

Woman fears allowing boyfriend to help with cleaning up

Dear Dr. Brothers: I recently bought an old house, and I've also been dating a fabulous guy for almost a year. Although he has offered to help me with stuff around the house, I am reluctant to involve him in the mundane tasks that I could use help with — cleaning out the basement, hanging heavy pictures, weeding the garden, etc. We have had such a storybook romance so far that I don't want to ruin it. Do you think I should take a chance, or just try to keep our times together on a fun basis and leave the work behind?



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

games and root for the same teams as your husband. If you really want to be a good sport, you can spend some time learning about each sport he is interested in, know who the major players are, and what league your husband's teams belong to and where they stand. In other words, you can try to educate yourself a bit (ask him questions; he'll probably be happy to fill you in), and see if a little more knowledge will kindle some real enthusiasm on your part.

You might find that you warm up to at least one sport, where you can share his interest. If you don't, chances are your husband can find some buddies to go to the games with, and you will be left at home alone. As far as him not participating, I'm sure your respect will come back if you have children — fans like your husband tend to be very devoted followers of their kids' athletic exploits. He might even want to be the coach. So ... play ball!

Dear Dr. Brothers: I have recently been thinking about getting my father a computer. He is in his early

80s, but he's very alert, active and fit. My mom died about six months ago, and I don't know if Grandpa (as we've called him since our kids came along) can ever adjust to being without her, but I thought a computer might help. Do you think this is a ridiculous idea? My wife seems to think he is too old to be thrust into a world of pop-up ads, porn spam

and CD downloads. He enjoys reading the newspaper and following financial news. What do you think?

— B.H.

Dear B.H.: I think it's a great idea, and you should tell your wife to tend to her knitting. If your dad is willing (this is the key, of course!), go ahead and take the plunge. The first thing you should

teach him is how to send you e-mail and instant messages. Give him the grandkids' screen names, too, and ask them to write an e-mail welcoming Grandpa to the Net.

I'm sure they would like to put Grandpa on their buddy lists and keep him informed of the highlights of their lives.

Your dad might very well love the financial information he can find online, as well as all the other news and information. But even if he never does more than send e-mail to you, I think your purchase will be well worth it. Anything that keeps your dad active — and you close — has to be a good thing. Go for it!

Dear Dr. Brothers: Should I at-

— I.J.
Dear I.J.: You sound very insecure about your relationship. Are you concerned that he will see you as something less than a beautiful princess in a fairy tale if you have an apron on or wear work gloves? Or are you more afraid that he will hit his thumb with a hammer and ruin your image of him as a studly, manly guy? Or perhaps you fear that his offer to help is actually insincere, and that he would resent the time the two of you spend away from going to the beach or out to dinner, or whatever else you do for fun. In that case, you might be worrying that he would leave you.

If any of these is true, I'd say you should examine whether you really want to have a "real" relationship, for it is real life that you seem to be rejecting. After a year, you should know each other well enough to get past the glitz and glamour of dating and enjoy helping each other out with the mundane, everyday tasks that are part of the fabric of a real relationship. If you don't think your vision of each other can stand up to a little dirty work ... well, that should tell you a great deal.

Dear Dr. Brothers: My new husband is what I would call a professional fan. We have a seemingly endless supply of tickets to sporting events, particularly hockey games, wrestling, football and basketball. I am not really interested in any of these, but I go because it is so important to him. The truth is, though, that I don't really like the fact that he is such a willing spectator at all these sports. He isn't interested in actually doing anything — just watching. I seem to be losing respect for him. Am I wrong?

— J.G.

Dear J.G.: There are no rules when it comes to your role as a fan's wife. I guess what you are "expected" to do, though, is go along for the ride, enjoy the

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It's 3 a.m. and there's a freight train running through your bedroom.

Loud snoring — yours or someone else's — can be a sign that something is seriously wrong with breathing during sleep. Snoring and other sleep-related disorders such as sleep apnea, narcolepsy or restless leg syndrome, affect nearly one out of three Americans, making their sleeping or waking hours miserable. Sleep disorders may lead to other major medical problems including high blood pressure and cardiac difficulties.

How's Your Sleep?

- Excessive daytime sleepiness
- Loud snoring
- Breathing cessation or gasps for breath at night
- Uncontrollable attacks of sleepiness
- Trouble at work or school because of sleepiness
- Muscle tension, aching, crawling sensations in legs when trying to sleep
- Leg twitching or kicking at night
- Inability to fall asleep or stay asleep at night
- Depression or fear of falling asleep
- Interruptions to your sleep

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