

Opinion: Cohabitation is not a crime

...ions reveal living
...your significant other
...re marriage might not
...s harmful to a
...nship as
...ously thought

By Annemarie Schulte
Arts & Culture Editor

...remember in high school always
...about how bad it was to "cohabi-
...with your partner before marriage.
...and was hushed; it seemed like a
...word to me.

...thers told me something like, "It
...your chance of getting divorced
...percent."

...16-year-old sister, a bleeding heart
...always told me how ridiculous
...was, and how she had lived with
...of her boyfriends. No matter how
...she told me that cohabitation was
...ly OK, I saw the way my parents
...grandparents disapproved. Honestly,
...es I thought she did it just to spite
...coming from a family riddled with
...frankly, I believed every bit of the
...idea that living together before
...was sinful and a bad idea.

...2010, though. I'm 19 years old,
...with my boyfriend. Society can
...mouth as much as they please, I
...don't mind. Living with someone
...marriage is not some taboo thing
...It's accepted, and more and more
...are doing it in this country. Look
...cohabitation is as prevalent as real-
...is and drug abuse.

...can't say I view my situation as
...that I'm blind to the fact I'm too
...be living with my boyfriend. But
...months ago I got so stressed about
...ing situation that I just had to leave.
...working just to pay rent (too high
...add) and my sister whom I lived
...continually came home at 3:30 a.m.
...ted with friends in tow, keeping
...all night when I had to get up early
...ol.

...dd insult to injury, I was driving
...ates every morning to school and
...bankrupted by all the gas I was
...was driving a brand new car and
...ing up the miles; I felt guilty. And
...my boyfriend and his family openly
...his guest bedroom to me rent-free,



I said to myself, "I would be crazy to turn this down." I knew all of my stress about money and rent would just melt away and I could actually be 'comfortable.'

I know friends who currently live with their boyfriends and they encouraged me. I discussed my decision with my parents and my whole family knows, they are totally accepting of it. The whole reason we even considered it is just because it's for such a short duration; I am only living with him for three months until spring term is done. But like I said, my situation is not ideal. His grandparents still do not know, and to be honest, I think this is on purpose. They're old school; they'll never change their ideals or perceptions.

It's not a struggle living with my boyfriend, though. We have a great relationship. I've realized he plays "Call of Duty" way too much, and he's realized I have "way too many clothes," but for the most part our relationship has stayed the same. I would usually stay a couple nights at his house as it was, and so it really feels like nothing has changed. His family likes me and I feel encouraged and supported by them. His mom brings up snacks to me while I study. I have much more time and energy to focus on school, and I'm much happier.

The best thing about this turn of events, though, is that I feel home again. I moved out right after I graduated high school to pursue professional dance in Portland, leaving everything from my childhood behind. Since then I've been living in apartments, which while nice (and too expensive for me to afford), just did not feel like home. I only ate out, and I hated how loud the next door

neighbors were. I missed being home and being taken care of, I missed my parents (especially my mom whom I'm closest to), I missed my pets, the familiarity of the neighborhood, everything you love about home. Now, I am finally home again.

“

We'll be nostalgic about our petty fights over homework, being broke and always sleep deprived.

As great as this all sounds, my boyfriend and I do have our bad days. There are some days we just want to get away from each other, and I'm sure there are days he just wants his room to smell like a guy's again. But we are figuring things out and maturing through this together. We always say we'll look back after graduating college and think "Man, that was a good time." We'll be nostalgic about our petty fights over homework, being broke and always

sleep deprived. When we look back, these are the times we'll miss the most.

The *New York Daily* recently released an article that stated, "The prevalent belief, based on older studies, was that couples who cohabited before marriage were significantly more likely to split up than those who didn't. But a new report from the National Center for Health Statistics, based on the National Survey of Family Growth conducted in 2002, says differently."

The study, which surveyed 13,000 men and women between the ages of 15 to 44, reports that 71 percent of men who were engaged when they moved in with their future first wife made it to their 10th anniversary. For men who didn't cohabit before getting married, the success rate dropped slightly to 69 percent.

This study basically dismissed the idea that cohabitating was bad for marriage and doomed you for divorce. And I agree. I'm ecstatic to see our society moving forward. We're accepting of homosexuality, transgender, recovering drug addicts and now cohabitation. It's about time right? Now I just can't wait to see the next reality show testing this new theory. It will be called "Can they do it?" and it will feature young couples, in the early stages of their relationship, testing if they have what it takes to live together, and stand the test of time. I think in the end though, America will find that cohabitation is no longer a dirty word.

"A young couple should not live together unless they are married."

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Female	9.7%	25.0%	49.1%	13.4%
Male	9.0%	23.1%	52.6%	13.3%

• Statistics were similarly close for women, with 65 percent of cohabiting engaged couples standing the test of time, compared to 66 percent of women who waited until the marriage was official to shack up.

• Meanwhile, the likelihood of an unmarried cohabitating couple lasting the decade after marriage was 55 percent. While somewhat lower, the results indicate that living together before serious commitment isn't a recipe for disaster.

• To view the report released in February 2010 by the National Center for Health Statistics visit: www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_028.pdf

• The original study statistics can be found at: www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg/abc_list_a.htm#marriage

NOTE: Percentages in the tables do not add to 100 because the category "neither agree nor disagree" is not shown here.

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