

NAVIGATE YOUR LIFE

HANDLE WITH CARE

Soothe her mood with these five smooth moves

Want some insider information? Get to the library and look for *What Was I Thinking?: 58 Bad Boyfriend Stories*, by Barbara Davilman and Liz Dubelman. Forget that it was written for women in need of commiseration; in reality, it's like a reverse instruction manual for men. Study the real guys written about here and you won't make their mistakes.

1 TURN AN ERROR INTO SOMETHING POSITIVE

Book story At dinner, John says he wants a "crêche" of wine. Lynn corrects: the word is carafe. "I'm a writer," he snaps. "I play with words."

Better move Brush off minor crêches – er, gaffes – with a laugh and an acknowledgement. "If you become defensive about something small, she'll think you're incapable of fielding bigger errors," says Dr Sandor Gardos, founder of *MyPleasure.com*.



JAMES BETTS/CELEBRITY PICTURES



2 HOLD HER ATTENTION, BUT DON'T PESTER HER FOR IT

Book story Kurt rubs Alice's back; she watches TV. Annoyed, he says, "What does somebody have to do to get your attention? Wrap a bullwhip around your neck?"

Better move The creepy threat was mistake number two; number one was assuming touch would keep her attention. "Women can compartmentalise physical come-ons, especially if they're not in the mood," says Pat Love, co-author of *How to Improve Your Marriage Without Talking About It*. Instead, ask open-ended questions. "It shifts her attention to you. Once you have it, she'll be more open to seduction," says Love.

3 CREATE CHEMISTRY NATURALLY, ESPECIALLY IN BED

Book story Kate sleeps with her yoga instructor. But in bed he rolls her shoulders back to correct her posture.

Better move "If you act judgmental during sex, you're telling her you aren't swept up in the moment," says Dr Michael Broder, the author of *Can Your Relationship Be Saved?* Be proactive rather than reactive. Broder suggests complimenting her on the things you like, requesting a small change, and then lavishing praise on that alteration.

4 BE STRAIGHT WITH HER, BUT NOT TOO STRAIGHT

Book story After sex, Rhonda's boyfriend pledges honesty – and then admits that he was fantasising about another woman. **Better move** One study found that lovers who didn't know all about their partner's attraction to others were more likely to stay together than those who knew each other's true feelings. But in a different study, published in the *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, people who deceived their partners felt less connected. The solution: "You don't need to share every thought," Gardos says. Don't burden her by unburdening every single aspect of yourself.

5 SHARE INTERESTS ONLY IF SHE'S INTERESTED

Book story Tony loves video games, Aimee doesn't. So he buys her a flat-screen TV for Christmas and *Super Mario Kart* on her birthday. **Better move** On an average evening, give her a sampling of your favourite games. "She'll be more receptive if you make the experience about her enjoyment," says Broder, so explain the rules and show her what makes it fun. "But allow her to back out if she's not into it," he cautions. "You don't have to share all the same interests."



SEX COACH

Jacqueline Hellyer boosts your bedroom know-how

Q *I've been with my girlfriend for two years. I don't find her physically attractive anymore, but we are great together. Where do I go from here?* – KR

A You need to switch back into the mode you were in when you did find her attractive. You've probably become complacent about her, spending too much time together and not seeing her as the sexy woman she is, and that you once thought she was. Put yourself in situations where you can see her as "other", that is, not as your girlfriend who you see around you all the time. Try going out and noticing how other men look at her – with fresh eyes, I bet they see her as attractive.

Spend more time apart so that you've got time to miss her, want her and yearn for her. Then, when you meet, make an effort to dress up, like you did when you first dated. Keep doing different, new and sexy things together, so that you keep the erotic spark alive between you.

Q *I enjoy it when my girlfriend goes down on me, but I rarely come. She has developed a bit of a complex. How can I get her to stop worrying about it and relax?* – GN

A Too many people think that sex is all about orgasm, that sex is something you do to another person so that they have an orgasm. It's not. Orgasm is a fantastic by-product of sex, not the point of sex. The point of sex is sharing pleasure (and making babies).

The focus for your girlfriend needs to be on the giving of pleasure rather than the giving of an orgasm. If she makes that shift, she'll realise that she is giving you pleasure, and that's fantastic.

Funnily enough, by her chilling into the pleasure aspect and you not worrying about her worrying (that's officially called Performance Anxiety), you'll probably find that orgasms do come more easily – but don't ever expect one; it's the expectation that gets in the way.

Jacqueline Hellyer is a sex coach and author (jacquelinehellyer.com). Got a question for her? Log onto yahoo7.com.au/menshealth.

