

Will Snoring Get You Fired, or Just Divorced?

Dear Stephen:

Off the bat my reason for writing may not sound like a work-related problem, but bear with me because it is. My husband snores! He has for years, and I mostly tolerated it, but now as I get older and sleep less heavily, it is affecting my own ability sleep, which is in turn affecting my work. I can't sleep during the night, so I am either late for work or cannot function at 100 percent because I am so tired.

To be fair to my husband, it is really more than just snoring. He has been diagnosed with sleep apnea, so he often wakes himself up several times during the night gasping for air. Still, his refusal to use his sleep aid machine is not helping. He is only 36, so we are in this for the long haul. I am not sure how many options I have. Even when I move to the sofa, which is now part of my routine, I wake up exhausted. It's affecting my performance at

work, and I am too embarrassed to explain it, but now I got a poor performance review. What should I do?

Sleepless in Lower Manhattan

Dear Sleepless,

Struggling to sleep because a partner is snoring is much more common than some people might imagine. Funny, right? We seem to have no filters when we talk to our co-workers, and yet you never hear anyone talk about their partner's snoring. We will talk about intimate details in our relationships and write about them online, we will cry at work when getting over a breakup, but we won't talk about how we might as well have been trying to sleep in a recycling factory the previous night.

I have no idea why this topic is verboten, but it is. It doesn't fly

as an excuse at work. So short of divorce, start by filming your husband for a couple of minutes with your smart phone while he is snoring. I know this sounds strange, but most people who snore don't realize what they sound like, look like and what happens to them when they stop breathing. If watching themselves choking on air doesn't get them to wear the CPAP masks, or go talk to their doctors, then those death-wishing dimwits aren't worth the time or energy.

My point is that by hook or by crook you need to find a way to get your sleep. My dear friend



You can send your workplace questions to Stephen at: StephenSays@bellow.press.

Questions selected to be answered, will appear in this column. Please use the Subject: Stephen Says for all emails. Stephen Viscusi is a bestselling author, television personality, and CEO of The Viscusi Group, global executive recruiters located in New York. Follow Stephen on Twitter @WorkplaceGuru, Like Stephen on Facebook; and follow him on LinkedIn.

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and mentor Arianna Huffington, formerly of the Huffington Post where I am a contributor, released a book last year titled "The Sleep Revolution: Transforming Your Life, One Night at a Time." It offers an excellent survey of the copious evidence of the importance of a good night's sleep.

I won't spoil her full analysis, but the main thrust of her argument is that sleep is essential and more difficult to come by in our times than ever before. After reading the book, I feel like I can say conclusively, with the full weight of the scientific community behind me, that you likely aren't getting as much sleep as you should be — and that's even before we think about snoring spouses. With that in mind, you need to find a way to convince your husband to make concessions to try to stop snoring. If not for his own health, then for yours. And for those of you in the furniture industry, this research should have you seeing dollar signs. Savvy manufacturers like Haworth are already capitalizing on the new trend of

putting nap pods in offices. Once that market gets cornered, you slow movers might have a market for blankets, but it won't pay the same, so get going.

Taking all this medical, statistical and practical advice out of the equation, I find that people also start to resent their partners who snore. The upshot is the snoring is not just affecting your sleep and your work, but it is also affecting your relationship. I mean what is more annoying than having your alarm go off when you're still exhausted? The answer is having your alarm go off when you're still tired because your idiot of a partner couldn't be bothered to stop by the CVS to pick up breathing strips. If your partner is to blame for your pain and suffering, then who wouldn't resent them? Now, some may think that I am blowing this all out of proportion, but I have seen relationships fall apart because of this (yes, "relationships" plural).

So onto solutions. If you can convince your partner to try some

breathing strips or to start using their very expensive, doctor-prescribed CPAP machine — zero noise comes out of the CPAP, and yet people still refuse to use it — that's great. Even that might not work for everyone, though. In these situations, if you have the space, the best option is starting to sleep in different bedrooms. I know it sounds crazy, but it worked in Victorian England, and it's gaining popularity today. And don't worry, birth rates increased in the Victorian era. Just because you have two different rooms, it doesn't mean that you aren't allowed in each other's beds.

The bottom line is you need to have a good night's sleep to have a good day at work. Snoring is just one of many things that may disrupt sleep. Drinking too much, a new baby at home (I'm not saying don't have a baby), noisy neighbors, anything could be the reason. Seek professional help if applicable or find another solution. Just make sure you get your seven hours!

Stephen