is not desired, you can use masturbation that ends with an orgasm to produce the exact same pain relieving effects. For women, getting a clitoris stimulator, which can bring about orgasm quickly, is the most useful (most well-known is the Hitachi Magic Wand). It can also save time if sex isn't an option.

SEX: PAIN RELIEF AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

A research study showed that orgasms induce elevations in blood pressure and pulse, as well as in levels of plasma epinephrine and norepinephrine.

Plasma prolactin substantially increased after orgasm and remained elevated 60 minutes after sexual arousal. Sexual arousal also produced small increases in other hormones, plasma LH (leuteinizing hormone) and testosterone. FSH (follicle stimulating hormone), beta endorphin, progesterone, and estradiol were unaffected by orgasm. The study concluded that sexual arousal and orgasm produce a distinct pattern of hormonal alterations in women, primarily inducing a long-lasting elevation in plasma prolactin concentrations, suggesting that prolactin is an endocrine marker of sexual arousal and orgasm.

It has been reported that oxytocin levels increased in association with massage and with positive emotion, but decreased in relation to sad emotion. Oxytocin is a chemical secreted and released by the pituitary gland and is increased during orgasm in both men and women. Social stimuli is thought to cause oxytocin release, and as a result make positive social contact more rewarding.

Oxytocin enhances the level of subjective arousal and pleasure at orgasm in women. These findings are evidence that oxytocin has an endorphin like effect and that endorphins play a role in the human sexual response. Either way, the release of oxytocin during the sexual response has pain relieving and wound healing benefits.

Research studies on oxytocin report that women have higher oxytocin levels when they are in a close relationship, during positive emotional states, and when they are more secure in their relationships. Women not in a relationship have lower oxytocin levels and more difficulty with emotional openness.

WHO WOULDN'T WANT TO HAVE AN ORGASM OVER TAKING AN ASPIRIN?



In the more secure subjects, the higher levels of oxytocin seemed in turn to reinforce their bond with their partners.

EMOTIONAL PAIN

Emotional withdrawal is a result of feeling ill or experiencing depression. The symptoms are lack of energy and fatigue from the illness and the pain. If a person is in pain, it restricts the ability to reach out emotionally. It depletes one's energy and impairs physical ability to participate socially. This leads to social deprivation, which then leads to loss of interest in activities. This can develop into a loss of self esteem. Emotional withdrawal is both the cause and effect of fatigue, pain, and social deprivation.

Happy social interplay is energizing. Who doesn't like to play? It distracts the perception of pain and enhances the sense of self esteem. Sexual interplay is the most intimate and meaningful of social interplay. It is the most powerful remedy for the de-energizing loss of self esteem. The capacity for natural performance is impacted by pain and loss of motion.

Consider different positions and methods of providing sexual pleasure with a partner. The capacity for natural enjoyment is impaired by the loss of self esteem, physical difficulties, and pain. The best support and medicine is a loving, caring sexual encounter that can be practiced frequently!

SEX DOES THE BODY GOOD!

Studies report that having sex even a few times a week has an associative or causal relationship with the following:

- Improved sense of smell: After sex, production of the hormone prolactin surges causing stem cells in the brain to develop new neurons in the brain's olfactory bulb, the smell center.
- Reduced risk of heart disease: A study reported that by having sex three or more times a week, men reduced their risk of heart attack or stroke by half.
- Weight loss and overall fitness: Sex is the best source of exercise and can burn up to 200 calories — about the same as running 15 minutes on a treadmill. The pulse rate in a person aroused rises from about 70 beats per minute to 150, the same as that of a person working out at maximum effort.

Muscular contractions during intercourse work the pelvis, thighs, buttocks, arms, neck, and thorax. Sex also boosts production of testosterone, which leads to stronger bones and muscles.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO HAVE TOO MUCH SEX?

Good news ladies! For women, probably not, for men, yes! University of Bristol researcher, Dr. Claire Bailey says that there is little to no risk of women having too much sex; in fact, regular sex improves posture and firms your thighs and butt!

For men, the penile tissues can sustain damage from sex that is too rough, along with overuse, which can sometimes lead to permanent damage. Viagra and Levitra are drugs that give men more staying power than is actually good for them — being sexually active is healthy but putting too much demand on the body can sometimes be more than the body can physically handle. ♡

JOSHUA TREE: FROM SUNRISE TO SUNSET



TREAT YOURSELF TO SOME PEACE AND LOVE BENEATH

By Dolly Lemke

"Getting away" is an incredibly common turn of phrase and it means something different for everyone, depending on where you need to escape from or who you are escaping with. Preferably you escape with someone you love deeply and with whom you are ready to blaze a trail of awesomeness. Hopefully, you are scarping for the right reasons: the full-on arctic blast in the Midwest this past winter, or insert any terrible Los Angeles freeway here, or maybe you are

just bored. These are all great reasons to go to the desert, specifically Joshua Tree.

When I need to get away I look for a rich landscape, total silence and freedom. No trains, no freeway, no bank lines. I want it to resemble nothing of my daily life. I want dirt roads and a drink in my hand. I want a vacation where I don't feel guilty for not sightseeing. Being awe-struck, content, and gosh-darn it, happy even, is unusual, but when you are in Joshua Tree with someone

you love and the house you rented didn't break the bank, that's something to be happy about. The desert has magical abilities to make you less like a machine and more like a human being again.

Start with Vacation Rentals By Owner (VRBO.com), and read the crap out of the reviews. They are extremely accurate. This is not a too-good-to-be-true situation. A positive review means these people genuinely loved staying in this rental so you



THE SUN, MOON AND STARS OF THE CALIFORNIA DESERT

should believe them and scoop up the dates you want right away. I found a place called Shangri-la and was like, no way, this rental can't possibly live up to its name: a remote, beautiful, and imaginary place where life approaches perfection. I can certainly say from first-hand experience that this is 100% accurate. I lived it with people I love dearly for three glorious days.

At an affordable \$175 a night (depending on the season), Shangri-la offered everything

we were looking for: privacy, silence, a clean and nicely furnished cabin about a 20-minute drive from the city center where you purchase groceries and firewood, go out to eat or buy some kitschy desert trinket. No judgment. My apartment is littered with "sentimental" items. There is a huge Walmart in town where, and I hope everyone knows, you can get ANYTHING and EVERYTHING. Set your social politics aside; this as a food and beverage sanctuary.

A few perks we weren't expecting were a dishwasher and outdoor shower. AN OUTDOOR SHOWER! This was my first outdoor showering experience and I highly recommend it. It's extremely liberating watching the water and suds trail into the harsh cracked ground as the outside air hugs your every curve. OK, it's pretty goddamn sexy, too.

Looking out your back door isn't the only place in Joshua Tree where you can witness



incredible sunsets and explore the vast and deceptively barren landscape of the desert. We were welcomed into the Joshua Tree National Park by a pleasant park ranger, threw the map in the back seat and just started driving. It's easy to feel lost here amongst the giant boulders and twisted flora, but you always have the winding road to guide you. Our destination was Keys View where a myriad of geographic landmarks were all visible from one location: the Little San Bernardino Mountains, Coachella Valley, the Salton Sea, San Jacinto Peak,

and on a very clear day, Signal Mountain in Mexico can be seen. We walked to the edge and took way more pictures than were necessary, wrapped our arms around each other, watched the sun dip into the west. Naturally, we forgot how quickly it gets cold in the desert once the sun goes down so we rushed to the car, and as we drove away we saw the moon, bright and full. We came full circle, nestled between the sun and moon, happy to be freezing and together.

One of the best perks about this kind of getaway is that you get to decide what you

will be doing during every minute. You can spend a full 48 hours never seeing another human being, drinking bloodies and Modelo for 14 hours, and then go dancing at Pappy & Harriet's located 20 minutes away. That's another great point, almost everything you need, want, and desire is about 20 minutes away, or it's sitting right next to you watching the sunset like you've never thought possible. Back to Pappy & Harriet's: This place is the jam, literally, please go there and jam out to the house band. They will knock your classic-rock-cover-band socks



**JOSHUA TREE WILL REMIND
YOU WHAT GETTING UP TO
SEE THE SUNRISE CAN DO
FOR YOUR SOUL, FOR YOUR
RELATIONSHIP, FOR YOUR
PERSPECTIVE ON LIFE.**



off. They have pool tables, an outdoor grill, a full menu and bar, but get there early and be ready to wait because everyone wants a piece of this place. Also, because Pappy & Harriet's is nestled between the mountains, you will not have phone reception. Instagram will have to wait; you are living dangerously off the grid for the night.

We forget it's possible to let the day decide what you'll do, with commuting, conference calls, brand meetings, whatever your day job might be, you forget to be human sometimes. You forget why your

body hurts or why your heart hurts. Joshua Tree will remind you what getting up to see the sunrise can do for your soul, for your relationship, for your perspective on life. There are cycles and patterns bigger than any human can truly appreciate, until you've seen it and you know you can see it again. Slowing down can't possibly be easier than in Joshua Tree.

Go get it. Go get that calm and quiet, go get that dangerous side living amongst rattlesnakes and black widows. Go get whatever you need from Joshua Tree, and

you'll be better for it. The only issue you'll run into is your new obsession with dry heat and when your next desert fix is coming. Enjoy your life. Save your money and keep coming back because this is the kind of living you need to experience more often. ♡

– By Dolly Lemke, Founder & Co-curator
The Dollhouse Reading Series
TheDollhouseReads.tumblr.com

Images by Matthew Allen, Lauren Beitel & Meghan Webster

IS WHAT YOU DO WHO YOU ARE?

VENTURING FORWARD THROUGH UNCHARTED TERRITORY



By Barbara Kloss

I was never one of those types that knew what they wanted to be since they were crawling on all fours. You know the type I'm talking about. The day they were born, the stars aligned and the heavens shone down, and the whole world morphed to forge a clear path for our prophetic crawler to walk upon. And all through their star-touched life, they walked with their heads held high, always smiling at the world because, obviously, the world had smiled on them. I'll admit: I took that broad smile as a personal offense.

In fact, I was pretty jealous of those people. To know what you were good at. To know exactly who and what you wanted to be. It seemed like life would be so easy, so simple, once those questions were answered. Everything else would make sense. Which major to choose, where to volunteer your time, and all the steps you'd need to take in order to accomplish your ultimate goal were practically laid out for you. But it's not that way for everyone, and it certainly wasn't that way for me.

Who you are and what you do are two

different things. For some people, what they do is who they are. For others, like myself for so long, those were two separate things. I had a career, a very good career, and as much as I tried to define myself by it, I just never felt like it really defined me. It wasn't who I was to my core. But when I'd think on that, trying to make the "who" and "what" converge, I was forced to deal with another, very difficult question: Who was I, anyway?

Those people, they fall into their dreams. But the rest of us, we fall into our careers. My story? I fell into a career called Science, and let it deposit me in whatever career it saw fit. Thus I was deposited in a clinical lab, goggles, blue gloves, white coat and all. It was a great career, and from there I was able to further specialize as a traveling technical rep. There were many aspects of it I loved: the travel, meeting new people, training others, the unexpected challenges in validating instrumentation per FDA requirements. But despite the pride I took in what I did, I just didn't feel like it defined who I was, and as the years strode on, this left me feeling increasingly unsatisfied. There

had to be more. There had to be something. So, I explored. I traveled and played, I investigated and read. Anything I could get my hands on. I was bound and determined to find a hobby or something that I could pour myself into that would give me this sense of, well, me. How I wanted to be identified. How I identified myself. It's amazing the things that strike you when you just open your mind to possibilities. I mean really open your mind, as in don't discount certain things just because you've never done them before. Don't assume you're terrible at things without really giving them your best effort. Or maybe there's that thing you always wanted to try but never did for lack of time and courage. Which is exactly how I went from being a lab scientist to an author. Of fiction.

It was my husband, really, who ended up aligning the stars and redirecting the sunlight on my head. I'd always loved reading and I'd always had a vivid (and deranged?) imagination. One fine evening, my husband, who sees things much more clearly than I ever do, pointed out that I

TURN OFF THE TV, GET OFF FACEBOOK OR PINTEREST OR INSTAGRAM OR TWITTER, OR WHATEVER YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA DRUG MAY BE, AND THINK. CREATE. DO ONE THING EVERY DAY TO HELP PROPEL YOUR DREAM FORWARD.



might try and combine my love for books with my imagination, and write. I thought he was nuts, of course. I don't write; I'm an unwilling scientist. But the thought wouldn't go away. The seed was planted, and it had begun sprouting, wrapping millions of little tendrils around my vitals. So I tried, and I was just as bad as I had feared. But I loved it. It gave me a sense of fulfillment greater than anything I'd ever experienced, it brought a deep-rooted joy that made the time fly faster than Ludicrous Speed.

It didn't matter that I was bad. I mean, what did I expect? I'd been plodding down one path my entire life and I was just taking those wobbly baby steps down an entirely new one. This new path had no trail. It would be obscured, hidden in walls of thorny bramble. There had to be monsters lurking about, monsters just waiting to rip out my insides and suck out my soul and rejoice in my failure. Fear of failure prevents us from doing so many things. From trying so many things. We may fall into this profession or that. Some of us may be perfectly contented with where we are. There are others who are not, but

aren't sure what to do about it. And it takes a good amount of courage to walk down a new path, venturing forward through uncharted territory, facing those deadly monsters.

Now to be perfectly clear, I'm not saying that if you're unhappy with where you are, to just walk away and quit. Reality isn't null just because you have dreams. Bills have to be paid. No, figure it out in your free time. You have other responsibilities? So does everyone else. You have kids? Work on your dreams while they're sleeping. Turn off the TV, get off Facebook or Pinterest or Instagram or Twitter, or whatever your social media drug may be, and think. Create. Do one thing every day to help propel your dream forward. And don't be afraid of yourself or what you can do.

When I wasn't "working," I was writing. Before work, during breaks, at night, and on weekends. Dishes piled, dust motes formed various landmasses on our furniture. But I didn't care; I was doing something I loved, making time for it every moment I could, and, thankfully, I had a spouse who supported me. People will doubt you. Some

people will tell you that you can't and that you won't, and many times it comes from those closest to us. And it's difficult listening to those voices when you're already facing so much self-doubt amidst the great personal risk you're taking.

No one promises these endeavors will be easy. No one promises you won't get bruised and cut and wounded by all the bramble (and monsters) along the way. But I can promise you that it is worth it in every single way. I've walked on clouds, I've fallen into Dante's Inferno. My heart has swollen with immeasurable joy and it's been stomped and trampled on until it resembles a stale raisin. Finding what you love is both a blessing and curse, because it hits you where you are most vulnerable. It hits you to your core and makes you acutely aware that you are alive. But I wouldn't trade this adventure for the world.

So now I have to ask you: Is what you do who you are? &

Last Summer Ride



CHASING
DOWN
FASHION
ON THE
CALIFORNIA
COAST'S
ENDLESS
SUMMER





MONROW
NORDSTROM

(From Previous Spread)

ON HER

Dress: Monrow

Bracelet:

Anthropologie

Shoes:

Christian Louboutin

ON HIM:

Shirt: Monrow

Jeans: Levis

Belt: Levis

Shades: Ray Ban

(At Left)

ON HER

LeatherJacket: BCBG

Pants: Monrow

Heels:

Christian Louboutin

ON HIM

Shirt: J. Crew

Jeans: Levis

(At Right)

ON HER:

Dress: Monrow

ON HIM:

Shirt: Monrow

Jacket: J. crew

