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(And Slash Your
Grocery Bill) p.130

FEBRUARY 2009



**Love Your
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p.34



too tired," she recalls. "That's when the piano fell on my head. I thought, I've done everything to make this work, and it's not going anywhere." The next evening after she got home from work, Fiona told her husband the marriage was over. They tried counseling, but it only solidified Fiona's decision to leave. After the breakup, she accidentally-on-purpose met up with Kyle, "but my decision to split up wasn't about wanting to be with Kyle; it was about realizing I needed out of my marriage." Six months later, Hugh and Fiona divorced. Six months after that, she met Kyle at yet another music festival, and this time, a real romance bloomed. "We've been together a year now," she says. "He's much more like me than my ex. He's funny, tolerant and intellectually curious. Our relationship started as a fling, but it's become much deeper. I'm glad an affair triggered the end of my marriage, because it made me see that I deserved to be happy."

IS SHE NORMAL? About 15 percent of married women have had a sexual partner other than their spouse, according to *Sex in America* (Grand Central Publishing). "An affair isn't always the cause of the demise of a marriage," Dr. Holland says. "But it can be a critical symptom of its disintegration."

WANT TO TRY IT? Although infidelity spelled doom for Fiona and Hugh, Dr. Holland says that sometimes such indiscretions can strengthen a union. "If you address the fundamental problems in the relationship, and if both partners are determined to save the marriage, an affair can be a chance to reestablish trust," she says. (Indeed, roughly 35 percent of marriages stay intact after

and I'm still attracted to men. But sometimes, you have to take a leap. At my age, I'm not going to censor the scary, vulnerable stuff. I spent so much time in my 20s protecting myself from getting hurt; now I'm thinking, Let go!"

IS SHE NORMAL? Twenty percent of Americans have had a same-sex experience, according to the Global Sex Survey conducted by condom maker Durex. A Self.com poll found that 16 percent of you fantasize about having sex with a woman.

WANT TO TRY IT? If you're attracted to someone, male or female, and you're both unattached, you might want to throw caution to the wind. "I believe sexuality is a spectrum, and very few people are exclusively heterosexual or homosexual," Dr. Holland says. "Most of us are more omnisexual, or attracted to both genders, than we allow. So don't worry so much about labels. If you give yourself permission to have an experience without shame, you might enjoy it!" In any case, whether your hookup is same-sex or heterosexual, it's important to be aware that the infatuation stage of a relationship is often fleeting. "When you fall in love, your brain is surging in chemicals it's not usually bathed in—dopamine, oxytocin and serotonin," Dr. Holland says. "They cause feelings of connection and euphoric bliss. It doesn't last, this kind of intensity, but research shows you can keep sparks of it alive by doing novel things together." Try hitting an art event rather than the movies, take salsa lessons or test a new position in bed.

“I had vaginal laser surgery”

THE STEAMY SCENE Nell, 29, had a boyfriend, who'd always told her she was beautiful, but she never felt that way. "I was self-conscious because of extra skin around my vagina. I would get infections from it always rubbing against jeans or thongs, and sex was awful because of the irritation—I'd have to wear sweatpants afterward. Over the years, I'd asked a couple of gynecologists if there was anything I could do, but their reaction was, Why couldn't I just accept myself? But this was not a vanity thing; it was affecting my quality of life." Then Nell heard about physicians who performed vaginal surgery. She called one of the doctors, and he referred her to Christopher Warner, M.D., founder of the Laser Vaginal Rejuvenation Institute of Washington, D.C. She went in for a consultation and quickly scheduled the procedure.

HOW IT FELT "When I looked at myself right after surgery, I cried," she says. "I felt normal for the first time. It took about six weeks for the sutures to fall out and the swelling to go down, and it hurt, but I never thought, What have I done? I'd do it again in a heartbeat."

IS SHE NORMAL? Operations such as Nell's are currently on the rise. The number of vaginal-rejuvenation surgeries rose 30 percent between 2005 and 2006, the first two years the American Society of Plastic Surgeons tracked such procedures.

WANT TO TRY IT? "If a woman has a physical problem that can be helped by surgery, no one could argue with that. I understand women saying 'I did it to feel better!' but I also worry about us as a culture," Dr. Holland says. "Society is capitalizing on women's insecurities to induce them to have surgery they might not need, which creates more insecurity." Motives aside, vaginal rejuvenation is a complex, expensive surgery, which demands about six weeks of abstinence to heal, can cost up to \$20,000 and isn't covered by insurance, even in a case such as Nell's. Consult your doctor and interview several board-certified surgeons before undergoing any procedure.

(continued on page 160)

things together.

infidelity, according to David Barash, Ph.D., professor of psychology at the University of Washington at Seattle.) Still, she warns, "if you're tempted to have an affair, you need to decide if you want to improve your marriage, make the affair into a real relationship or be alone to work on your self-esteem and goals."

“I fell in love with a woman”

THE STEAMY SCENE "I had never been attracted to women, but I just loved Emily's vibe—she was so strong and direct and confident," says Daniela, 42, a producer who met Emily, an artist, on a freelance assignment. "I'm pretty girly, and I was a little intimidated by her, but something about her resonated in me." She and Emily ended up collaborating on various projects over several months, and "our connection was undeniable," Daniela says. Finally, after a late night at a photo shoot, they went outside for some air and Emily kissed Daniela under the stars, kicking off a hot-and-heavy romance.

HOW IT FELT "I'm not struggling with my sexual identity," Daniela says. "I just know Emily is someone I want to be with. I don't know what's going to happen—I'm thrilled and a little worried, because this is all so intense and new." There are speed bumps, of course. Daniela worries that Emily is guarded because Daniela has never had a same-sex experience. "Whatever happens," Daniela says, "it's been amazing to discover my own openness. I had no idea it was there. Whenever I've closed my eyes and imagined who I want to be with, it's always been a man,