

Personal Trainers



Training is everything; the peach was once a bitter almond; cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education.

—Mark Twain

I was lucky. I got my own personal trainer along with my marriage license.

→ Robert E. Horseman, DDS

ILLUSTRATION
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In the overwrought world of celebrities or wannabe celebrities, no member of their entourage is more important than the personal trainer. Sure, the financial manager is essential to negotiate the \$7 million real estate flips and to minimize the damage to the exchequer done by serial monogamy and common-law cohabitation katzenjammers, but it is up to the personal trainer to tackle the cottage cheese cellulite and deficient washboard abs.

It wasn't until the advent of low-rider pants previously worn only by plumbers that the abdominal musculature became of such transcendent importance. Now that talent is not a requisite, these are the physical attributes that make or break you after the plastic surgeons are finished.

PTs frequently have an Olympian status exceeding that of their clients, making

house calls as dear as the monthly payments on the Bentley. Obviously, celebrities can't go to fitness centers and YMCAs and perspire with the hoi polloi. One might as well be clad in Wal-Mart sweats. Today it would not be unusual to observe a large number of persons in the form of personal trainers, nutritionists, secretaries, press reps, and brokers to arrive like a SWAT team at even a D-list celeb's front door along with the paparazzi to make certain no triviality is overlooked.

I was lucky. I got my own personal trainer along with my marriage license, although having lapsed into a catatonic silence shortly after the vows, I didn't realize it at the time. Looking back over the last 62 years, I have come to realize what every woman contemplating saying "I do" questions instinctively at the outset, "Is he trainable?"

Men are not so introspective. I saw my future wife at the beach. She was wearing

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a one-piece black bathing suit. I remembered my father's advice, "Check out her mother — it's a preview." I did; was more than satisfied, and four months later we were man, wife and personal trainer.

I had enjoyed a three-year perpetual training exercise in the Marine Corps during WWII, so my wife concluded that, at the very least, I could make a bed, and might, with a little additional brush up, hang up my own clothes. Embracing the personal trainer motto — "So much to do, so little time" — she fell to with a will.

Prepare a hearty breakfast for a man and he's good at least until lunch. Teach him to make his own breakfast and you can sleep in until 10. Given free reign, no rational woman would consider the former after the honeymoon has worn off. In my wife's case, the arrival of three offspring, necessarily postponed her 10 a.m. arising plan for a decade, but training has many facets beyond the obvious toilet seat position. Thus, in time, I was able to pass proficiency tests in diaper changing, bottle preparation at 2 a.m., and to learn the consequences of forgetting birthdays and anniversaries.

I had received my driver's license on my 16th birthday 10 minutes after the DMV opened. For 11 years I negotiated parking places, avoided parked cars, pedestrians, and stray animals all without further training. I had no idea what hazards were out there until my wife, as required by her training obligations, patiently pointed them out to me. For the last 62 years, thanks to her better perspective from the passenger seat (both front and back), I have been able to negotiate parking places, avoid parked cars, pedestrians, and stray animals without mishap.

My personal trainer has been successful instructing me in the art of ironing my own shirts and shopping for groceries using the secretive scanning methods known only to other women. I can squeeze, shake, thump, smell, detect expiry dates, calories per serving, compare generic with

brand and spend inordinate amounts of time looking for unheard of items in the feminine hygiene section without being questioned by the management.

That's not to say I have learned it all. Coupons, for example. I would rather be savaged by fire ants than break out a sheaf of coupons at the checkout counter. I still roam the aisles for hours myopically looking for something rather than ask a knowledgeable employee, even if I could find one. I am a work in progress.

After buying at my bride's insistence one of those weird Dyson vacuum cleaners that turned out to be so heavy she couldn't push it, let alone lift it, I learned the fine art of vacuuming. She read me the manual. I am now proficient in the

use of 10 accessories and acknowledge the necessity of periodic maintenance. I have mastered the care and maintenance of the coffeemaker and can sometimes detect when things need dusting without detailed written instructions.

With divorce rates averaging better than 50 percent, it becomes painfully obvious that many males are running the risk of failing to become all they can be. Even the U.S. Army is offering to help. That's why many mothers are so happy to see their sons off and married. With the new trainer at the helm, she can, at last, snooze until 10.

Next month I am scheduled to learn why there is a right and wrong way to assign dirty laundry to the Maytag. Who knew? So much to learn, so little time. ■■■■