



Better balance

(Isn't that just a tower in each hand?)

Oooh, the memory is so clear! It's high school, our best friend snags a new boyfriend and she lavishes all her time on him, leaving nothing for us, not even a minute for catch-up gossip in the halls. And weekend girl-time? Forget that! (And we've been told that boys ain't much better when a girl catches their eye!)

Of course, we probably did the very same thing when it was our turn to be "in a relationship." Humans are notoriously fickle, and teenagers certainly have no corner on friendship angst. We all have trouble balancing the demands of work and play and people in our lives. And funny thing, that sense of abandonment stings every bit as much when we're 30 or 50 as it did when we were 16.

So now you're a fanatical quilter and desertion takes on a new dimension. Have you ever had a friend dump

you because she was so tired of your quilting obsession? Sadder still, have you ever divorced because your devotion to stitching seemed stronger than your devotion to spouse? (Think we're kidding? Read *7 Stupid things quilters do to mess up their lives* on page 26.)

Some of us may balance our fat-quarter mania okay with the rest of our day-to-day demands, but our OCD comes out in other ways. We're completely and irrationally fixated on making quilts with tiny half-square triangles (that might be more of a disorder than an obsession!). Maybe we can't seem to buy anything other than Civil War repro fabrics. And it could be that our pack-rat quilters in Linda M. Poole's piece on page 28 sound like our separated-at-birth q-twins/triplets/quads. (S'cuse us while we stop writing this long enough to venture to *eQuilter.com* and buy yet more, more, more fabric!).

The point is when we obsess, we exclude. We allow one interest to "edit" our focus and rob us of other influences that will end up enriching us as artists, quilters and people.

The antidote for tunnel vision is new vision. Or, rather enlarged vision. We've got to dial out the focus and let more ideas, influences, thoughts and experiences creep into our creative selves. It keeps us growing as quilters, plus it keeps our loved ones going, too, so they can support — rather than slam — our fanaticism.

If we're really lucky, the results will go far beyond just acknowledging life and loved ones around us (which is really a big enough reward by itself, let's be honest). We might, at the end of our sewing day, be able to say that we simple (yeah, right) quilters spread more joy with our work because we opened ourselves up to other people.

The real score, though, is if we drag one or two of those interested parties into our quilt folds!

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