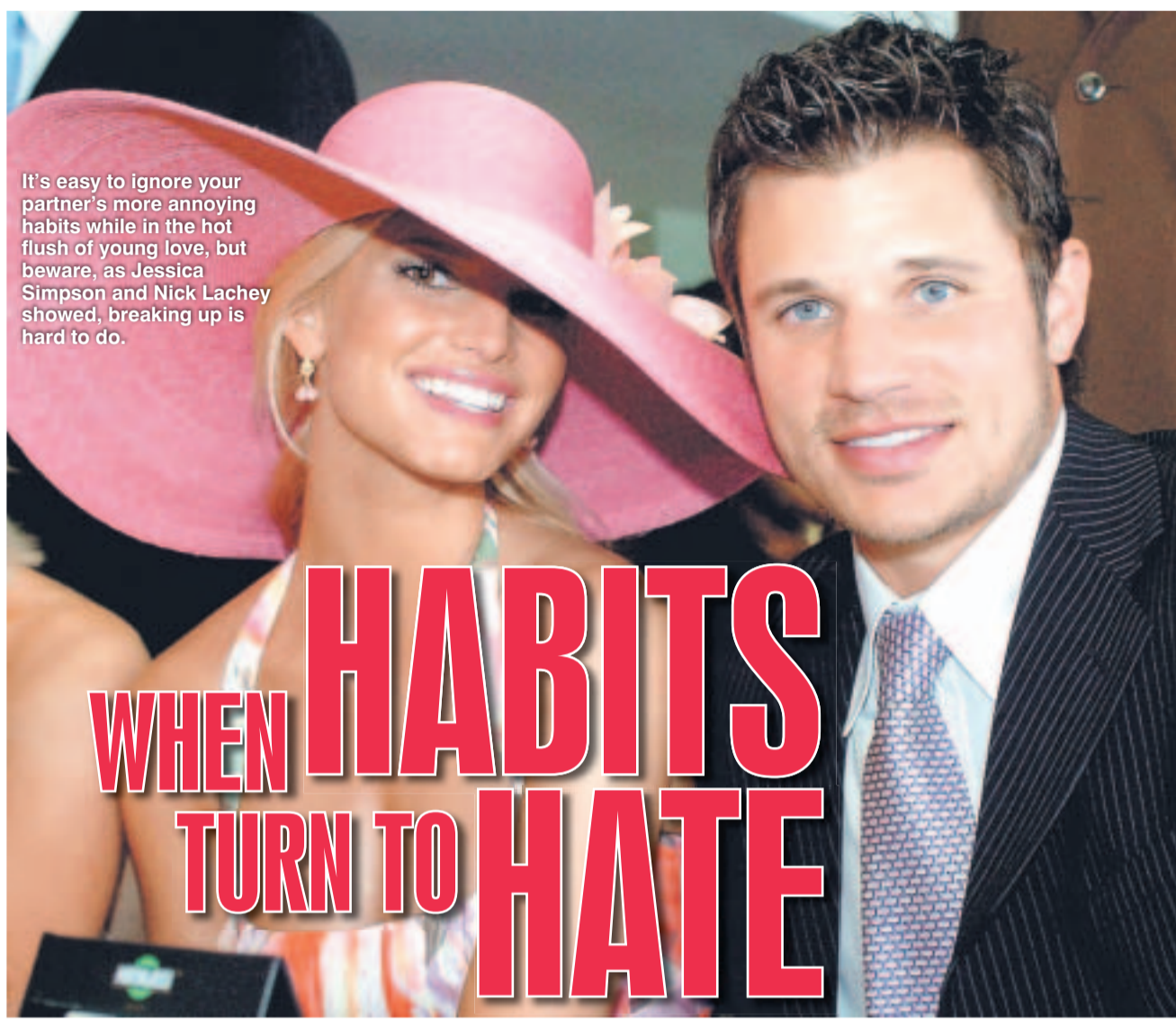


mxShagpile



It's easy to ignore your partner's more annoying habits while in the hot flush of young love, but beware, as Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey showed, breaking up is hard to do.

WHEN HABITS TURN TO HATE

You used to love those quirky habits, so **JORDANA BORENSZTAJN** asks why are they so annoying now?

Whether it's sensitivity, forgetfulness or just plain untidiness, attributes we initially love in our partners can turn into habits we loathe a few months down the track. When they throw their pyjamas on the floor, forget to screw the toothpaste lid on or speak their mind, what is it that turns our admiration into aggression? At the start of relationships, couples see each other through rose-tinted glasses, Relationships Australia senior counsellor Rosalie Pattenden says. "The differences we see in our partners are often the things that we become attracted to and everything is gorgeous," she said. "The early stage people go through is where they're really bonding stuff and they've got chemicals running through their system." But once the electric, honeymoon period starts to fizzle, it's the differences that can create tension. Partners can become very critical very quickly. "You start seeing more negatives than positives and that's a normal stage of a relationship.

"Everything starts getting interpreted that way for a period of time (and) they can start pulling away," Pattenden said. Not screwing lids on jars, failing to pick bath mats off the floor, forgetting to write events in the diary and not cleaning your teeth before bed are just a few habits that can turn a relationship sour. The big challenge is to work through this stage, Pattenden said. "Everybody's got annoying little habits that can get on your nerves, but it's what you do with that, whether you make a big deal with it or let it slide." Human Need psychologist Chris Dawson said that during the honeymoon period couples are so absorbed in each other they tend to miss personal traits that could cause problems further down the track. "There's a bit of a blind spot to any of the small characteristics of the other person that would irritate them." But when this comes to an end, smaller, quirkiest things become more noticeable and irritating. "There's a saying opposites attract and then they attack ... but that's not always true." Psychologist Evelyn Field said differences often surface because men and women are so dissimilar. "Men are very single-focused. They think about one thing and they stick to the one thing whereas women's minds are more flexible." Men tend to do the same thing over again without

thinking, which could frustrate women, she said. And quite often they don't think they needed to change. "The average man would say what on earth for?" Field said. "Men are so rigid they just get into a certain way and that's it, whereas women are very creative and flexible and always looking for new opportunities." The key ingredient to healthy relationships is to grab hold of the important things that connect two people, such as trust and honesty, and turn a blind eye to the little habits.

INTIMACY. HAVE YOU GOT IT?

- Can you let your guard down completely when you're with your partner?
- Do you let them comfort you when you're hurt?
- Do you tell them exactly what you're feeling?
- Do you share your feelings, experiences, dreams, hopes, fears, hurts and memories with your partner?
- Do you say "I love you" enough?
- Do you show intimacy in ways other than making love?

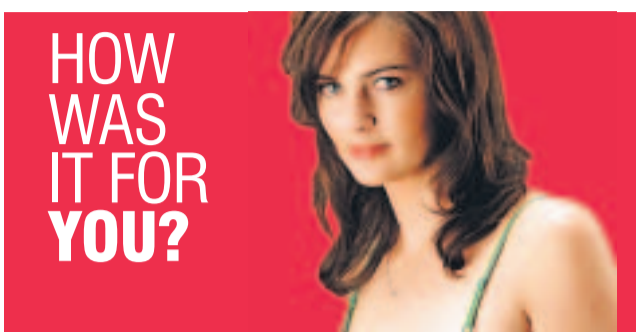
RELATIONSHIP MYTHS

- People who love each other automatically communicate well.

- Good communication doesn't come naturally.
- Open communication between couples is a must.
- As long as there is lots of romantic love, it will be a long and happy relationship.
- Couples need to know love always changes from a romantic passion into a complicated companionship.
- If my partner loves me, he or she should know what I need and want to be happy.
- Expecting your partner to know everything that goes through your mind is too hard. You need to tell them what you want, need and expect to make it work.

WARNING BELLS SHOULD RING IF ...

- You're now doing activities on your own that you once did together.
- You have the same argument over and over again without resolving it.
- You're unhappy or feel dissatisfied.
- You're too keen to do stuff on your own without your partner.
- You're feeling less emotionally. You think you've fallen out of love.
- You or your partner have had an affair.
- You're tired and your work isn't up to scratch.



HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?

"With the season of new love upon us, I offer you some simple spells ... before dismissing this as hocus-pocus, remember, there was a time when magic was science."

How do you find love in the 21st century? You can join RSVP like one out of twenty Australians, go speed dating, try to get on *The Bachelor* or you can resort to the ancient practice of ... magic.

Ladies, instead of spending time waxing our legs, buying new perfumes and doing sit-ups, perhaps we should familiarise ourselves with the little white witch inside all of us and cast a spell – or two. And boys, rather than wining and dining us in expensive cars to impress, why not just concoct a charm to have us at your feet?

With the season of new love upon us, I offer you some simple spells procured from African Hoodoo, Hungarian gypsy folklore and modern-day Wicca. Before dismissing this as hocus-pocus, remember, there was a time when magic was science. Indeed many cultures throughout the world, both modern and ancient, believe in the art of utilising the powers of nature and the mind to bring about a desired effect.

SEA MAGIC

On a Friday night at high tide, bring an apple and some cloves to the ocean. Stud the apple with the cloves, marking the rune image of love three times. Then holding the apple with your power hand (the one you write with), say: "Apple of love, cloves of fire. This is my need, my desire!" Now throw the apple as far as you can into the sea. So shall it be.

GRASS SPELL

Place a blade of grass in

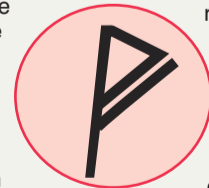
your mouth, and turning from east to west, say: "Where the sun goes up, shall my love be by me! Where the sun goes down, there by her I'll be." Cut the blade of grass into pieces and mix it with some food. Offer the food to the person you desire. If they swallow even the slightest bit of grass, they will be moved to love and true-heartedness.

CANDLE SPELL

Using a rose thorn from a white rose bush, inscribe the words "All my love come to me" three times on a small white candle. Light the candle and, for the entire time it burns, gaze upon it, visualising your love coming to you in nakedness and beauty. When the candle burns out, collect the wax puddle that remains, wrap it up and keep it in a safe place. By enacting this spell you will receive all the love that person has for you. If at some future point you no longer wish to receive that person's love it's your responsibility to dispose of the ritual remains in a ceremonial way. The wax puddle can be burned on a fire, buried at a crossroads, or thrown into running water.

AND SOME QUICKIES

- Feed your lover a fig, with your initials carved lightly into it to keep him or her faithful.
- To ensure that a relationship will last, fill a glass with water. Let him or her take a sip and then take a sip yourself. Then purposefully drop it so that it breaks. Collect the shards and bury them in the back yard.



BTW Boys, if casting magic spells isn't your thing, take heed. A speed dating fundraiser is being held at the Richmond Club Hotel, Melbourne, on September 14th for people aged 28-45. Heaps of women have signed up, but there is a dire shortage of men. Why not take the plunge and see what's out there. I dare you. For info/bookings contact Prue 9890 4203 or email: events4src@bigblue.net.au <mailto:events4src@bigblue.net.au>. Feel free to write in and let me know what-or who-went down.