

How I cheated on my wife... with my wife

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Marty Wilson... "We had a huge spa bath in the afternoon - just because we could - and as we lay back my wife said, "Isn't it luxurious to lay back in a bath without a toy shark sticking into your bum cheek?" Photo: Kitty Hill

A weekend away is all it took for Marty Wilson to regain the spark. No need for a website exhorting affairs, thanks.

When I heard about Noel Biderman and his website, sleazyparasite.com.au (not sure if that is quite correct), I wanted to write about it but couldn't - at least not straight away. I had to wait for the bile to die down so I could do it without swearing in front

of the kids, or smashing my fist through the iMac.

As someone who has just spent his "seven-year itch" year interviewing couples in great relationships, I realised how deeply anyone who signs up to that site misunderstands what it really takes to make love work.

But, rather than rant and rave, I'll just tell a quick story, then get a little obnoxious and judgemental to finish off.

For my 40th birthday, my siblings gave me and my wife a voucher for a weekend away in the Hunter Valley. Even more importantly, mum and dad chipped in with the priceless "babysitting coupon".

Four weeks ago, we finally organised the time off and had a wonderful two days away. I am now 42 years old.

As we planned for the break, we realised this would be our first weekend away in over five years. We talked about everything else we'd managed to squeeze into that time: we'd moved back to Australia; I'd gone back into advertising; got a book deal; had a second child; finished my first book; ran screaming from advertising; started comedy and corporate speaking again; saw our first child start school; had both kids in hospital; and finished my second book. How could we not sneak in a lousy weekend away? We really, really, really needed a break.

It was wonderful how quickly we recaptured the spark. By the time we'd driven the three hours from Sydney, we felt like "Allie and Marty" again, and not just "Mum and Dad".

We have some friends who talk about how things used to be "BC" (Before Children). We could now see what they meant. We were slower, calmer, softer.

We checked into Wilderness Grove, a gorgeous, secluded place with only four suites in the middle of an expansive olive grove, and spent the rest of the morning doing nothing much. We had a huge spa bath in the afternoon - because we could - and my wife said, "Isn't it a glorious luxury to lay in a bath without a toy shark sticking into your bum cheek?" I agreed, "It's just lovely doing a wee without a three-year-old barging in asking, 'Are pterodactyls herbivores or carnivores?'"

A typical conversation went like this: "Isn't the scenery lovely? It could be Europe, with the hills covered in vines and the olive trees. Remember that trip to Italy we had when we lived in England? I

miss that."

Instead of this: "Isn't the scenery lovely? (Connor take your fingers out of your brother's nose). It could be Europe (Elliot, beans are not lightsabers), with the hills covered in vines and the olive trees (finish your lunch or no ice-cream. That's one). Remember that trip to Italy we had (Boys! That's two) when we lived in England? (Three. Right no ice-cream). I miss that."

The next day we went for a lengthy walk. This was by far the highlight of our weekend. We ambled along, adoring the stunning vineyards and we (drum roll please) talked, to each other and no one else, for almost four hours.

We hadn't done that in five long years, except for those sporadic dinners when you're so ecstatic to be outside the four walls of your house together you end up ordering that second, sometimes third, bottle of wine and not remembering exactly what you talked about.

It all felt so natural, so easy, so just-like-it-used-to-be "BC". It reaffirmed our commitment to each other and reminded us both why we got hitched in the first place.

I may be playing amateur psychologist here, but I think if only more couples made time to have weekends away, these revolting and brainless websites would never get off the ground.

Here comes "judgemental and obnoxious": Noel Biderman is promoting and preying on what can only be called "emotional consumerism", and his view of love is as deeply soulful and rewarding as a new pair of Dolce&Gabbana undies.

If you don't understand why love doesn't work that way, be my guest and sign up with Noel, and enjoy your life full of romantic skidmarks.

Marty Wilson is a stand-up comedian, professional speaker and author of the bestselling What I Wish I Knew series. His latest book, What I Wish I Knew About Love, is in stores now. Read more of his blog www.whatiwishiknew.com

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