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The Wife's Bill of Rights

By Jill Adler

Preamble:

We, the wives of America, love being married to the husbands of America. We know we have our faults, but with our ever-morphing roles these days, there's a lot of pressure on us to be superhuman. We care for our families, manage the home, keep ourselves attractive, and even bring home our shares of the bacon. We know we sometimes lash out, but we really do want to "live happily ever after" with you. Our mutual acknowledgement of these amendments can go a long way toward achieving that.

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Amendment I

We have the right to dislike your buddies.

We know it's important for you to have your guy friends, but you should know by now that we're not turned on by your stories of the good old days at college, your sexual exploits, or which relief pitcher the Red Sox should trade. Disappear for a while and be boys—it's OK, go chug beer and high-five—but please don't expect us to be happy when your friends come over and put their feet on our coffee tables or leave their beer cans on the floor.

Amendment II

We have the right to experience PMS in all its glory.

Either give us our space or accept the consequences. We know it's unfair, but some of us just can't rein it in. You knew that before you married us. We may shout, cry, belittle, act irrationally. It lasts a few days each month, so please deal with it. Or even better: Bring home dinner, clear the dishes, and give us a big hug.

Amendment III

We have the right to demand you finish a household job.

We're not your mothers, and we loathe having to act like them. If you wash the dishes, do them all and clean the sink, too. Don't just bag the trash, take it outside to the bin. If you start a load of laundry, put it in the dryer and fold it too. We don't like nagging any more than you like hearing it.

Amendment IV

We have the right to an honest answer to "What's wrong?"

We admit guilt in this area too, but "Nothing" says nothing. If we ask, it's not because we're trying to make casual conversation. It's because we love you and need an honest answer. If there truly is nothing wrong, then ask why we think otherwise. Yes, this could open a can of worms, but remember when we dated and talked about everything?

Amendment V

We have the right to keep our secrets.

Not marriage-ending ones, just small secrets we choose to hide from others. If we don't want to speak our age or share our true hair color or reveal the cheesy TV shows we watch in private, it's not your place to reveal them to our friends, your business partners, or your ex-girlfriends/wives. We're not asking you to lie for us, but we would appreciate your discretion.

Amendment VI

We have the right to clean air.

You may think it's funny, masculine, or natural to pass gas anywhere and anytime you please, but when the smell drives us to gag, it's uncool. There is something inherently wrong in the relationship if you must walk over to us and fart, or if you intentionally set a bad example for the kids. We fart too, but we do so discreetly for a reason. You may not like our potpourri and scented candles, but they're infinitely better than toxic and flammable methane.

Amendment VII

We have the right to keep and bear tons of girly bathroom products.

You have your tools; so do we. These items are expensive and to be used sparingly. It brings no joy to see our \$15 bath bar shrunk down to the size of a quarter after two passes on your chest and legs.

Amendment VIII

We have the right to speak to our girlfriends every day.

About whatever we want, whenever we want. Please don't eavesdrop or criticize. We know you're not that interested in gossip or psycho-analytical interpretations of why some people do what they do, so we turn to our like-minded female friends for instant gratification. Yes, we do talk about you—a lot. It helps us work through issues. This keeps us happy, sane and, usually, off your case.

Amendment IX

We have the right to flirt.

Not the kind that makes you jealous, but the healthy practice of connecting with another person on a non-sexual level. Light banter is fun, quick-witted, and encouraging to our self esteem. It might even remind you of why you fell in love with us. And if it gets us a smoking deal on that new furnace or a free stay for the family at a million-dollar ski chalet,

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so much the better.

Amendment X

We have the right to foreplay.

A fine bottle of wine, soft music, deep looks into each other's eyes, compliments, holding hands, cuddling—these are all forms of foreplay, and we insist on them. Please don't reach for our crotch or breasts and expect us to melt into a porn kitten. It didn't work when we met, it most certainly doesn't work now. Sure, we women are strong and independent, and appreciate an inspired quickie when the moment strikes, but we also have an inner soft spot the size of Texas that needs squeezing and cherishing. We appreciate you more when you think about how it feels to us rather than how it feels to you.

YOU TELL US: Would you add or remove any 'rights' from this list?

Jill Adler is a freelance writer based in Salt Lake City. When she's not researching relationships, she edits a bi-monthly sports publication in Utah, is a film and television actor, and is a PSIA Level III certified ski instructor. You can reach her at www.jilladler.com.

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[1-4 of 157000] [\[more\]](#)