



strength * spirit * solace

Newsletter

August 2006

Dear friend...

This month, my husband and I celebrated our one year anniversary! When we first discussed what we wanted to do to celebrate, my thoughts went to the Hollywood image of a happy couple in a nice restaurant clinking their champagne glasses. Mark, on the other hand, had something totally different in mind: he booked us on a 3-day, 2-night hut-to-hut backpacking adventure in the 10th Mountain Division Hut system – not my original idea of *romance* but I was definitely up for it! Now, I am no stranger to hiking, camping and outdoor activities, but I had never done anything *that* intense before. I am a bit of a “tender foot” and am used to getting blisters on even the gentlest of nature walks.

During our anniversary hut trip, we hiked an average of 10 miles per day, at extreme elevations, gaining nearly 2,000 feet each day, *and* carrying roughly 30 pounds of weight! On the second day, while climbing the last 1,000 feet in just a little more than one mile, I broke down and complained incessantly– my legs felt like lead, my head pounded from the altitude, my heels on both feet burned with blisters and my shoulders felt like the weight of the world was riding on them. All the while, my dear husband was smiling, encouraging me on, loving me – even in my most raw and negative state. When we finally reached the hut, I felt elated and triumphant – my aches and pains went away and my soul soaked up the views and the joys of the moment! I immediately saw the value of doing something totally different for our anniversary. Mark gave me the greatest gift ever: not only did he give me his unconditional love and understanding during my darkest moments on that trip, but he also gave me an experience that was profoundly personal and deeply shared between us both. I succeeded at something I had never done before.

In addition, our anniversary hut trip caused me to ponder the “safety” of my yoga practice. Was my regular routine sheltering me from true physical challenges on the mat, *and* in life? Was I really growing in my practice or just hanging out in Savasana? Have you asked yourself these same questions before? Do you feel like you are ready for change, challenge, triumph? Whether you decide to let just a little everyday adventure in around the edges (think: getting up to see the sunrise once per week, even if you are used to sleeping in), or you choose to throw open the doors to a full-fledged wilderness

expedition (think: backpacking the Andes mountains solo for a month!), I hope *my* adventure story helps you connect with whatever part of you wants to head out, break free and try something different.



Keep up the great work and let your light shine on!

Namasté,

Sara

Meditation

In a busy and demanding world full of obligations and opportunities, we sometimes lose track of our primary relationships, thinking they will tend to themselves. We may have the best intentions when we think about how nice it would be to surprise our partner with a gift or establish a weekly date night. Yet somehow, life gets in the way. We may think that our love is strong enough to survive without attention. Yet even mature trees need water and care if they are to thrive. One of the best ways to nourish a relationship is through communication. If you feel that a distance has grown between you and your partner, you may be able to bridge the gap by sharing how you feel. Do your best to avoid blame and regret. Focus instead on the positive, which is the fact that you want to grow closer together. Sometimes, just acknowledging that there is distance between you has the effect of bringing the relationship into balance. In other cases, more intense effort and attention may be required. You may want to set aside time to talk and come up with solutions together. Remember to have compassion for each other. You're in the same boat together and trying to maintain the right

balance of space and togetherness to keep your relationship healthy and thriving. Express faith and confidence in each other, and enjoy the slow dance of intimacy that can resume between the two of you.

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The Yoga of Relationship

Are you in a relationship rut, having the same fight with your partner over and over again? Or playing the same role—nag, enabler—day in and day out? By contemplating the I and I, guidelines for living consciously, you can break free from unhealthy patterns and move toward a more joyful future.

Study yourself

Although the problems may seem to be all about your partner, if you practice svadhyaya (self-study) you may learn something valuable that can shift the dynamic. For example, do you set your partner up for failure by asking him to do things you know he won't do—and then play the martyr? If you observe your thoughts and motives, you'll be less likely to blame.

Love the one you're with

If you fantasize that the perfect person would solve all your relationship woes, you're stuck in a cycle of what-ifs. Instead of longing for that elusive and nonexistent perfect partner, contemplate samtoshā (contentment); it may help you accept who's right in front of you. By letting go of fantasies, you allow room for a deeper love.

Reshape your future

No relationship thrives without work. That's where tapas (self-discipline) comes in. Practice this niyama and you'll be rewarded with a partnership that's strong and free of regrets.

- Megan Francis, Yoga Journal, February 2006

Nutrition – Eating together

Married life is about love, happiness and compromise. But wait a minute! You like everything about him except for his eating habits – chili dogs, chocolate cake, prime rib, packaged cookies and, of course, potato chips. So how can you *eat* happily ever after?

Update your recipes

If your partner groans at the thought of your “healthy cooking,” make the adjustment less painful by starting out with easy substitutes like non-fat plain yogurt instead of sour cream, egg whites instead of whole eggs, olive oil instead of butter, and ground turkey instead of ground beef. Sift through your old recipes and see if there are ways to “lighten up” the old stand-bys – if not, throw them out and get some fresh new recipes

to try. Try cooking some ethnic dishes – like a great chicken stir-fry with fresh veggies and brown rice – with your honey to get you both involved in eating healthier and feeling great!

Watch your portions

Now that you're cooking for two, you might have faced the age-old question: What do two plates, a recipe that serves six, and zero leftovers add up to? The answer is oversized portions. When you're cooking at home, limit each plate to just one portion, and immediately put leftovers in a storage container. When eating out, ask your server to box half of your meal to take home.

Keep healthy snacks on hand

When we're hungry, we tend to reach for what's fast and easy. When you get home from the market with a bag of groceries, make a point to wash and trim those fresh veggies right away, keeping them within easy reach in the fridge. That way, the next time you crave something crunchy, you can choose from a platter of ready-to-eat carrots, celery, green beans and whatever else you love to munch. And you never know, maybe your idea of a healthy snack will start to rub off on him, too.

Plan ahead

If possible, sit down together to plan meals for the weeks, allowing for those days when you'll want to eat out or bring food home. Keep a grocery list of the ingredients you'll need on the refrigerator, and add items as needed. When you shop, stick to your list, and avoid tempting impulsive buys that didn't make the cut. Combined with making an effort not to shop when you're hungry, keeping a grocery list will significantly lessen the chances of junk food landing in your pantry.

Recipe for Love ♥

Ingredients

2 Hearts Full of Love

2 Heaping Cups of Kindness

2 Armfuls of Gentleness

2 Cups of Friendship

2 Cups of Joy

2 Big Hearts Full of Forgiveness

1 Lifetime of Togetherness

2 Minds Full of Tenderness

Method

Stir daily with Happiness, Humor and Patience.

Serve with Warmth and Compassion, Respect and Loyalty.

- Author Unknown

Your Questions Answered!

Do you have a question? Email it to me at sara@saradelaney.com.

Q. My husband won't eat vegetables! He says I overcook them...How can I cook good tasting vegetables?

A.

In order to end up with good tasting vegetables you have to start with vegetables that are fresh and preferably in season. Once you start there, you will find there is less that has to be done to make your vegetables taste good. Another important factor in making your vegetables taste good is to not over cook them. Remove them from the cooking process while they still have a little crispness, and bright coloring. With these two things in place, you can then get creative in flavoring your vegetables. In looking at various vegetable recipes, I find that I am quite fond of dressing vegetables with just a little olive oil and fresh lemon juice, rather than heavy sauces, dips or cheese. Olive oil enhances the natural flavor of the vegetables. When your greens and other vegetables are fresh you really can't beat their natural flavor.

Contemplate...

Raymond Oliver, in his book *Gastronomy of France*, has a whole chapter on the subject of aphrodisiacs. He states "In the aphrodisiac meal...the number of dishes should be extremely limited. If possible, one should make do with a single dish and in no circumstances should one eat its fill...In very favorable conditions, the effects of an aphrodisiac meal are almost instantaneous."



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*"When you come to the edge of all that you know, you must believe one of two things:
There will be earth upon which to stand, or you will be given wings to fly."*

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