

# WIVES AND MAPS /2/ MULTITASKING

And so we go on, **constantly stopping** and turning, while two **brilliant** navigators sit **silently** in the back. But **now that** science has **come up with** an explanation **for** the **difficulties** women have with map-reading, I **might** finally find the **courage** to **speak out**: "**It's** your hormones, darling. You are **lousy at** map-reading **for** the same reason **that** I would **have a hard time breast-feeding**. Now **why don't you** just **hand** that map **over** to George?"

Hormones **may** also explain why my wife is **much better at doing** certain things that I **fail at over and over again**. She has no trouble **keeping** at least five tasks **running at once** - **helping** a boy **do** his homework, **running** the bath, cooking, **answering** the telephone, writing **thank-you letters** etc. **Myself**, I **have never been able to** concentrate on more than one thing **at a time**. If the phone rings while I am **running** the bath for the seven-year-old, I will **forget all about** the bath and let it **overflow**. **From now on**, I **may have** an excuse: it's my hormones, darling.

My wife remembers important dates, too, **which** I never **do**. She **carries** in **her** head the birthdays of **at least** 30 people on her side of the family and **mine**. Every year I say, about **three weeks too late**: "Oh Lord! I **forgot all about** my godson's birthday." And she will always say: "**Don't worry about it**. I sent him a present and a card from you."

The **awful** truth is that I am **not much good, either, at most of the things** men **are supposed to** be **good at: keeping** cars in good **condition**, understanding computers and **fixing** the **plumbing**.

But **never mind**. I have four sons, **all of whom** will soon **be able to take on** the man's jobs in the family. **Actually**, it **might not be a bad idea** to start right now, with the navigating.