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## Documents Online

**Title:** Letter from Benjamin Rush to Susan Stockton

**Date:** August 18, 1781

**Location:** I-SpahrB-1953-23

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Directions for making a husband unhappy  
without incurring the Character of a bad wife.

1 Find out his humor and inclinations in  
every thing. — If he is passionate or impatient  
in his temper endeavour to rouse him into  
both as often as possible. — If it should be  
dangerous to oppose his will when he is  
angry, don't fail of reminding him of all  
the hasty and foolish things he says and  
does ~~whenever~~ in his passion when he is in  
a good humor. — ~~etc.~~

Let your pleasures, Studies, companions be  
as different from his as possible.

If he delights in a country life, you must  
prefer the city — If he prefers the city, you must  
dwell constantly in raptures  
~~spend all your time~~ upon the charms  
of <sup>the</sup> country. ~~life~~.

If he is fond of music, you must seal  
your lips, and suffer your guitar or harpsichord  
to remain always out of tune. If he had  
no taste for music, you must be perpetually  
striving straining upon some chorded instrument,  
or make every room in the house resound with  
humms — and screechings like an Italian orchestra.

If he is a Churchman, be sure go con-  
stantly to meeting. If he is a presbyterian



don't fail of going constantly to Church even on  
week days, and loose no opportunity of giving  
a byeblow at the long faced psalm-singing blueskins.

If he is a whig, talk of nothing but of the rank  
& consequence of the ancient great folks. If he is ~~in~~  
~~a~~ moderate & liberal ~~man~~ in his principles, breath out  
in all your conversation fire and sword & gibbets and  
hatters against the poor torries. —

If he is fond of making entertainments for ~~large~~  
~~companies~~, plead your want of kitchen maids and  
waiters fit for large Companies — If he delights to  
move in a <sup>social</sup> ~~private~~ circle, and should now & then  
pick up a Stranger or a friend & bring him home  
with him to a family dinner — look as black as  
midnight & make your dinner appear as scanty as  
possible — and ~~if~~ be sure to forget to order a piece  
of Cheese or butter or some fruit to make up for  
the defects of the dinner.

If he delights in balls & assemblies, do you  
assent the character of one of the most domestic women  
in the world. If he prefers the joys of his fireside  
to tumultuous and mixed companies, do you harp  
constantly upon the happiness of those ladies whose  
husbands introduce them to fashionable amusements.

If he loves to go to bed soon, do you  
prefer sitting up. If he prefers a Matras in  
Summer do you insist upon sleeping upon a bed.



prefers Soup to roasted meat  
If he ~~is a~~ ~~But~~ ~~is a~~ ~~But~~ you must speak  
with contempt of Soup maigre rascals - But if he  
prefers his meats well done in the taste of the  
wisest and most civilized Nation in the world, you  
must never suffer them to come to table Unless  
you are sure a stream of blood will follow every  
incision that is made into them with a knife as  
copious & clear as in amputating a limb. —

If he delights in the prospect of a numerous  
~~as a word you must be opposed to~~

~~and promising family~~ you  
must make pointing ~~to~~ ~~to~~ complain  
hard lot, keep pace with the three in  
that generally ushers in those Blesings  
& Society. —

In a word you must be of  
him in every thing. —

Thus far - for making a husband untray,  
- now for preserving the Character of a good wife  
you must speak of your husband with  
respect, and treat him with tenderness upon all  
occasions. you must ever reproach him at  
times with a want of affection for you. — You  
must sooth him - and flatter him - and love  
upon <sup>him</sup> a thousand little kindnesses occasionally, but  
more especially when you want a new gown  
or a Set of China. — This will not only blind  
the eyes of the public, but your husband will



be the foremost in defending your character as a  
good wife.

Philad<sup>a</sup> Aug: 18<sup>th</sup>  
1781

Adieu

Yours  
sincerely

B. Rush

Miss Susan Lockton  
(of monroe)

now at

Buckenridge

Directions for making a husband unhappy without incurring the character of a bad wife.

Find out his humor and inclinations in every thing. - If he is passionate or impatient in his temper endeavor to rouse him into both as often as possible. - If it should be dangerous to oppose his will when he is angry, don't fail of reminding him of all the hasty and foolish things he says and does in his passion when he is in a good humor.

Let your pleasures, studies, companions &c. be as different from his as possible.

If he delights in a country life, you must prefer the city - If he prefers the city you must dwell constantly in raptures upon the charms of the country.

If he is fond of music, you must seal your lips, and suffer your guitar or harpsicord to remain always out of tune. If he has no taste for music, you must be perpetually strim straming upon some chorded instrument, or make every room in the house resound with hums - and screechings like an Italian orchestra.

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liberal in his principles, breath out in all your conversation fire and sword & gibbets and haltere against the poor tories. -

If he is fond of making entertainments, plead your want of kitchen maids and waiters fit for large companies - If he delights to move in a social circle, and should now & then pick up a stranger or a friend & bring him home with him to a family dinner - look as black as midnight - make your dinner appear as scanty as possible - and be sure to forget to order a piece of cheese or butter or some fruit to make up for the defects of the dinner.

If he delights in balls & assemblies, do you affect the character of one of the most domestic women in the world. If he prefers the joys of his fireside to tumultuous and mixed companies, do you harp constantly upon the happiness of those ladies whose husbands introduce them to fashionable amusements.

If he loves to go to bed soon, do you prefer setting up. If he prefers a mattress in summer do you insist upon sleeping upon a bed. If he prefers soup to roasted meat you must speak with contempt of soup maigre raeccals - But if he prefers his meats well done in the taste of the wisest and most civilized nation in the world, you must never suffer them to come to table unless you are sure a stream of blood will follow every incision that is made into them with a knife as copious ~~and~~ clear as in amputating a limb.

If he delights in the prospect of a numerous and promising family you must make pouting <sup>&</sup> complaints <sup>ing</sup> of your hard lot, keep pace with the three months ~~at~~ that generally ushers in these blessings home & society.

In a word you must be opposite to him in everything.

Thus far - for making a husband unhappy - now for preserving the character of a good wife.

You must speak of your husband with respect, and treat him with tenderness upon all occasions. You must even reproach him at times with a want of affection for you. - You must sooth him - and flatter him - and lavish upon him a thousand little kindnesses occasionally, but more especially when you want a new gown or a sett of China. - This will not only blind the eyes of the public, but your husband will be the foremost in defending your character as a good wife. -

Philada. Augst. 18th

1781

adieu

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sincerely

B. Rush

Miss Susan Stockton  
(of Morven)

now at

Baskenridge.