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Random Writings on Nephews

By Timothy Ward

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I don't get to see my nephews much anymore every since I moved from Atlanta to Lake City. I get to see them maybe twice a year and even then my younger nephew Nick is usually sleep so it doesn't really count. Seeing a family member sleep is like looking at a picture of them. A snoring, drooling, incoherently mumbling picture.

I have two nephews and I love them to death. They are the only people in my family that are younger than me. All my other family members were already alive when I was born. I has been a thrilling experience to watch my nephews grow through the different stages of life. Of course, some stages are more thrilling than others.

The early baby stages were not very thrilling. All my nephews did as babies was sleep and cry. At least thats the way it seemed to me. I'm sure they also ate and pooped, but whenever possible I was far away during these periods. I learned very quickly that when it comes to sheer grossness (if that's a real word) watching a 1-year old eat is rivaled only mammal childbirth and maybe that episode of Fear Factor where they ate blended sewer rat. I've seen pictures on Rotten.com that turned my stomach less. And we won't even

start on the pooping.

Once my nephews started talking I was able to get along with them better. My younger nephew, Nick, who is three, can now speak fairly well. Last time I saw him he could say a few words. Now he has a whole vocabulary. It's quite astonishing to hear him say something like "Uncle Tim I want to play the train game" in perfect english. Last year

he would have just grunted and pointed somewhere in the general direction of the computer. He also sings. My Dad tried to get him to sing 'I've been working on the Railroad'. He preferred Fat Joe's 'Lean Back'.

My oldest nephew, Frankie, is now 8. I had to ask him how old he was when I started writing this article, because I always forget.

"Frankie, how old are you now"? I asked. "Seven or eight"?

"Eight." he replied, with an expression of total disgust on his face. "I can't believe you thought I was seven"

I apologized for making such a mistake. I know that confusing an 8-year old with a 7-year old is an offense paramount to confusing Spiderman with Batman, or SpongeBob with Shrek. I've learned over the past eight years that age is a very sensitive subject for children. They say to never ask a woman her age, I say to never ask an adolescent either.

The older my nephews get the harder they are to wrestle with as well. When they were small I had to worry about hurting them. Now, I have to worry about them hurting me, or worse, me hurting me as I flee from them down the hallway in a desperate attempt to get to the bathroom and lock myself in. I've found that I have

to prepare for they're visits much like an athlete prepares for the Olympic. I have to get my body and mind in shape. I run. I lift weights. I practice my Thunder Power Slams, Killer Elbow combos and tapping out. And I spend a lot of time on my sprints.

I have a lot more to learn and look forward to as my nephews get even older. Soon they will be pre-teens and then teenagers. They will even reach adulthood one day I suppose. One thing I do know is that no matter what age they are and no matter what phases in life they are going through I will always love them. They are My nephews, My family. And the best tag-team wrestlers I know...

Timothy Ward invites you to visit:<http://www.wardwidewebzine.goduck.netto> learn more about his new ezine: the Ward Wide Webzine.

He Still Hasn't Popped the Question. Should You Give Him an Ultimatum?

By Terry Hernon MacDonald

You've been dating the man forever, and he has yet to cough up a ring. You spend every single weekend with him. You endure his flatulent buddies from college. You put up with his lunatic mother. You alternate spending holidays with his family and yours, spending handsome sums on gifts for his nieces and nephews. You cook for him. You've baked him birthday cakes. Occasionally you even do his laundry.

Should you give him an ultimatum? Doesn't he owe it to you to marry you after all you've done for him?

No.

After all, it was you who decided to endure people you don't like. It was your idea to cozy up to his nieces and nephews to show him how much you love children. You cooked and baked and did his laundry to prove that you're superior wife material. All this in the hopes of winning the ultimate prize package: The ring! The dress! The 7-day/6-night trip to the romantic destination of your choice!

And all he ever does is take you for granted.

Of course he takes you for granted. You don't have a life of your own. Your goal in life is to get married, you're pinning your hopes on him, and he knows it. Put yourself in his place: Wouldn't you take you for granted?

If you truly love him (and consider this carefully; do you love him, or do you love the idea of getting

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married?), don't give him an ultimatum. It's never smart to give any man an ultimatum. Ask yourself: Do you really want to marry a guy you had to strong arm? Don't you deserve better?

Ask yourself what marriage to an ambivalent husband might be like. If the guy takes you for granted now, how bad will he be in five years when you've given birth to children who scribble on the kitchen wall, and he remains slumped on the couch while you scurry to scrub it off? How bad will he be in 10 years when, on top of cooking, cleaning, and laundry to do, you still have homework to supervise and Halloween costumes to make?

Stop yourself now. Otherwise, one day sooner than you think, you will find yourself among the legions of women who complain that their husbands never do a damn thing around the house, and you'll have nobody to blame but yourself.

So, take a step back. Decide what you really want from life. Determine whether this particular man is the right companion for the trip. Cease spending all your free time with him. Replace a bad habit with a good one by taking a class, signing up for yoga, or going away for the occasional weekend with the friends you've been neglecting since you hooked up with What's-His-Name. In other words, don't be so available.

Fill your time with opportunities to meet new people. Get to know yourself better (you're worth getting to know). By all means, hang out with the guy from every now and then but limit time with his family. Resist all inclinations to "wife and mother" him. Let him bake you a cake for a change.

Will he come to his senses? Will he fall on both knees and make all your Cinderella fantasies come true?

Well, here are three possibilities: 1) He won't miss you all that much, freeing you to find happiness elsewhere; 2) You'll realize you don't miss him all that much and hold out for a man who'll love you as much as you love him; or 3) He'll ask you to marry him, and you'll tell him yes or no, confident that you're making the best choice for your own future happiness.

Keep in mind that if you say yes, the guy's obnoxious college buddies and lunatic mother are part of the package. If you're clever, you may get away with scaling back on his nieces and nephews' gifts a bit. How much baking, cooking, and laundry you take on, however, is entirely up to you.

Terry Hernon MacDonald is the author of "How to Attract and Marry the Man of Your Dreams" and the host of "Romance Talk with Terry" on

radio. Visit her website at

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