

# Constant catering to spouses in pain can hurt, study shows

Being solicitous might trigger greater response in brains of the ailing

By ALEXANDRA WITZE  
Science Writer

ORLANDO, Fla. — Some spouses can be a real pain in the brain, scientists have found.

Solicitous spouses, who constantly cater to a partner in pain, can actually cause the sick person's brain to respond more to painful sensations, researchers reported Sunday in Orlando at the annual meeting of the Society for Neuroscience.

"What kind of wife or husband you have can determine what kind of pain you have," said neuroscientist Huda Akil of the University of Michigan, who was not involved in the research.

Earlier studies have shown that the behavior of spouses can affect how sufferers deal with their pain. The new study is the first to look at what's actually happening in the brain during that interaction, said Herta Flor, lead author of the new study.

"What seems to be the problem is too much attention, too much positive reinforcement for the expression of pain," said Dr. Flor, of the University of Heidelberg in

Germany.

Her team studied 30 patients, 20 suffering from chronic back pain and 10 healthy controls. Of the patients feeling pain, half of them had solicitous spouses and half had non-solicitous spouses as defined by a questionnaire.

Solicitous spouses do things like fetch water or medications when their partners are hurting. Non-solicitous spouses might encourage patients to go for a walk or otherwise try to distract the sufferer.

The researchers put each patient into a room and administered painful electric stimulation to their backs and fingers. Half the time, the patient's spouse was also present, sitting quietly out of view but known to be there by the patient. The other half of the time, the patient was alone.

The scientists hooked up electrodes to the patients' brains to measure brain activity during the shocks.

Patients with solicitous spouses saw their brain response to back pain soar when their spouse was in the room. Pain-related brain activity was nearly three times higher when the spouse was present than when the spouse was absent, Dr. Flor reported. The patients were also more likely to moan when their solicitous spouse was in the

room.

In contrast, the brains of patients who had non-solicitous spouses showed the same activity whether the spouse was present or not.

Neither group had much brain response to painful stimulation of the finger. The brain spiked only in response to a jolt to the back of patients with a solicitous spouse and a chronically aching back.

"It's an interesting example of how social interactions affect the physiology of pain," Dr. Flor said.

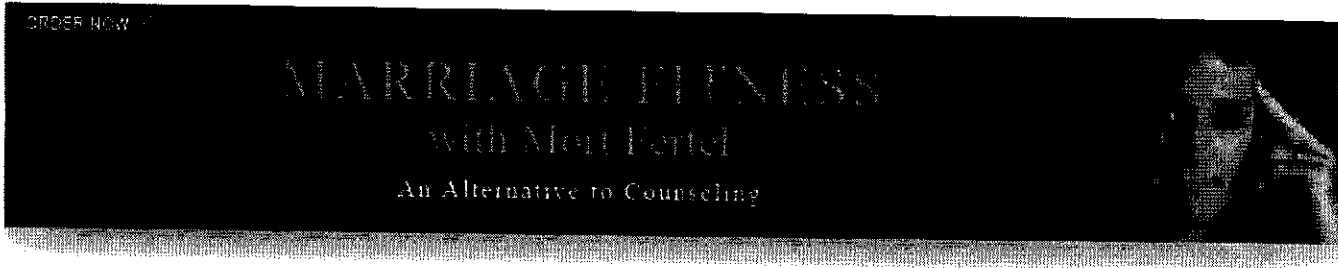
Patients with solicitous spouses have simply learned to experience pain more vividly, she suggested.

Doctors looking to alleviate chronic pain might try to get rid of such negative influences. A little behavioral training might go a long way in helping spouses better help their suffering partners, Dr. Flor said.

On the other hand, there are benefits to getting increased attention from a solicitous spouse: the feeling of being cared for can help patients' morale if not their actual pain.

More research is needed, Dr. Flor said, before scientists can untangle the many factors that cause chronic pain and, perhaps, allow it to be better treated.

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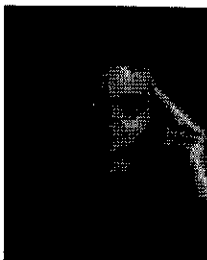
## 75% say they're Worse off or Divorced after Marriage Counseling

Did you know that over 75% of people that go to marriage counseling report that they're WORSE off or divorced less than a year later?

Imagine spending all that time and money in marriage counseling trying to solve your problems and learning communication techniques only to find that nothing worked and that at best you're in the same place as when you started.

Now there's an ALTERNATIVE to marriage counseling—it's called **Marriage Fitness**, and it's a proven system for saving and restoring marriages.

Are you ready to get your marriage back on track?



Hi. I'm Mort Fertel, founder of **Marriage Fitness**. I received your contact info and, as promised, I'll send you my free marriage advice articles and 5 free marriage assessments. As I mentioned, I think you'll find both helpful. But it's just a small start. If you want to be sure you get the help you need to save and restore your marriage, you'll want to get the

### Marriage Fitness Audio Learning System

**The Marriage Fitness Audio Learning System** is a ground-breaking step-by-step relationship-changing program that teaches you to neutralize your problems and implement a program of positive relationship habits that change the way you and your spouse relate. Those changes in turn "stop the bleeding" in your relationship and restore the connection you and your spouse once had. And the best news is—you don't have to talk about the past, hash out your problems, or practice communication strategies. This is not marriage counseling; it's **Marriage Fitness**.

But before I get into the details, check here to make sure **The Marriage Fitness Audio Learning System** is right for YOU.

**Marriage Fitness Audio Learning System** is designed for marriages

suffering from:

- Infidelity
- Broken trust
- The threat of divorce
- An obstinate spouse
- Emotional Neglect
- Money conflicts
- Addictive Behaviors
- Separation
- Emotional infidelity
- Boredom
- Poor Communication
- No Sex
- Lack of Appreciation
- No Affection



(Please note: This program is NOT appropriate in cases of consistent physical abuse.)

Are any of these your problems?

If so, then **The Marriage Fitness Audio Learning System** can be a **BREAKTHROUGH** for your relationship. It doesn't matter if you've heard the words "I'm not in love with you anymore" or "I need space." If you want to re-connect with your spouse, I can show you how to do it. I'll walk you through every step of the process . . . and **I guarantee (see below) you'll get there.** How can I be sure? Because I've helped hundreds of men and women whose marriages were in serious trouble do what I call a "Marriage180." Here's just one of those stories:

*Hi Mort*



*My wife and I have been married 3 years and it was hard from the start. We've both been divorced before so this was not our first time trying to make a marriage work. This time was not going well either. My wife had 2 affairs, she left 4 times, and marriage counseling was a disaster. We were on the brink of divorce again. Then I surfed the net and found you.*

*I ordered the Marriage Fitness Audio Program...in a matter of weeks, you saved our marriage, and, more importantly, taught us how to build love on our own.*

*If anyone is reading this who needs marriage help, get it from Mort. You won't be sorry.*

*Thank you again Mort for saving our marriage and teaching us how to create love in our relationship.*

*Martin  
Rosedale, Indiana*

There are hundreds of stories like this on from people in **all sorts of situations**, but first there's one story in particular I'd like to share with you...my story.

Unlike other relationship experts who approach this topic from a clinical perspective, **for me saving marriages is very personal.**

*My wife and I were deeply in love. I remember staying up all night talking, surprising each other with thoughtful gifts, and speaking to each other in code words. You know the feeling of really being connected? That was us.*

*But then something happened that destroys most marriages. We had a son who died when he was just one week old. And then we had twin*



daughters, who also died as newborns.



Your situation probably was not so tragic, but something happened. What was it? How did you lose each other? Or maybe you can't put your finger on why things aren't the same anymore. That's common too.

For us, after losing 3 children, everything felt different. Instead of talking all night, it was a chore to talk for a few minutes. Instead of using our code words, we used curse words. Our relationship consisted of screaming matches and silent treatments.

Somewhere deep in our heart though, like you, we knew we didn't want to lose each other. So we made a commitment to work on our marriage. Sometimes I tried and my wife didn't. Sometimes my wife tried and I didn't. Sometimes we tried together. We went through different stages of "trying."

What did we try?

We tried the obligatory, "Honey, let me repeat what you said to make sure I understood you correctly." We applied conflict resolution strategies. My wife learned about Mars and I learned about Venus. We even went to counseling to wrestle with our problems. But guess what. Nothing changed. Nothing worked.

Because all the advice we got (books, counselors...whatever) asked us to confront our problems. But that just made us feel worse. And fight more.

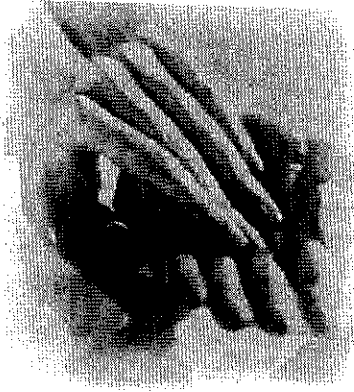
As long as the "right" way wasn't working, why not be dysfunctional? So we tried to convince each other of our way. You tried that too, right? Obviously, that doesn't work.

Finally, we had a breakthrough.

We decided to **SET ASIDE OUR PROBLEMS**. We didn't talk about them at all. We didn't bring them up even once. Instead, we put our energy into trying to connect. We used certain relationship techniques that transformed our marriage. Not only did we resolve our differences; we fell in love again! And we did it not by dealing with our problems (as serious as they were), but by establishing new relationship habits that brought positive energy to our marriage.

**This is the solution to most marital**





situations—to "step away" from your problems and spend your time and energy building your relationship through positive actions. If you do this RIGHT, your problems will dissipate, the threat of divorce will go away, and the other people invading your marriage will become irrelevant. Slowly but surely you will come closer together again.

Now you're probably wondering, "How do I stay away from the very problems that plague me? What healthy habits or relationship techniques can bring us closer together? And what if my spouse doesn't cooperate?"

That's EXACTLY what I'll teach you. I'll answer those questions and more so you get the results you want. Let me be more specific. Here's what you'll learn in **The Marriage Fitness Audio Learning System**:

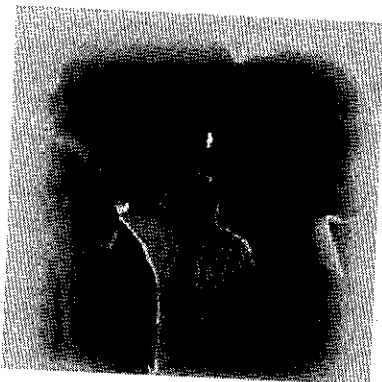
- ➔ How to **snap out of destructive patterns** of behavior
- ➔ How to **stop dwelling on the past** and start moving forward
- ➔ How to get over **old hurt**
- ➔ **7 daily acts** that will **rebuild love** in your marriage
- ➔ **5 weekly habits** that will **soften** your marital environment
- ➔ **2 monthly acts** that will **restore romance** between you
- ➔ How to get your **spouse to change**
- ➔ The **4 primary principles** of LASTING love
- ➔ How to become a team rather than 2 individuals
- ➔ How to **make decisions** together
- ➔ How to get **YOUR needs met**
- ➔ How to connect with an emotionally absent spouse
- ➔ How to keep the small things small



- ➔ How to tickle your spouse's soul
- ➔ How to deal with a spouse who won't listen
- ➔ How to **break the silence**
- ➔ What to do if you're not **spending enough time together**
- ➔ How to get and give the right **affection**
- ➔ What to do if you find yourself attracted to another man/woman
- ➔ What to do if your spouse has intimate internet friends
- ➔ What to do if your spouse is friends with their X
- ➔ How to restore honor to your marriage
- ➔ How to talk so your spouse will listen
- ➔ How to listen so your spouse will talk
- ➔ How to bring your past to its knees
- ➔ When NOT deciding is the best decision
- ➔ How to replace efficiency with intimacy



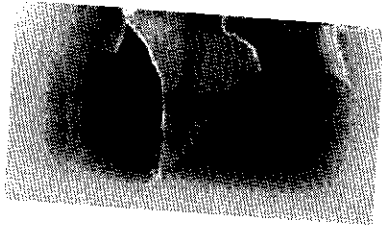
It would have been nice to know how to do all this years ago, right? Well, it's NOT too late. In my experience, it's never too late. Cathy would agree. Who's Cathy? Listen:



*Mort,*

*I really can't thank you enough for the wisdom, support and guidance your program provided.*

*It's been a whirlwind of a year starting horribly*



*and ending on a definite up-swing. I continue to practice the principles you set forth in Marriage Fitness and my husband is beginning to follow. I believe implementing those practices truly saved our marriage.*

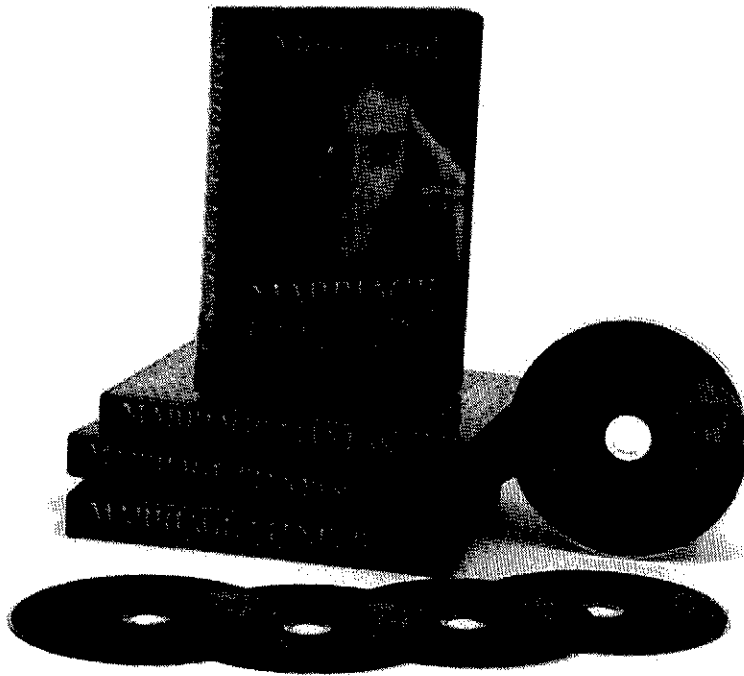
*Keep up the excellent work!*

*- Cathy P.*

The **MIRACLE STORIES** go on and on, but the bottom line is this: if you're willing to learn new ways of relating to your spouse and if you're willing to apply what you learn to your situation, then **The Marriage Fitness Audio Learning System** can work for you.

**The Marriage Fitness Audio Learning System** is a 5 CD system that includes over 5 1/2 hours of listening including step-by-step instruction for how to save and restore your marriage, inspiring stories that'll offer you hope and motivation, and special relationship practices that'll turn your spouse around too.

## **The Marriage Fitness Audio Learning System**



WRBS-FM, Baltimore, MD  
KYXY-FM, San Diego, CA  
WZBA 100.7, Baltimore, MD  
KTLO Radio, Mountain Home, AR  
KVJY-AM 840, Austin, TX  
KWRE Radio, Warrenton, MO  
NPR with Dr. Barton Goldsmith  
WIYY 98, Baltimore, MD  
WZBT-AM, West Palm Beach, FL  
KUTR-AM, Salt Lake City, Utah  
WEAG, Jacksonville, FL  
KAHI-AM, Sacramento  
CAWOCA-AM, Ocala, FL  
WSCF-FM, West Palm Beach, FL

In addition to media attention, the Marriage Fitness approach to saving marriages has received expert endorsements from **John Gray, Ph.D.**, author of *Men Are from Mars and Women Are from Venus*, and **Dr. Stephen Covey**, author of *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.

But the most important endorsements are from people like you whose marriages have been transformed because they ordered the program. Here's a story from a recent participant:



*Mort,*

*Your CD's turned my marriage around.*

*You're just the best...and believe me, the therapists that we've paid tens of thousands of dollars to don't even know your name yet, but they will when I give them a copy of your program. They can't argue with the results and with the new glow on my wife's face.*

*God bless you,*

- Brian Hanse

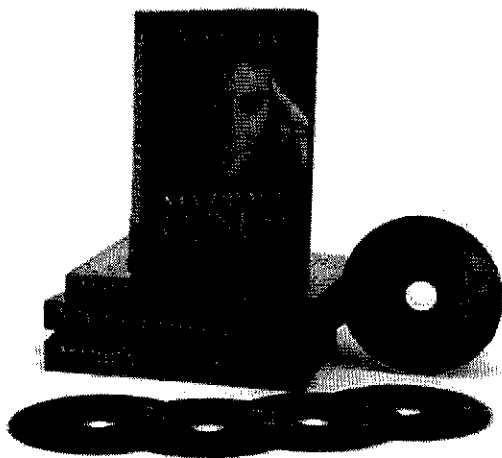
What would you want your letter to say? Think about it. What's the happy ending to your story? If you want that story to be written, then you've come to the right place. There are no accidents in life. There's a saying:

***"When the student is ready, the teacher will appear."***

The fact that you're searching means you're a ready student. Your teacher has appeared. I can help you. I guarantee it. But before I explain the guarantee, let me explain the fee.

You probably expect a program like this to cost a **few hundred dollars**. Five and a half hours of my time costs \$2475.

## **But the Marriage Fitness Audio Learning System is only \$69.95**



### **Your order includes:**

- 5 CD's with over 5 1/2 hours of listening
- The Marriage Fitness 4 Step Plan
- 20 Relationship Exercises
- 5 Marriage Assessments
- A 14 Week Implementation Schedule
- Online Access to a Special Report
- The Secret to Becoming Soul

### **Mates**

- 5 Ways to "Move from Me to We"
- The Magic Solution to Every Marital Problem



## Husband and wife find joy in living apart

Husband and wife find joy living apart — together

By Judith Newman

Self

updated 8:46 a.m. CT, Thurs., Nov. 1, 2007

My husband and I have been married for 14 years, and we've never lived together. Unbeknownst to us, demographers have devised a name for our arrangement: living apart together, which refers to married couples living separately. According to 2006 data from the U.S. Census Bureau, there are 3.8 million married couples who don't reside under the same roof. But even without statistics behind us, John and I figure we're in good company. Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera lived apart, as did Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. (Interestingly, the latter couple were never married but chose to be buried next to each other in the same tiny plot. Maybe once they didn't have to share a bathroom, occupying the same space for eternity was OK.)

In the beginning, my line about our arrangement was that we were very Woody and Mia ... but then a few things happened to make that quip seem not so funny. After we'd been married for eight years and we'd had our twin boys, Henry and Gus, I told people something a bit closer to the truth: Marriage and kids are one thing, but living together? Don't rush me.

In fact, there are many practical reasons we keep separate apartments. First, we live in New York City, land of wildly expensive real estate and no space. Neither of our places costs much. Mine is small; his is rent stabilized, meaning it is too cheap, by New York standards, to give up. Plus, most of John's apartment is taken up by his two pianos. (He's a former opera singer.) If we had moved in together, we'd have had to spend a big wad of money on something larger, money that we didn't have. When our boys were born and I did have more money, I expanded my apartment to include the one above me. But it was still not big enough for one piano, let alone two. And, second, neither of us likes change. I mean, we really, really don't like change. Third, I love my downtown neighborhood; he loves his uptown digs. Why should we rock the boat?

### Nothing in common

Which brings me to a far more compelling reason for our living separately: John and I have nothing in common except that we love each other and our sons. (We also share an antipathy for team sports and shellfish, a solid foundation for lifelong commitment if there ever was one.) But as far as our living habits go, we could not be farther apart. I think this situation is true for many married couples; they simply won't admit it.

John's apartment is a den of gloom: Jacobean furniture; ancient, loudly ticking timepieces; worn Persian carpets. I find it downright creepy; I'm convinced it harbors a ghost. John is convinced, too, the difference being that he enjoys his ghost. My apartment is light and airy, a slice of the Caribbean, or it would be if I hadn't listened to John's advice when I was installing new floors (dark oak). When I'm not writing, I crave noise and action, both in plentiful supply with our 6-year-olds. My life soundtrack is Joni Mitchell, James Taylor and The Roches, all of whom my husband refers to as "those bloody caterwauling idiots." John needs either complete silence in his home or Wagner. Small children don't allow for silence, and Wagner used to make the twins sob.

My husband is fastidious. I am the kind of person who, if I notice Cheerios on the floor (which I usually don't), generally feels confident that someone — the children, a mouse, the dog — will come along and eat them, thus saving me the bother of cleaning them up. John can't stand my obliviousness to mess, so he likes to set traps for me. The other day, next to my desk, there was a wad of dog hair the size of a basketball. It was impressive, if a little startling. "I wanted to see how long it took you to notice," John said. "When I began, it was about the size of a marble. Every time I brushed the dog, I added to it." Apparently, the hair ball had been there for two months, so you can imagine what else escapes my attention. If I had funds for a live-in housekeeper with obsessive-compulsive disorder, maybe John could move in. But frankly, if I want to hear a litany of complaints about what a pain in the ass I am, I don't need him telling me; I only have to tune in to the voice in my own head.

When we had the children, of course, living separately became dicier. Friends said John and I would simply have to live together; after all, what would the kids think? I understand that when Henry and Gus are older,

we'll have some explaining to do. ("No, we're not divorced, and, yes, the arrangement is weird.") Until then, what they know is that sometimes, when they jump on my head at 6 a.m., the bitterly complaining lump on the other side of the bed is their father, who stays over three nights a week or so. And when he's not there, no one else will be.

### Living apart — and loving it

So far, the children don't seem to think much about it, especially because Dad is always around for dinner and to tuck them in. They talk happily about their uptown and downtown houses. Once, Henry told a friend that his mom and dad didn't live together. Soon after, I got the Alarmed Call from a mom: "Judith, is everything ... all right?" You could hear the anxiety, tinged with interest, in her voice: Those people are divorcing; he already has his own apartment! How soon before she'll be blowing her kids' college savings on liposuction and a face-lift?

I was bugged, yet amused. Clearly, she was making the same assumption that everyone does, which is that a married couple who do not cohabit must not be happy or ever have sex. (Another fun interpretation is that we must have lots of sex, only not with each other.) The notion that two people can live apart and still be in a traditional marriage, neither celibate nor throwing key parties, seems to make folks' head explode. To which I can only reply, in my own head, "That's logical. We have separate places, so we must never have sex. Because as everyone knows, the thing that makes for a hot sex life is proximity."

Yet another misconception held by those who find our setup peculiar is that a person can only be as faithful as her opportunities, so when John isn't around, I must be entertaining myself somehow (or he himself). Now I admit I've lusted not only in my heart but in parts farther south, but these temptations are moderated by the thought, lodged in my heart, of someone waiting for me at home, scowling lovingly.

Some people suspect that John has a commitment problem. He lost his beloved second wife of 20 years to cancer. (I'm number three.) Does he now have some deep fear of abandonment, they wonder, which he deals with by keeping me at arm's length? Do I, an only child, have a problem with sharing? Or do we just not care enough about each other to want to be entangled?

### Entangled lives

Yet our lives are entangled, hopelessly, irrevocably and, for the most part, happily. To us, living together in the same physical space has nothing to do with living in the same emotional space. In my more hippie-granola moments, I like to think that there is a certain purity to our arrangement. I am married simply because I happen to love the guy.

Not that I never get angry, especially because I'm usually the one rushing around in the morning trying to get our boys off to school. ("Quack! Quack! Mr. Duck wants you to eat your cereal and put on your pants!" For this, I got an Ivy League education?) Indeed, there have been moments of fury: When I'm on vomit patrol by myself; or when Henry wakes me at 3 a.m. to ask, "Why do we have knees?" Yet we have something many kids with dads in residence often don't: a father who is there for dinner, who will leave for his place only after he hears the boys snoring. He loves and worries about all of us. And he agreed to take on the burden of children in his late 60s; the least I can do is let him get a good night's rest.

Truthfully, I can't fathom why any couple would want to live together. It's not as if most people feel more intimate when they share a space. (There's a reason the courtship days are the giddiest time — that reason involves not knowing every nasty detail about each other.) I've never walked in on John in the bathroom. He has never clipped his toenails in bed. If you live apart from someone and trust him, you have intimacy without that incestuous feeling that comes from too much information, which can lead couples to stop having sex.

I won't go so far as to say that our arrangement has brought us closer. John and I fight as much as, and perhaps more than, the average couple. But living apart has allowed us to stay married and remain in love. We do find each other essential; it's just that, like many couples, we find each other deeply annoying, too. The only difference with us is that sometimes we can breathe a deep sigh of relief at the end of the day and say: I love you, honey; now get the hell out of here!

And on certain afternoons, when the children are with the babysitter, I make my way uptown, where John is waiting for me. The lights are low, and there are beverages at the ready (single malt for him, white wine for me — seriously, we have nothing in common). I look forward to these afternoons when it's only me and the

guy I fell in love with 16 years ago, afternoons that would be tough to savor if we lived together. And the best part? Afterward, when he gets frustrated that I've strewn clothes everywhere, I put them on, kiss him and wave good-bye.

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