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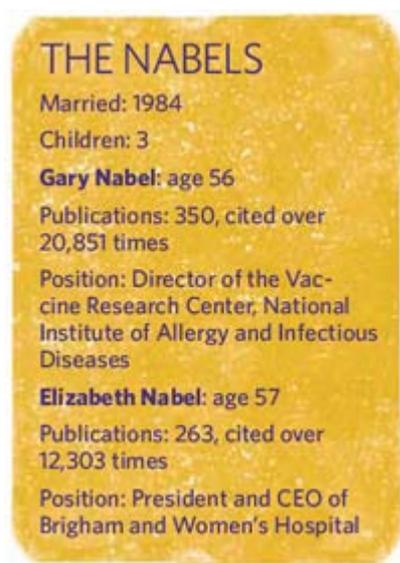
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## *Power Couples*



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*Three highly productive couples give advice on how to balance life at home and in the lab.*



*Elizabeth Guenther, a resident at Brigham and Women's Hospital, might have thought twice about agreeing to go out with her internal medicine intern Gary Nabel, had she known their first date would turn out like a scene from Pulp Fiction. While deciding what to order, a masked man appeared in the restaurant, pointing a gun at the chef and shouting for everyone's money. The gunman fled the scene with a fistful of wallets. The owners of the restaurant came out and offered all of the patrons a free dinner. Most just went home, but Nabel and Guenther were poor and tired med students, so they stayed and ate the free meal. "I was amazed that she was so graceful under pressure," Nabel recalls.*

*Just a little over a year later they were married.*

*From keeping their cool during a stickup to dealing with new career opportunities, their ability to make the most of life's curveballs has come to define their relationship.*

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*Early in their careers, the Nabels were able to collaborate on the first gene therapy studies in cardiovascular disease and cancer, each in their respective labs at the University of Michigan. But in 1999, when Gary was recruited to become the director of*

*the Vaccine Research Center, a new branch at NIH focused on developing an HIV vaccine, Elizabeth had to decide her next move. She loved life in Ann Arbor, Mich., raising her three children, and directing the cardiology department at the university, but realized the benefits of moving. "This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for my husband," she says. "I knew it would be a wonderful opportunity for my children to live in DC and be exposed to all the economic, social and political diversity."*

*Elizabeth soon made a name for herself as the director of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at NIH, launching new scientific programs focused on the genomics of complex diseases and global health. Just this year, it was Elizabeth's turn to make a big career move, when she was offered a job as the president and CEO of Brigham and Women's Hospital. For the first time in their marriage, the couple will make their relationship long distance. "What every married couple comes to recognize is that life is not static," says Gary. "You just have to come to expect and negotiate change together."*

### ***The Nabels' advice on balancing a busy lab life with family:***

#### ***Pay for childcare, if possible***

*"We decided early on that we would always keep family as our first priority," says Elizabeth, so money always went to education and nannies before other expenses. They hired a nanny to take care of their first son while they were completing residency and postdoc fellowship training, and continued employing nannies for all three children. "There were some years in Ann Arbor when we had three nannies who rotated schedules so we had coverage on evenings and weekends as well as after school," says Elizabeth.*

#### ***If he won't go, I won't go***

*Often potential new employers would not provide adequate terms for both Nabels, skimping on lab space, start-up money, or desired salary. When one of them wasn't happy with the employment terms, neither would sign on. They turned down offers "if there wasn't a position for us both or if the location wasn't a place we wanted to raise our children," Gary says. The position at the NIH was the notable exception.*

#### ***Incorporate work into family time***

*Even with busy work schedules, the family would spend time together around the dinner table and in the study in the evenings. "We have a fairly large study at home*

*with three computer stations,” says Elizabeth. “Basically, at night everyone in the family would come to the study and we’d work there together as family time.”*



*Federica Sallusto and Antonio Lanzavecchia were colleagues for several years before they became romantically involved. They met in 1993 when Sallusto joined Lanzavecchia’s lab at the Basel Institute for Immunology in Switzerland as a research technician. “In a matter of a few months, Federica made a spectacular discovery, which led to a couple of papers that are some of the most quoted papers in our field,” says Lanzavecchia. In one of these papers, published in *Journal of Experimental Medicine* and cited over 3,000 times (179:1109-18, 1994), she discovered a simple method to generate large numbers of immature dendritic cells by culturing human monocytes with two cytokines.*

*Despite their successes together, Sallusto moved back to Italy to focus on her T-cell research in the immunology department at the University of Roma La Sapienza in Rome. The two reunited a year later at a meeting and “we realized we liked being together, not just for work,” says Sallusto. They began to date.*

*In 2000, the two made a move together. Lanzavecchia was asked to direct the Institute for Research in Biomedicine (IRB), a new immunology center in Bellinzona, an Italian-speaking part of Switzerland. Sallusto took a position leading an immunology lab there. At IRB, the two were able to establish the kind of working dynamic they always wanted. “We each have our own focus—I enjoy exploring antibodies, B cells, and plasma cells, while Federica focuses more on T cells—but we work completely as a team,” says*

Lanzavecchia.

*"When I work with Federica, it is fun," he says. "We are absolutely on the same level."*

***Their advice on protecting a relationship in the lab:***

***Maintain your independence***

*"People would often ask Federica whether she was independent from me," says Lanzavecchia. These comments irked the couple, and motivated them to differentiate their research contributions from each other. After leaving Rome, Sallusto returned to Lanzavecchia's lab at Basel, but decided to focus on T-cell work, distinguishing herself from Lanzavecchia's area of expertise. "If both researchers in a couple feel independently successful, it makes them feel like they're on equal footing," says Lanzavecchia.*

***Ignore personal criticism***

*Despite efforts to carve out her own research niche, Sallusto still gets asked if she is independent from Lanzavecchia. Eliminating prejudices from outsiders may be a lost cause, so they did the next best thing: They decided not to let the opinions affect their work. "Scientists are never completely independent anyway," Sallusto points out. "A lot of our accomplishments come from working together so well."*

***Collaborate and compete***

*Lanzavecchia wanted to examine the immune response of human B cells and plasma cells more closely using cloning techniques, but his method proved to be somewhat laborious. Sallusto wagered that she could create a more effective way to interrogate immune cells. Fueled by a little competitive spirit, she generated a library of T-cell variants, which allowed her to select and test how specific T cells respond to different antigens more efficiently than Lanzavecchia's. "When we talk and feed off each other conceptually, we can create something innovative," says Lanzavecchia. "A little friendly competition is good."*



*When Maiken Nedergaard came to Cornell Medical Hospital in 1987 as a visiting neurology fellow from Denmark, she happened to work in the lab next door to Steve Goldman's. "One afternoon, she wanted advice on how to culture cells," says Goldman. "How's that for romantic?"*

*The couple was married 2 years later, and by 1999, they had five young children. Between kids two and three, they moved out of New York City to Westchester to have more space to raise their children. But the New York commute proved too draining, so Nedergaard took a job at New York Medical College in Westchester, heading a neurology lab and teaching. Goldman continued to commute up to 4 hours a day until they "finally decided to find a place where we could both integrate our family and work life," says Goldman.*

***"When we talk and feed off each other conceptually, we can create something innovative." —Antonio Lanzavecchia***

*In 2003, the couple took positions at the University of Rochester Medical Center in upstate New York. "Most of our researchers moved with us, so by the time we had consolidated, both labs together were bigger than most of the basic science departments at the university," says Goldman. With the backing of the university, they started a new department—the Center for Translational Neuromedicine.*

*Recently Nedergaard and Goldman developed a strategy to use stem cells to replenish*

*the type of brain cells that are lost in Parkinson's and Huntington's in animal models of the diseases, and hope to use this strategy in humans.*

### ***Their advice on preserving family time:***

#### ***Keep weekends sacred***

*Goldman and Nedergaard did not plan on having such busy work and family lives, but the move to Rochester made a tremendous difference, says Nedergaard. "I almost never work on the weekends anymore so I can spend time with the kids," says Goldman. If they were to do it all over again, they might have tried to find a joint appointment sooner.*

#### ***Find couple time***

*With such a large family, it is tough for Goldman and Nedergaard to set aside time to be alone, especially if that takes away from being with their children. The couple does try to steal away moments together, for instance, when the kids sleep late on weekends. "We can enjoy an early breakfast together discussing our children or news from the latest conference," says Nedergaard. Since alone time is so short lived, the couple never gets bored in each other's company, she says.*

#### ***Take turns sacrificing***

*During the couple's days at Cornell, Goldman's duties in the clinic often called him away from the lab. Luckily, Nedergaard was there to oversee his lab in his absence. In turn, Goldman made sure Nedergaard wasn't left taking care of baby duties alone, even when he spent long hours on the road. "I was already used to getting 2 hours of sleep a night from my days covering the intensive care unit," says Goldman. That skill came in handy when he took the overnight feeding and burping sessions to let his wife sleep through the night. "The ability to be fluid and cover each other's duties has been crucial for us," says Goldman.*