Dear Anne,

I love my boyfriend dearly, but I can't deal with his aversion to soap and water and clean clothing. He wasn't like this when I first knew him. He lives in my house and helps with the bills but I hate him being in my bed because quite frankly, he smells. I've tried dropping hints and just being direct but nothing works. I don't want to ask him to leave but I will have to if he can't respect me enough to spend 5 minutes a day in the shower. He has enough time to spend 4 hours a day in the pub when I'm at work.

Any suggestions? Many thanks,

PM

Dear PM,

It's hard living with anyone whose personal hygiene isn't good enough. It's not only offensive to the nose, it can be a health hazard and it can certainly spell death to intimacy.

You've tried to tackle this without a positive response from your partner. You might try assertiveness once more: "I love you but right now I don't want to be close to you because you smell unpleasant. Please will you have a good wash and put some clean clothes on?" may do the trick. Equally, it may not. Alternatively you might ask him what the problem is because you can't help noticing he's been reluctant to have a shower and wear clean clothes. Perhaps between the two of you, you can come up with a solution. This problem-solving approach could be viewed as supportive.

You could tell him on any given night, "I'd love to spend time with you on another occasion but right now I don't want to because you smell dirty. Will you sleep on the sofa tonight if you won't take a shower?" And stick to your guns, politely but firmly.

If at the end of a week of these tactics he still hasn't addressed the issue constructively, you might give him an ultimatum. The fact that he regularly has time to spend hours in the pub could indicate someone with an alcohol problem, in which case if he's unwilling to sort it out, recognize that that's not about you but his addiction. No one can fix anyone else's drinking problems so either you could go to AA for support in a relationship with someone who has a drink problem, or you could kick him into touch.

Good luck.

Anne
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**Reading Comprehension Questions:**

What is PM’s problem? Why does she need advice?

What are three things Anne suggests PM try?

Do you agree with Anne’s advice? Is there anything you would disagree with? Anything you would add?