

MEN ARE LIKE DOGS



Appreciating How Men Work

www.ChadDavid.ca

Copyright© 2025 Chad David

All rights reserved.

...&

**sometimes they like each other
too much**





Dedication

This book is dedicated to Aaron McCormick; the talented man who has done the covers for my last three books. I first met him when I was 20 years old volunteering in his grade six class over twenty years ago. It's truly a blessing to have things work out for us to become friends (and not just because he's incredibly talented with a camera and computer). He's a loyal friend who is a role model of someone who pushes himself to grow and be the best version of himself.



My friend took this brilliant picture. Maybe one day I'll be cute enough to be on a purse instead of being the person holding my wife's.

Table of Contents

1) Please Note	9
2) A Note from Present Me	13
3) Introduction Stuff	15
4) A Man's Best Friend	30
5) What is a Man?	36
6) A Dog is Not a God	46
7) The Different Types	48
8) Logical	54
9) Logical... But Dumb	62
10) Loyalty	73
11) The Importance of Training	86
12) The Importance of Praise	116
13) Making Their Partner Happy	122
14) Our "Screw you" Factor	138
15) The Importance of Fun & Adventure	142
16) Easily Pleased	146
17) Easily Distracted	150
18) Caught in the Moment	153
19) Routine and Consistency	157
20) How They Communicate	160
21) The Alpha Male	171
22) The Need to Provide	184
23) The Need to Protect	186
24) Competitive	189
25) Desire to be Wanted	193

26) Buddies	195
27) The Gross Side	200
28) Personal Space	205
29) A Man is at His Best When...	210
30) Conclusion	219

The family who influences me
(One of them isn't a relative... but I kind of wish they were)



****** PLEASE NOTE ******

This book was originally written over 13 years ago when I was in my early 30s and dating, which means it started with a more optimistic mindset about life and people in general. Young men tend to have more hope (and there's a reason hope rhymes with dope). Now that I'm in my mid 40s and married with three young girls... well, let's just say there's a reason they made a movie called *Grumpy Old Men*. Honestly, I'm more of a grumpy old man in training because I'm more of a grumpy-ish, kind-of-old man, but give me a few more decades and I'll have this grumpy thing down pat.

As I've learned firsthand, there are differences between younger and older men, single and married men, and early-stage dads and dads with grownup kids, but the basic ideas about us remain the same, which we'll discuss in this book. The one thing I will point out now is ***a guy is at his best when he has something to hope for and/or a problem to solve, which can become a challenge to find for men as we get older.*** When we're young, we have hope to one day achieve the big three goals, a wife, family, and career, but when that's all in place, we can be left wondering, "Now what?" It's like the athlete winning a gold medal: "This is awesome... but now what?" The difference is an athlete can try to do it again whereas I don't advise men trying to redo the big three goals unless absolutely necessary (it doesn't end well financially). When a man achieves the big three goals (or gives up pursuing them), he can end up in the mid-life crisis mode because he feels lost. That's when he needs to create a new goal to pursue even if it's to be a pickleball champion (which is better than being the pickled champion).

After I had kids, I felt like something in me died, and it got worse with each baby because I kept getting further and further engulfed in responsibility and having less me time. For my wife, after having kids, something in her awakened and she felt a new sense of purpose. She finally felt like she was now fully alive, which was strange when she hadn't really wanted kids before having the first one. This feeling of being fully alive will likely fade over the years until it fully disappears with the kids growing up. This is why some women try to prevent their kids from becoming independent; they don't want to lose their sense of purpose. Where my wife's fun *is* the kids (there's a reason girls play with dolls and boys find more interesting things to do), my fun was lost for the kids. My fun was doing things like playing sports, watching action movies, and not dealing with girl drama. In the

future, when my kids are more independent and I have free time again, like a lot of men before me, I'll have to push myself out of this rut of not doing fun things (if my body can handle it). ***A man's first challenge is sacrificing his fun for the greater good of the family and then years down the road, the next struggle is pushing himself to get back into having fun.*** It can be hard, however, because laziness and avoiding social situations grows alongside the grumpiness – that's fun.

That being noted, there are some men who find fun in playing with kids, but that's not me. That makes sense, however, because when I was young, I liked playing on my own or doing sports with those around the same skill level as me. As a father of three young girls, what I'm supposed to do now are things I wouldn't have wanted to do as a kid (especially the normal dad activity – being the human trampoline). This means my current lack of excitement for playing with my kids makes sense. It's not anything against them or a sign I'm not a good dad. It's just a logical result of my personality and preferences. At the same time, seeing my girls smile and laugh are incredible moments, which are helpful for motivating me to be the father I should be for them. Besides, trying to be a good dad is simply the right thing to do. This goal, however, comes with sacrifice. For instance, who knew young girls could have such a talent for accidentally hitting/ kneeling/ kicking/ jumping on their dad's groin? (At least it saved me from booking a vasectomy appointment.) Fortunately, anything I have given up has been worth it (or will be when they're older and taking care of me). Ultimately, I would claim that being a dad has been a necessary step in my life, especially for growing as a person and having a fuller life. My increased grumpiness is a side project most men with or without kids work on.

Achieving the big three goals for a man can leave him feeling disillusioned (“This is what I dreamed about?”) and/or lost (“Didn't I have friends at one point?”) This is why I've met very good women whose husband ends up really struggling emotionally when life should be good. What's interesting is if one of these three areas is struggling, it can actually be helpful because it gives the guy a challenge to focus on or at least a place to dump the blame for not being happier. It becomes unhelpful, however, when one of these areas is sooo difficult it's soul crushing. This becomes a time when the guy can really benefit from outside support like a therapist unless he has a really great friend who knows how to listen, ask good questions, and offer professional support (but what are the odds unless their friend is a therapist?)

As strange as it might sound, having a good life (i.e. not having an area to blame for being unhappy) can leave an older man with a baseline of unhappiness: “My life is good, so why am I not happy?” The tips I give at the end of the book can be helpful for improving this situation. Sometimes, however, this is an everybody situation. What I mean by that is whenever anyone is not feeling their best, we should be asking, “Is my body trying to tell me something?” Our bodies are smart and will try to get our attention if we’re suppressing something that needs to be addressed or missing something it needs. For instance, I’ve worked with several guys who claimed they had depression, but it turned out they only ate fast food, so their body was angry at them and desperately wanted something healthy. They felt like garbage because they were filling their body with garbage.

There are also times when a guy doesn’t feel great when all three areas are doing well because he’s a guy getting older. Of course, this isn’t an excuse not to work at being patient and kind, but it can be hard not feeling the way we want. As an outsider, sometimes all you can do is let your good-guy-in-a-bad-spot be grumpy because he’s being like me – on a path to being a grumpy old man. ***The hope is he will find a new challenge to pursue or maybe find contentment in this new less obvious goal-oriented phase of life.*** If he likes reading (highly doubtful) I’d recommend my other book, *52 to be a Better Person: The perfect gift for someone else*. If we’re going to be grumpy, we should at least try to be emotionally healthy about it.

****** A NOTE FROM PRESENT ME ******

(Written as my older grumpy-ish self) In this book we're going to be looking at "real" men, but some guys are only hints of that title. For instance, here are *the three basic types of husbands*:

1. The lazy at home and lazy at work husband (i.e. a useless slug).
2. The lazy at home and hardworking at work husband (i.e. someone who is too tired, lazy, foolish, or chauvinistic to help at home).
3. The hardworking at home and at work husband (i.e. a good guy who might be frustrating his wife because he's working on something different than what she wants (like me doing this book)). This is the category of a "real" man.

This list can be expanded to *the five types of guys*:

1. ***The Jerk***: Someone who is too brash and mean.
2. ***The Dirt Bag***: Someone who is a know-it-all, show off, arrogant, or player. When I was younger these guys had cars with thumping stereo systems.
3. ***The Loser***: The nicer way of putting this is "social misfit" because they're someone who doesn't quite fit in the normal crowd. As an interesting note, I have a friend who is on the spectrum, and even though he might feel like he's in this category because of his idiosyncrasies, he's in the next one; he's a solid guy and far from being a social misfit. This category can also be the guy who doesn't deal with his junk. Weakness, lacking courage, and/or not accepting responsibility leaves you a loser.
4. ***The Decent Guy***: These are the husbands who work hard at home and at work. All the guys I grew up with as friends are in this category, which originally left me thinking all guys were good. Fortunately, I soon learned the truth without a lot of hurt, which gives me a better appreciation for what women can complain about when it comes to a man in their life.
5. ***The Awesome Guy***: I'm yet to meet this guy, but I know a lot of decent guys who work toward this title.

If you're reading this book and your man doesn't line up with the "real man" attributes I discuss, it could be a sign he's an anomaly, he's not The Decent Guy I'm writing about, or you're missing his positive traits. Hopefully, however, this book will be the start of better understanding and appreciating how men, in

general, are supposed to work in order to help you better work with them or know who to avoid. After all, not all men are good men.

****** WARNING ******

This book uses humor to teach. If you have a sense of humor, enjoy. If you don't, enjoy having something to judge.

Introduction & Beyond

This isn't just an introduction; it goes "beyond" because it not only introduces the topic, it also teaches a few great lessons. I do this to guarantee you get your money's worth. Yes, I'm that nice a guy. You're welcome... assuming you're polite and actually say thank you when someone does something nice for you unlike rude people (rude people are the worst). If you're reading this book, you must be pretty cool, so I'm sure you said thank you... or I guess thought it. That'd be pretty weird to say thank you out loud to a book: (reader) "Thank you book for being so thoughtful." (person nearby with children) "See, kids? That's why you don't do drugs." If people hear you talk to a book, they'll think you're special... like I must be for going off on this tangent. You're welcome for this tangent... or I'm sorry. One of those should apply. Don't worry; the rest of this book is amazing. If you thought this has been amazing, thank you for having a low standard. For you, this book is going to be ultra, fantastically, super duperly amazing because I'm just getting warmed up.

Side Note: This is a good example of how guys can *try* to be funny (emphasis on try). It also shows how we can get easily distracted. I want to point that out, so it makes more sense. I am that nice a guy... at least to strangers I'm worried about impressing (my wife has seen a different side).

The *Real* Introduction & Beyond

(and not just some tangent)

Not all men are *real* men. Some men just suck. I'm sure you can tell the difference because you're smart enough to read this book. The same is true for dogs. Some dogs just suck. I'm sure you can tell the difference because you're smart enough to keep reading this book even though I started it with some kissing up. ***When a guy or dog sucks, it means they are not living up to their true nature, which is largely the result of a lack of proper training, role models, and/or healthy supports.*** After all, every guy has the potential for being a *real* man; it just takes the right formula, which is further discussed at the end of the book. And yes, this means that every guy can change and become a *real* man. I'm pretty sure I can hear women cheering right now: (cheering woman) "I knew it! I've been telling my friends I can date the worst guy in the world and fix him, and now I have my proof. I just need to use the right formula, which I assume is marrying him and having lots of babies. I love this writer!" This is probably a good time for me to point out that I enjoy sarcasm: (cheering woman now confused) "You mean you don't think marriage and babies fix everything? I hate this writer... unless he means that having twenty cats will fix everything because then I'll be back on board." I should also point out that people can only change in a positive way when they have the right formula *and* drive to do it. I sense any cheering has now completely stopped: (woman formerly known as "cheering woman") "I'll give him the drive to change. Nagging always works!" As a tip, if you're dating a partner like this, you might want to runaway. Any hint of the following also suggests you should run: (controlling woman) "I'm going to make you into what I want you to be. If you love me, you'll do everything I say!" As appealing as that sounds (again, sarcasm), run; please, run (this time there's no sarcasm).

Huhn, I started this section intending to be serious and totally botched it. I promise I can be serious; I just prefer joking and having fun because... well, I'm a guy, and that's what guys do. Men typically don't feel safe sharing their feelings in a serious way (unless it's to pick up a girl) because we're... well, not women. If we need to share something personal, we'd rather joke about it, which is one of the reasons stand up comedy is more male dominated. Joking about our pain is what we know, and if we can make money off it, bonus. This doesn't make us better or worse than women, just different. In this book I will do my best to find a balance

between joking and teaching useful information. I can't promise I'll always be good at it, but I promise to try. If I don't, you get to work on your patience and kindness, so either way, you win. You're welcome.

Here's something serious: Men aren't the enemy. Men aren't inherently evil, but sometimes people want to see us that way. I have seen gaggles of girls (is that the proper term for a flock of females?) who want to demonize their man. More often than not, however, the guy isn't evil; he's just misunderstood because he's not acting like a woman (or he has a brain issue). Men are rarely maniacal. We've got better things to do than play mind games even if it's to stare blankly into space (that's so much more satisfying than having to play mind games). Men also avoid being manipulative because it's too much work. We're way too lazy for that. Sure, the word "man" is in both "maniacal" and "manipulate," but that's just as relevant as the word "men" being in "menopause." At least as far as I know men don't cause menopause. I'm pretty sure lesbians still experience it just the same otherwise there'd be a whole lot more women joining that team: (every woman in her 40s) "So if I give up men, I won't get hot flashes in a few years? Done. I was thinking of giving them up, anyway. Sign me up for that medical miracle." And as you can see, I started serious, but that only lasted for so long. Why? Because I'm a guy, and as Cyndi Lauper sang, "Oh, guys just wanna have fu-un." I may have those lyrics wrong, but you get the idea. And yes, I'm aware that reference makes me sound old (aka wise... or senile).

The *Real-Real* Introduction & Beyond

(third time's a charm)

Important Fact: I believe men and women are equal, but we are different. By saying men are like dogs I am in no way suggesting that we are inferior (or cuter). I'd say we tend to be stinkier, but that's something we are typically proud of: (wife) "What's that smell?" (proud guy) "That was me! I did that." This, of course, becomes beneficial for a wife who is embarrassed by a smell she's accidentally made: (random girl) "What stinks?" (wife) "Uh... that was my husband." (random girl) "But he's not here right now." (wife) "Yeah, but he smells so bad it lingers on my clothes." (random girl) "Guys are so gross." (wife) "Yeah, tell me about it."

When I was a kid, my family had a dog. We named her Amber because the colour of her coat was... amber. We also had a cat named Squeaky because when she meowed it sounded... squeaky. Back then we weren't very creative with our pet names, but that seems pretty common. A lot of people name their pets after the animal's features with names like Whiskers, Patches, Barfy (from the "Family Circus"), Spot, Harry, and Gerald. Gerald is a geeky name for a geeky looking dog. Sorry to anyone named Gerald. Not for making fun of your name, but because your parents named you Gerald. To be honest, part of me wishes we named children like this (not Gerald; I'm not that mean). If we gave babies names based on their characteristics, that'd be hilarious: (father of multiple children) "This is Gummy Grin, Rotting Umbilical Cord, Yellow Splats, and Puddles (who doesn't love a good water-breaking reference?) They're so cute." Even better would be the love songs. Those would be amazing: "And I-I-I-I will always love you, Slimy Bald Girl... despite your parent's terrible taste in names." And as this demonstrates, I will never write top 40 music lyrics... or make any woman jealous of my wife: (every woman to my wife) "We're so sorry for you. Is your husband's name Gerald? That'd explain the weirdness."

My dog, Amber, was an Irish Setter, which sounds like a guy with red hair in a kilt drinking Guinness and playing volleyball: "Let me set ye up fer a spike thar laddie. After all, I'm thee setter. Oops, I better put me pint down first." Amber wasn't a drunk, but she was about as smart as one and had the equivalent social skills. Ever see a happy drunk guy at a party with people he likes? That's what Amber

resembled: (drunk guy) “I love you, man. I love you sooooo muckstch.” (sober friend) “That’s a plant.” (drunk guy) “I don’t judge. Be who you gotta be; you know?”



This is Amber. As you can see, she was a proper lady... minus her favorite hobby of eating garbage

My family was constantly yelling her name, “Amber!” and not in the “Who’s a good dog?” kind of way. She was often jumping up on people or ripping through the garbage for a snack. She loved aluminum foil and old butter wrappers. Again, not the smartest. Men in committed relationships are familiar with this tone because we tend to hear it a lot from our partners. When my wife says my name in this way it’s not because I jump up on people or rip through the garbage for a snack... although, I guess she would if I did those things. I have my own “problem areas” like cleaning differently than her and purposely leaving a few drops of milk in the milk bag, so she has to change it. That’s one of my favorite things to do. I can’t stop giggling when I put the milk back that way: (me) “She’s going to be so mad.” Come to think of it; I’m not sure why I like doing that so much. It never ends well for me.

The funny thing is I don't even have to do anything bad now and my wife will say my name in a scolding way. The other day her brother-in-law made a mistake cutting the dessert, and to correct him she sternly said, "Chad!" I wasn't even near him, but it's like my name has become synonymous with bad boy: (an angry wife) "You're such a Chad!" (husband) "Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! Let's not be so harsh. I'm more of a Steven. Chad's the full bad boy. I was only being half a bad boy, so I'm a Steve." (My apologies to anyone named Steven, but at least you're not a Chad. Even better, you're also not a John because Johns are named after toilets. Even better than better, at least you're not named Gerald with two d's because he's extra duh.) My sister-in-law doesn't use my brother's name in this way. Not because he's better than me... well, she thinks he is, but she also thinks eating sugar is bad for you. Yeah, she's delusional. Fortunately, my wife disagrees with her (at least about the sugar). My sister-in-law doesn't use my brother's name like this because she gave him a nickname: Babe. It's funny because it's a one syllable word that she's able to turn into two or three syllables based on how bad he's being: (sister-in-law) Ba...aaa...aaa...abe! (brother) "Four syllables? I'm a dead man." Personally, I hate the nickname Babe: (me) "Are you saying my brother is a baby or a talking pig that herds sheep?" Maybe my sister-in-law calls him Babe because he reminds her of a sexy woman. That's not an image I want to have: (guy in girl's bikini winking) "Hey fellas; baa, ram, ewe." Sorry, I had the image in my head and figured I shouldn't be the only one to suffer with it. And my apologies if you haven't seen the movie *Babe* because you'll have no idea why I added the "Baa, ram, ewe." Of course, if you haven't seen it yet, you really should because it's great; it's like bacon great. (Can I write that?)

Important Point: Saying men are like dogs is a sign of respect because I love animals. I actually like animals more than people... minus you; you're the exception. If I go somewhere and there is a dog or cat around, I'm bailing on the people and hanging out with them. If you hate animals, I can see how this comparison is a problem for you. That being said, I personally think anyone who doesn't like animals is a doody brain, or as my wife will say, "You have Chad for brains."

Not every guy has this glorious experience of his partner using his name like the equivalent of swearing, but it's pretty common. Some men receive the opposite treatment; they get treated like kings. Why? My guess is aliens because that's the go-to answer when something doesn't make sense. The point is there are some men and dogs who are spoiled and undisciplined... and they're dreadful. ***Both men and dogs have potential to be great or terrible, but from my***

experience, most want to be good; they might just need a little guidance to get there.

You might be wondering, aren't dogs intellectually about the same as a human three-year-old? Yes, and thank you for adding to my idea. Every man, no matter how mature he is, on some level, has an inner child. Just like a dog, he can be well trained and well behaved, but given the right opportunity, he's going to goof around and play. At 45, I was recently at a Christmas event that had a bunch of giant inflatable toys, and the party went from good to great for my brother-in-law and I when we were told they weren't just for kids. We could also go on them – oh, yeah! My wife? No interest (like a boring person). When my older brother who had been there earlier in the day with his family found out we got to go on the inflatables, he was incredibly jealous. For the record, he's an accountant, so he's definitely not known for being the life of the party. His wife (also an accountant)? Lived up to the accountant stereotype – boring.

Both men and dogs have a desire to have fun, which is one of the sections in the book. The point I'd like to make right now is that ***knowing men are like dogs can help people better understand and appreciate normal guy behavior.*** If you ever wonder why the heck your man thinks the way he does or responds in a way completely different than you, think of him as a dog and not your social and emotional equivalent. This isn't to say he's *not* equal to you mentally or emotionally. He's just different.

Hopefully knowing this can help you be more patient with him and remind you that you'll want to interact differently with him than your girlfriends.

For instance, men like things in simple and logical ways, which includes requests that are clear, concise, and direct: "Sit, roll over, play dead, pee on the neighbor's flowers, etc." You'll also start to realize how to care for him because, ultimately, ***every real man just wants to make his partner happy.*** He longs to hear the human equivalent of "Good boy," and "Here's a treat," which can be anything like "Good boy," and "Here's a treat." You might also try "You're so strong," "You're so smart," "I want your body," and "Take my body," (two things you should never say to a dog). The last two comments should be reserved for people in committed relationships, and not for women with integrity on a first date, and definitely not for nurses towards patients... unless that is how they tell if a man is healthy enough to go home from the hospital: (nurse) "Take me now, you hunk-a man." (male patient) "Will do." (doctor enters) "Excellent. Thank you, Nurse. Looks like we have another patient ready to go home." (patient) "But I just had surgery an hour

ago.” (doctor) “If you’re healthy enough to do what you implied you’d do with the nurse, you’re in fine shape to go home.”

Bonus: When dealing with mean people, it’s helpful to imagine them as a baby.

You can even have a picture of a baby nearby to help. By seeing mean people as weak and vulnerable, it’ll be easier to have more patience for them. Just don’t talk to them like a baby: (employee) “Who’s the cutest little manager? I got your nose. What a smart baby; you know how to dial a phone... and ask for security.”

Men are simple. I don’t mean simple like, “I’m sim...simp... I’m stupid.” I mean we’re simple as in the opposite of complicated and complex. I’ve heard women complain, “I don’t know how to make my man happy.” Um, yeah you do; you’re just over thinking it. We’re simple. The odds are if you know anything about men, you’ll be able to pick something for your man. If you want a little guidance, consider the five senses. You can do something to please his nose (e.g. bake cookies... preferably non burnt), his ears (e.g. tell him how great he is), his taste (e.g. brush your teeth before kissing him), his eyes (e.g. put on something less grandma-y), or figure a way to incorporate touch (e.g. eye poking like the Three Stooges... or maybe not). Men and dogs are easy to please. There’s not a lot of mystery. The odds are you can take something that pleased an ex-boyfriend, and there’s a good chance it’ll please your current guy as well. Of course, don’t say, “This is what my ex loved,” because... gross. And you’ll want to be cautious because you want to make sure that what your ex liked was something normal. What’s normal? Here’s a fun/gross story to help explain what’s not:

I once dated a girl who did something to me her ex liked, and it was... um... yeah. The first time we were being romantic, this girl kissed my neck... nice. She then kissed higher up on my neck... still nice. She then kissed my ear lobe, which was strange, but still acceptably nice. Then I felt a wet, spongy type thing in my ear... not nice... very, very not nice. I don’t mean she gently licked my earlobe or flicked it around like a bored kid with a metal spring doorstop, doingggg, doingggg; she didn’t chew on it like a piece of gum or bite it like a piranha. Those aren’t great options either, but they’d still be better than what she did. Her move was to put her tongue – her wet, saliva-y, sandpaper-y tongue – into the bowl part of my ear and whoosh it around like someone cleaning a toilet with a very thorough, full pressure scrubbing. Now, if she did this when we’d been together for a while I would’ve been very blunt and mean: (me) “Thank you for trying something new, but... umm, no thank you; very, very no thank you.” I might be blunt, but I’m not

going to be that mean to someone who knows where I keep my toothbrush. Unfortunately, we had just started seeing each other and I didn't want to ruin the mood, so I pretended nothing was wrong, you know, like a guy. As gross as it was, why ruin the moment, especially when the hormones were bubbling, and it'd been a while? Yes, I was a true gentleman. So what was my move? I did it back to her... just kidding. That's nasty. I actually put both hands on her face all romantic like and redirected it away from my ears – smooth... minus the fact my hands were extra sweaty, so now she was like “Ew, gross. Your hands are sweaty!?” (Girls are allowed to be honest.) For the record, I did eventually work up the courage to ask her about it: (me) “Years ago, when we were kissing that first time, did you wipe the inside of my ear with a Lysol wipe or maybe your mom's goldfish?” I was trying to give her the benefit of the doubt because who sticks their tongue in an ear? She then explained how her ex really liked it. Um... did you date a mermaid? (mermaid) “Can you put your tongue in my ear? It reminds me of being in the ocean and cleaning my ears with coral.” How do you even ask someone to do that? (weird guy) “So I'm trying to save money on Q-tips; would you mind give'n the ol ear canals a sponge bath?” I ended up asking her if the ex told her this right before they broke up as a way to mess with her: (ex says with a stupid voice because all exes are stupid) “If you're going to leave me, I should tell you; you know what every guy loves? Someone jamming their tongue in his ear and really wiggling it around for the full wet-willy effect.” (her) “I'm so glad you told me that, so I can use it on the next guy. It sounds nasty to me, but if you like it, even though you're an idiot, I'm sure every guy likes it.” It turned out her ex actually did like it (weird). Before this girl and I went our separate ways, to show there weren't any hard feelings, I told her what I really love but was too embarrassed to say was when kissing a girl, I really love it when she plucks my chest hair and saves it to put in my coffee later. Telling her this may make me a terrible person, but it makes me giggle: (future boyfriend) “Her coffee is the worst!”

My Hope: I hope this story can inspire many great breakup suggestions: (girl after breakup) “You should know that every girl is too embarrassed to admit it, but she'll love it if you motorboat her armpit.” (Dimwitted guy) “That's good to know; thanks.”

Besides a situation like this where the guy had a weird wet-willy fetish thing, guys are pretty basic for pleasing. It essentially comes down to the three f words: food, fun, and frolicking. I went with “frolicking” because I couldn't think of a better f word for sex. In regards to frolicking/sex, it doesn't have to be sex-sex, but it should be your relationship equivalent like making out or looking at each other

longingly if you're Amish or my kids who will only be allowed to go on dates after eating a bushel of garlic and wearing giant oven mitts glued to baggy hazmat suits – the unsexy kind. Is that being overly protective?

I will point out that my three suggestions for making a man happy doesn't include sharing emotions or talking about the relationship. Shocking, I know. If I was giving the top two things that make a guy unhappy, those would be my prime choices. Guys typically prefer conversation when it's not the focus. ***It's easier to talk while doing something else like watching sports, working out, or building a deck.*** Talking for talking sake is more of a female thing... or a retired old man in the mall food court thing, but even they aren't talking about personal things. Instead, it's likely sports, politics, and why things aren't as good as they used to be. In my therapy practice, I've heard many women complain that things are rough in their marriage and it's made all the worse because their man doesn't want to have serious talks about it. If you think more talking will solve everything, you will definitely want to add my *52 Lessons for Better Communication: Help to talk less dumb* to your reading list. Men hate these serious conversations because they're usually very emotional (ew) and full of criticism (no thanks) and they make us feel like we're not good enough (very no thanks). For the record, a guy avoiding a serious conversation doesn't mean he doesn't care. It also doesn't mean you shouldn't have serious conversations... on occasion. These are best done like a business meeting (so no yelling) where they're planned ahead of time (i.e. not spontaneously before bed), with a time limit (there's a scheduled end) and set topics to address and not just a "whatever comes out comes out" kind of conversation (those are the worst). Really serious conversations are best done with an impartial referee like a good therapist (emphasis on good). What's a good therapist? One who understands that ***it takes two to make a relationship work, and two to make it not work. As much as I'd like to think I'm the good one in my relationship, I know every fight is 50% my fault because if I handled it better, it'd just be a bad moment and nothing more.***

Many relationships struggle because we forget that men and women are not the same. We see things differently. We think differently. We handle things differently. We use the bathroom differently (e.g. bathrooms are a great place to read). These differences go to a chromosomic level (I didn't major in biology, but I'm sure that's a word). For instance, women have two X chromosomes while men have one X and one Y. If X marks the spot (and when do pirates lie?), what do you do when women have two Xs? Which one is the spot? Is one right and the

other a booby-trap?¹ With men you know exactly which is the spot because there's only one X. It's simple with no confusion. And then we're left with one Y in order to ask Y do women complicate things? Or more importantly, Y don't women have a third X and be more fun? Triple X, get it? I think I'm funny; my wife is undecided. I know some people will say that acknowledging differences is wrong, but we *are* different. Between genetics, hormones, role models, and upbringing styles, how can there not be categorical similarities and differences between men and women? People accept that animals have differences between the males and females, so why wouldn't we expect that human men and women have differences too?

The most important difference I learned working with couples as a therapist is in how we communicate. The basic difference is ***men speak in facts and bluntness*** (aka we say what we mean) ***whereas women talk in themes*** (aka it's less fact based and more about getting a general idea across). In more extreme cases, the woman might be purposely speaking in a theme that's more "read between the lines," but that's not always the case. Does this fact versus theme idea sound like the recipe for fighting? This is part of the reason why guys get in trouble for joking. The woman assumes there's an underlying theme that's meant to hurt her when the guy is just trying to be funny (been there). Since men speak in facts and bluntness, they take every word a woman says as true and a point he needs to disprove if she's not 100% accurate. Yeah, that's going to start a fight, especially since ***all the woman wants is to feel understood and cared about***. Instead, her man nitpicks at the details that she couldn't care less about. Yes, with fashion and décor women tend to be more detail oriented, but this is different. In a confrontation, how true the details a woman shares is often negligible because it's not about the facts; it's about her theme. That's why for a woman, statements like "You always..." and "You never..." just help get her point across whereas a guy is thinking, "Are you crazy? I don't 'always' or 'never'." Let me give you an example to prove why you're wrong because then we won't have a reason to fight." I once had a girlfriend say to me, "You never do anything nice for me!" Meanwhile, there was a vase of flowers behind her that I gave her the day before. Guess how much she appreciated me pointing that out to her? She appreciated it so much that she started yelling louder. And my response? Because I hadn't yet learned this point, I brushed her off as crazy – very helpful. To add to the

¹ If you giggled at the word "booby" you might be a guy. If you're imagining what a booby-trap could look like and it makes you smile, you're definitely a guy. Meanwhile, if you're rolling your eyes at this, you're definitely a woman.

problem with men talking in facts and bluntness, our brains have limited space for listening closely (at least that's my claim). When guys focus, we focus... hard... for a minute or two and then we are done (sound familiar?) Guy conversations are short because facts are limited just like our attention span. Women will talk for hours and still have more to say. It's like they take longer to satisfy (hidden meaning intended because I think I'm clever). As a therapist, a lot of women are great clients if I want to sit back and let them talk. Guys are typically great... at staring at me waiting for me to initiate everything. That being said, here's an important lesson: ***Talking more doesn't mean you're a better communicator.*** Talking more can leave more room for error and misinterpretation. Of course, while women can have a hard time editing their stories down to where a guy can follow it, a guy often has a hard time sharing at all because he'd rather hide with TV, work, or drinking. Yes, I'm trying to point out the flaws of both because they both have flaws, and we shouldn't think either side is better than the other. We're just different.

These differences are connected to the idea that ***men want to feel good enough and women want to feel understood and cared about...*** and yes, I'm aware I gave the guy one thing and women two. Remember, we're simple, and women are more complex (or complex~~x~~ to reference the two X chromosomes again). If a man wants to feel good enough, it's no wonder he gets so defensive when a woman brings up past mistakes or makes exaggerated claims. At the same time, if a woman wants to feel understood, it's no wonder that she'll keep talking and talking and talking (I think you get the point) in order to feel like the guy gets it. It also makes sense that if he understood her, he would be more caring. Meanwhile, the guy is so focused on the individual words being said that when she keeps talking it wears out his attention span and causes him to look like he doesn't care, which further adds to the conflict. When a woman is venting her feelings, which means she's using exaggerations and random thoughts to convey an overall theme, the guy is likely thinking: (typical guy) "But that contradicts what you said a few minutes ago, which contradicts what you said yesterday, which contradicts what you said last week. What do you actually think? It doesn't make any sense! I must assume you're crazy in order to feel better!" Meanwhile, she's thinking: (typical girl) "If you loved me, even just a little, you'd understand what I'm trying to say and you wouldn't need to defend yourself. I have to keep explaining myself because I want to feel cared about."

Tip: A good communicator can summarize their point in one sentence, which follows the idea that in an essay the most important part is the thesis statement.

(Remember grade nine English?) When people fight, they typically give a grand argument, but have no idea what the point is (i.e. the thesis). Unless we can summarize what we're trying to say in one sentence, it's unfair to expect the other person to know what we're really trying to say because it gets drowned out by all the words. In a fight, more is rarely better (unless you're having a hugging war).

Tip for Men: A lot of women struggle to have a thesis statement because they're external processors, which means when they talk, they're likely trying to process what's going on. That's why you shouldn't tell them how to fix their problems. They're likely coming to that conclusion as they're talking. Besides asking a good question, one option to quicken a conversation is to try helping her figure out her one sentence: "So are you saying (one sentence)?" Just make sure it's a good guess and not something dumb: "So what you're saying is the dingo ate your baby." (And that's a little something for the Seinfeld fans.)

Tip for Women: Men are typically internal processors. This can feel like they're shutting you out when they're actually trying to process something. The challenge with this is knowing whether they're processing in order to deal with it or to stuff it down to ignore it. One option is to simply ask: "Are you processing something right now or is there something else going on?"

Another Important Tip: When people are angry, the underlying message is I don't feel safe. Another way to put it is anger is a sign we're trying to protect ourselves. If someone is angry, instead of following their lead and trying to protect yourself against them (i.e. you end up with two people trying to protect themselves), try to address what's going on for the other person. Help the other person feel safe, and then you'll find your own safety. This follows the rule: ***Help the other person feel heard, so there's a better chance they'll be open to hearing you.***

As a therapist, it's amazing how I will work with clients who are baffled by their partner's behavior. Sometimes after the client is done complaining about something the other has done, I simply say to a man, "Welcome to life dealing with a woman," and to a woman, "Welcome to why my ex-girlfriend is now a lesbian." (I helped her convert.) It's crazy how often people complain about qualities in their partner that are actually commonplace to that gender. So many relationships would be healthier if we were more aware of the typical traits of men and women and appreciated those differences. There's no point resenting a man for being a man or a woman for being a woman... at least there's no point

resenting her unless you want an excuse to trade teams: (straight man deciding to go gay because he's fed up) "I'm tired of being with someone who acts like a woman. I'm going to find myself a man... a very hairless, effeminate man who hopefully has female body parts because guy parts are disgusting." No offence to men, but let's be honest, we're nasty. If I was a woman, I'd so be a lesbian. And if I was a woman, I'd arguably be better at knowing how to please one.

A Thought: In my experience as a therapist (and avid sitcom fan), homosexual relationships follow a similar dynamic between men and women where one is more emotional and the other more logical, one is more organized and the other more easygoing, and one is more socially astute and the other is... like me, a guy. Regardless, ***no matter who you're with, relationships all come down to wanting to feel safe and loved.***

Since men and women are different, ***we need to stop trying to force our partners to be more like us, and instead, start to appreciate what makes this person different.*** Both genders have their benefits and their drawbacks. I, for one, am proud to be a guy. And no, it's not just because I can easily use a urinal, but that is a bonus. Similarly, I know women who are happy to be a woman and not just because they can use PMS as an excuse to get out of doing something they don't want to do. To the women who don't do this: Thank you: (girl I knew in high school) "I can't write the test today because it's that time of the month." (male teacher) "It's been your time every week for the past two months." (girl) "WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY!?" (male teacher) "I hope you're feeling better soon." I know some women think that menopause and PMS are a free pass to say whatever crosses their mind, but we all need to have self control when we interact with others no matter how much discomfort or pain we're in. As Thumper from the movie *Bambi* says, "If you can't say something nice, don't say nothing at all." There isn't any small print to this point: "... unless you're tired, hungry, drunk, hurt, have mental illness, or on your period." Growing up, I never understood this monthly cycle thing comedians talked about (mostly women) because my mom and sister were so good at handling it. They had tremendous self control (or knew when to be alone). Back then I never noticed a difference with PMS. Now I'm married... I miss my innocence.

Tip: It's everyone's responsibility to do their best to make self control easier. If you're affected by hunger, eat, tiredness, sleep. If it's woman stuff... good luck.

The most important point readers can take from this book is ***men and women being different can be a great thing (or it can drive us nuts).*** After all, it's

often our differences that can work together to make us stronger than we can be as individuals. Ultimately, the two perspectives, male and female, help us catch what we would otherwise miss on our own.

This book is meant to be the first part of a series: *Men are like Dogs & Women are like Cats: Appreciating our differences.* This series will aim to point out common traits in the genders in order to normalize our experiences with the ultimate goal of helping people appreciate these differences and better handle them. The fundamental truth is we're different. A cat can't be made into a dog, and vice versa. A dog can wear a cat costume, but that doesn't make him a cat. Notice I didn't say the cat can wear a dog costume because good luck getting a costume on a cat. There's a reason people dress up their dogs and not their cats... sorry, I meant, "There's a reason *crazy* people dress up their dogs and not their cats."

Thought: It's interesting how people who end up preferring dogs or cats tend to be very different people. A crazy cat lady² has fifty cats and smells like cat pee. A crazy dog person has one dog in a stroller... dressed like a baby and shares an ice cream with him: (crazy dog person) "A lick for you, and a lick for me. Lick for you..." This scene was inspired by a real person I saw sharing her ice cream with her dog – gross. It's almost as gross as someone licking your ear – almost.

This book will be broken down into the sections listed in the Table of Contents and wrapped up with a conclusion... you know, the normal way you write a book. I'm writing this in order to make things as simple as possible... and to fill in space. I want this book to look long enough to be legitimate, but not so long that it's annoying... although, I'm guessing this part could be annoying since I'm not teaching anything of value; I'm just rambling. The rest of the book will have less rambling... that's a half truth, but we just met, so I can't be fully honest yet. Early stages of a relationship are so tough! What's true, and what's a show? Don't worry; by the end of the book, I'll be fully honest... or is that a half truth, too? Whoa, that's deep. Hey, I'm a guy; for me, that's deep.

May you enjoy this book as much as I enjoyed writing it, and may it be a blessing and encouragement to you and your relationships.

² It's pretty rare to find a guy obsessed with cats to the point he's a "crazy cat guy." If you do, double check that he's actually a guy. If he is a guy, check again and/or make fun of him, and be ready for him to tease you back because that's how guys bond.

****** Please Note ******

The following chapter is more fun than informative. The more informative chapters will come later.

Chapter 1:

Man's Best Friend

It's commonly said that a dog is a man's best friend. Notice it doesn't say "a person's" or an intelligent-non-alien-life-form's" (if you like to complicate things)? A woman's best friend isn't a dog. Her best friend is (pause for dramatic effect) a woman... or possibly a gay man; either way, her best friend is human. So why is a dog a man's best friend? Are we pathetic? Sometimes. Do we want to avoid human interaction? Occasionally. Do we love that we can train our dog to use the neighbor-we-can't-stand's lawn as a toilet? That's definitely an attractive quality... unless you're the jerk neighbor: (jerk neighbor) "Why does my grass have all these dead patches? Oh right; I'm a jerk and my neighbor has a dog." The moral of that story is don't be a jerk. It's too bad some people just can't help themselves: (jerk neighbor) "But I thought my purpose on Earth was to be so bad I make other people look good?"

I've heard two main explanations for why a dog is a man's best friend, but both are wrong; there's truth to them, but they're not the real reason for this saying. The first maintains that a dog is a man's best friend because dogs make a great wingman. There's no denying that if you want to meet women, taking a dog out for a walk is a smart choice. Of course, you'll want to make sure there are ladies where you're walking the dog. He doesn't magically make them appear. Dogs aren't wizards... unfortunately. That would definitely make them more popular

than cats: (owner) “Hey Rex, can you conjure up a pot of gold to pay your vet bill?” Dogs are magical, however, in the sense that they can make a woman who would otherwise ignore you be willing to talk to you: (attractive woman) “Look at the cute dog!” (guy) “He’s not as cute as you. Why don’t you bend over to pet him so I can check you out?” I’ve never been good with pickup lines; can you tell? The main problem is I never know when to shut up... until after I’ve gone too far. Not a great feature. It essentially means I say stupid things and then get to feel guilty about them later – awesome. The good thing about my inappropriate pickup line problem is my wife has no fear of me cheating on her because... well, I’ll never have the option.... unless you consider a woman hitting you with her purse cheating: (wife) “You let another woman purse smack you? How could you?” (me) “I’m sorry. I swear I was thinking about you the whole time.” Fortunately, my wife doesn’t see that as cheating; it’s more like outsourcing.

Dogs are a great wingman, but this isn’t why they’re our best friend. If it was, then by that logic, babies would also be because they have the same effect: (lady) “Look at the cute baby!” (guy) “I’ll let you hold it if you let me hold you.” Again, in hindsight, I can see why this line is wrong starting with describing the baby as an “it”. That’s probably the wrong pronoun choice, or I guess *it* the wrong pronoun choice, and not “probably”. One of the main reasons women like seeing a guy with a dog or baby is they make the man seem safer. You’re not likely going to meet a man trying to mug you while carrying a baby: (guy mugging with a baby) “Give me your purse... actually, first help me change my baby’s diaper then give me your purse. Do you happen to have sanitary wipes? I forgot mine.” Dogs and babies both act as a social connecting point as they distract women from the unwritten rule that states women are supposed to pretend a guy doesn’t exist. At least that’s what I assume is the rule since I was ignored in middle school and high school... and university... and almost every day since. Getting a wife was largely from depleting options as the best guys were already married off: (single guy) “It’s either me or being single?” (girl) “Ooh, tough choice... how much money do you make?”

Even though being a wingman isn’t why dogs are a man’s best friend, it does point out why men prefer dogs over cats: Cats make lousy wingmen. You can’t walk your cat in a park to meet ladies because you can’t walk your cat... because it’s a cat. Cats don’t like to be walked because they have a mind of their own. A cat does what a cat wants, and any walking they do is not on a leash. Plus, one of the reasons you walk your dog is so he’ll go to the bathroom. Cats have manners. They’re not comfortable taking a dump at the side of the road where everyone can

see them. They're discreet. Dogs just hunker down wherever they are: (dog) "This looks like a good spot; lots of people around to watch. Do the circle dance. Now squat. Hey person walking by; how's your day going? Mine's...er... pretty good. Okay, leash man, time to clean up after me." Cats would never do that because they need to be in a private area, in a litter box, preferably their own box, and it needs to be regularly cleaned or they will go beside it in a passive aggressive gesture that says, "I win." A couple times over my life I've walked in while a cat was using the litter box, and each time the cat looked at me with this look of horror: (cat) "What are you doing in here! I don't want you seeing me like this... I mean, I'm not doing anything gross. I'm just busy picking up cat litter bits with my toes in order to distribute them throughout the house. You like litter in your bed, right?"

People also don't walk cats because even if you could, it isn't cute; it's weird... and a little sad. If I saw a guy walking a cat, I'd be thinking, "Get a dog." The only time walking a cat would be acceptable is if the cat was somehow a pet lion. How awesome would that be? That would definitely make people think you're cool... or insane. The problem is it wouldn't get a man dates because girls would be thinking, "There's something wrong with that guy. That's an irresponsible pet choice." Lions need a place to run and large things to eat... and you could be that large thing to eat. A pet lion doesn't say, "I am good with kids." It says, "You are going to need some serious lint rollers," and this guy is likely a gay magician. Thanks Siegfried and Roy for creating that stereotype. The idea of sitting on the couch together with a dog at your feet is cute. The idea of a lion *eating* your feet... not so cute.

The second reason why I've heard that a dog is a man's best friend is a dog makes it very clear when he's happy. There aren't any mind games... ladies... you know what I mean... and yes, I'm aware of the irony that I just played a mind game. If a dog is happy, he wags his tail: whoosh, whoosh... or, in the case of Rottweilers, they wag their nubs: nubby, nubby. Coincidentally, I think it's safe to say that's a pretty sweet nickname for a pet Rotty: (owner with excellent taste in pet names) "Who's a good Nubby-Nubby?" When a dog is happy, it's obvious, so there isn't any guessing unlike with girls: (guy) "Are you okay?" (girl) "I'm fine." (guy) "Are you 'fine happy' or 'fine angry'?" (girl) "I'm fine." (guy) "So you're fine angry." (girl) "I'M NOT ANGRY!" (guy) "Sorry. I guess you're 'fine I'm on my time of the month'" (guy now dead because guys aren't supposed to acknowledge that). The great thing about knowing when a dog is happy is it gives you a sense of accomplishment. Plus, the tail wagging is a form of appreciation: (guy seeing tail

wagging) “You’re welcome, and now I get to feel good about myself.” Sure, the tail wagging happily makes dogs terrible poker players, but that’s okay, especially if you’re playing against them (dog playing poker looks at his cards and wags his tail) (guy1) “I fold.” (guy 2) “I fold.” (dog now angry and can magically talk on top of playing poker) “Stupid tail!”

If knowing when a dog is happy is what makes a dog a man’s best friend that would also mean that cats would have to be a man’s best friend and they’re clearly not. When a cat is happy, she purrs, and purring is arguably better than a tail wagging because purring doesn’t knock over expensive crystal vases... unless that’s what you want: (guy to wife) “I’m sorry about your mom’s homemade vase.” (whispers to dog) “Good boy.” A cat is never a man’s best friend. A cat is never a woman’s best friend either. People who are obsessed with cats have 50 cats, which means they’re not a best friend; they’re a collection. Even though I love cats, I would never claim any of them as my best friend because none of my friends stick their butt in my face and expect a massage (my wife maybe, but not my best friend). If my best friend did that, he would immediately no longer be my best friend... or be in the same room. I’m awkward at hugging, so that would be a whole new level of terrible.

To be honest, part of me wishes that women had a feature like a tail wagging because it would help me know when they’re happy. Smiling doesn’t work because women are professional smile fakers: (guy to partner) “You’re happy... wait... is that fake?... No, it’s real... no, it’s fake... shoot; now I’m in trouble for not knowing.” The other part of me is glad my partner doesn’t actually have a tail. A miniskirt suddenly wouldn’t be as appealing. What do you even do with a tail? Do you keep the tail crammed in your pants (that’d look awkward) or do you let it shoot out the back? The bigger problem with a tail is it’d be another thing for a girl to be insecure about: (girl) “Does my tail make my butt look big? Is my tail too small? Is my tail so big it’ll give me back problems later? Should I shave it or will that make me look easy?” Talking like this leads to the bigger problem for me. If women had tails, that’d just be another thing for them to hit me with when they’re angry for something dumb I shared (like this section).

I’m also glad women don’t purr to show they’re happy because, well, a lot of guys get in enough trouble already for not listening. You know we’d somehow miss the purring too, which would just get us in worse trouble: (girl) “Can’t you hear how happy I am? I’m purring.” (guy) “I thought that was the washing machine acting up again.” If there was a magic genie or if God could have a do-over with Eve,

the best way for a woman to show she's happy would be for her boobs to get bigger. A guy's not going to miss that: (guy) "I love being a good husband!" It'd be like Pinocchio's nose getting bigger when he lies, but this would be better because it's positive reinforcement and not as dangerous for poking nearby eyes: (Pinocchio's boss) "I'm afraid we have to let you go. Car salesman just isn't right for you. By the way, the doctor said your customer will be fine in a month." I'm pretty sure women would like this idea too: (girls ready for girls' night) "I get to dress up and wear my favorite shoes. I'm so happy... and now my dress fits better. I love being happy!" On top of this, wives would have it made because their husbands would be doing their best to make them happy: (husband) "I bought you flowers!... I fixed the leaky faucet!... I put my dishes away!... I canceled plans with the guys so I can go berry picking at the hottest time of day like you wanted. Grow, my babies, grow!" It's really a win-win. This would be especially helpful if the wife wasn't good at saying thank you because she's saying it in a different way. After all, actions speak louder than words... and boobs speak louder than actions. Plus, if the husband didn't want to go out one night, he'd just need to be extra nice in order for her boobs to grow so big she couldn't move: (guy) "Sorry I bought you all that jewellery. Guess we're not going to the opera tonight. Oh well, maybe next time." The reverse would also be helpful. If a woman's boobs shrank when she was upset, a guy would clearly know how she felt. Plus, he would then always have an answer if she quizzed him: (girl) "Do you know why I'm upset?" (guy) "The same reason I am."

Ultimately, the main reason why a dog is a man's best friend is... are you ready? Have I delayed the answer long enough yet? The main reason why a dog is a man's best friend is because we can get dogs to chew our partner's favorite shoes as an act of revenge... just kidding. Although, it is nice to have the option. I've never done this; I've thought about it, clearly, but I've never done it... yet. In my defence, comedian Bill Engvall is even worse than me... not that someone being worse is ever a great defence: (murderer) "But officer, I just killed one person. That's nothing compared to Charles Manson." Engvall says the following, which is both terrible and funny at the same time:

My dog, Duke, he's a Basset Hound. He eats his own turds. Perfect dog right there. He goes outside to poop and cleans it up. You can't teach that. That's just a gift. Best part about it is my wife doesn't know he does it. She loves to let him lick her in the face. Right there, that's why my wife and I have never had an argument. She starts getting on my back and all I do is, "Duke, Mama needs some love'n."

The real reason a dog is a man's best friend is because we understand them. They're simple. They're not fussy. They're not whiney. They're... us. If we look upset, our dog will let us be upset because they get it. They'll never nag or "hound" us (yea, I went there). Dogs are great because they won't judge us for saying lame jokes like I just did. If we do share something personal because we're feeling particularly vulnerable (or drunk) dogs are amazing at keeping secrets. Plus, we don't have to worry about our wife leaving us for him no matter how cute he is because we can do stuff dogs can't, you know, like... walk the dog. Dogs are great because they're a buddy who smell worse than us, they bring more dirt in the house than us, and they're slobberier than us (hopefully), which means, by comparison, we're not so bad. Plus, a dog will be there when we need someone to spoon when we're sleeping on the couch for doing something stupid... again.

Please Note: Forcing someone to sleep on the couch is not something a best friend would do. It's actually a sign that there's a power imbalance. In a balanced relationship, there shouldn't be a kicker-outer unless he's been rolling in the garbage again. A problem I hope is just for the dog and not the husband. If it is... you have very interesting taste in men.

**** *Please Note* ****

The following chapter is again aimed at being more fun in nature as a way to set the stage for the following chapters that are more informative.

Chapter 2:

What is a Man?

If I'm going to claim that men are like dogs, I should back up and look at a fundamental question: What does it mean to be a *real* man? Is a man someone who has grease on his hands and makes the most money in the household? Is a man someone who needs to watch sports and never cry? Is a man someone who enjoys being naked in change rooms? If these things are required to be a man (they're not) then no thank you. Give me another option that's less rugged while still honorable, and preferably not chauvinistic. Chauvinism is pretty dumb: (girl) "You think I'm less of a person than you because I'm a woman? That's sooo hot." There needs to be a broader definition of what it means to be a *real* man, especially because there are so many different types of us. I know this because *I* am a different type of man. For instance, I hate hurting anything living. Not just people or animals, but any living thing. I don't even like cutting down trees or digging up flowers. I generally keep this to myself for an obvious reason – it's pathetic. If there's a bug in my house, I will do my best to "catch and release." Yes, I am aware "catch and release" is a term generally used for fishing and dealing with unwanted rodents, but I feel bad killing anything. If there's a bug in the house, like a moth or centipede, I'll put a cup over it and then gently slide a piece of paper between the wall and the cup in order to trap it. I then take it outside to safely release it. Mosquitoes don't count; they're the spawn of satan. But how

many men (or women) hear this and think, “Wow, what a great idea; this guy’s a genius and not at all a pansy”? I’m different, but this doesn’t mean I’m not a real man; I’m just a different kind of man... and I’m not just saying this because I’m trying to get away with being a wuss.

Side Note: I recently found out my old school, farmer uncle would also catch and release insects, but he used his bare hands... even for bees and wasps. Now that’s dedication.

If I try to save bugs, I’m sure you will assume I don’t like hunting... and you’d be correct. I hate it. I ha-a-a-ate it. Why would you want to kill an innocent animal whose habitat we’re destroying with our suburbia wastelands? (hunter) “I like the smell of rotting flesh and the taste of guilt.” I’ve heard men say they like the challenge of hunting, but they’re in camouflage with high-powered rifles hiding in a blind with fancy whistles to call the animal over to them who have no idea it’s hunting season. The animal doesn’t have a calendar or Google updates. Hunting is like a really terrible version of hide and seek where one of the players isn’t aware there’s a game going on: (guy) “I love hide and seek so much I need to mount the head of my challenger on the wall.” (child) “Maybe we should play tag.” If it was fair to play a sport with only the one side knowing there’s a game going on that would make football a lot more interesting to watch. Like say someone tosses a football near a random pedestrian and then five big dudes in tights jump on him. That, I’d watch, but that’s not a sport; that’s a premise for a YouTube video. If the hunter wants a challenge, he shouldn’t be hiding or using a gun; he should be hunting with a set of bagpipes. The screeching music would drive the animals crazy and they’d attack to make him stop. Fighting angry animals with your bare hands, now that’s a sport. A real hunter wakes up the bear by tickling his feet and singing, “Mambo Number Five” (i.e. a terrible song) and when it’s good and angry, that’s when a real hunter will fight him in hand-to-paw combat. At the end of the fight, they get a drink together and become friends – now it’s a sport.

As much as I hate hunting for killing innocent animals, I hate fishing for another reason – embarrassment. When I was fifteen, I was at a day camp and the one activity was fishing. I was handed a fishing rod and a bucket of worms, so I could pick one to use as bait. I was surprised, however, because I wasn’t given any tape to stick the worm to the hook. How was I supposed to attach it? When I pointed this out, instead of an apology for not giving me tape, I was told I was supposed to rip off part of the worm and then jam the metal hook through it. If that wasn’t bad enough, I was supposed to then throw the impaled worm part into the water

for it to drown and/or be eaten by a fish. What kind of torture is that? How could I do that to such an innocent, albeit, slimy creature? I had to kill a worm to catch a fish, which I was then just going to release after? Of course, as I later found out, we wouldn't be releasing the fish if the hook ripped his insides apart and he was going to die anyway. This is a sport? I didn't know I was a gladiator in Rome killing for fun. While I was picturing myself in a metal loincloth (a very uncomfortable choice for clothing in the heat or cold) I started fishing around the bucket (a much nicer form of fishing since it doesn't involve killing anything). I was hoping to find a worm that was already dead, but there weren't any... at least I didn't think there was. How do you know if a worm is dead? On a sidewalk it's easy; it's fried and crispy. If the worm is in dirt, is it like cartoons where dead creatures have tiny x's over the eyes? Since I was taking too long to get a worm, the activity leader grabbed a worm piece and jammed it on the hook for me. I'm pretty sure I heard a faint scream: (worm) "Ow, my tiny pancreas." As I wiped away a tear from my cheek (I wish I was joking), I looked at the poor little severed worm on my hook and I pictured his little worm wife and little worm babies and their little worm house with a dead-worm-free driveway. I then pictured the worm children crying and begging for mercy: (said with an English accent because it's fun) "Please don't kill our daddy!" I've always had a pretty wild imagination. I then pictured the worm children making a vow to get their revenge on me, and one day they would show up to enact their deadly plot: "Hello, my name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die." (If you don't get that reference, you're missing out.) While all of this was going through my head, the activity leader stood staring at me because I wasn't moving... or blinking. I'm pretty sure he thought I was special. Fortunately, I heard the giggle of the girl I liked and was thus inspired to take my rod and my fishing pole, (I'm hilarious) and my terminally injured worm friend to stand beside her. Impressing a girl is always the ultimate cure for a downtrodden boy. I quickly said, "Thank you," to the leader, and as I walked away, I began singing *Amazing Grace*, which I followed with a prayer for the worm: Ashes to ashes, dust to dust... I was pretty melodramatic as a child. I then concluded my prayer asking for protection from the little worm children so they wouldn't hunt me down and kill me one day. Not wanting to let the worm's sacrifice go to waste and hoping to impress the cute girl, I stood where she could see me and cast my line. I had been shown how to do this earlier, so this wasn't a problem... at least it wouldn't have been if I had noticed my one foot was on a slippery rock. When I write "slippery" I mean I not only cast the line into the water; I also cast my rod, my fishing pole (I really am hilarious), my hand, my arm and the rest of my body as I slipped and fell into the lake, the very cold and murky,

worm-gut filled lake. It was not a good moment for me. Fortunately, I learned that falling into the water is a good way to save the fish from any carnage that could befall them because they scatter when a human goes in the water... especially when the human is flailing and screaming, "Don't eat me! Don't eat me! I taste like broccoli!" I didn't like broccoli back then, so it was the first repulsive thing to come to mind to scare the fish from eating me like a giant worm. That day I also learned that getting a girl to laugh is a great way to impress her... unless she's laughing *at* you. That day was *not* the beginning of a beautiful relationship, but it was the beginning of me always carrying extra clothes whenever there's a chance I can fall in water.

This experience helped teach me that I enjoy eating fish when it's cooked and looks nothing like fish because then I can pretend it was never a living creature. Ultimately, I enjoy fish because it's a garnish for my ketchup. I just don't understand how you can hurt something unless you absolutely have to. No, I'm not a vegetarian. Instead, I live in a world of delusion where ham grows on trees, burgers are obtained from cow udders like milk, and chicken breasts are laid like eggs. It's a happy world.

The bottom line is I have a sensitivity that goes beyond most men (and even some women). The crazy thing is it can increase depending on what's going on in my life. Years ago, I was going through a rough patch around Christmas. One night I saw a commercial (yes, a commercial), and I was done. It started with a grownup son driving his mom. He apologized that everyone else was busy and couldn't be home for Christmas, but as he pulled into the driveway, the house lit up with beautiful lights and her whole family poured out the front door to greet her. As the mom got all excited, my cheeks felt unusually warm... and wet. When I touched my cheeks, I realized I was crying: (me) "What the heck?" I wiped the tears away and exclaimed, "What's wrong with me? It's a commercial... a Canadian Tire commercial! I quickly kicked the foot of the couch because I thought stubbing my toe was a better reason to cry. Crying over a commercial makes me like the two guys in *Dumb and Dumber* crying at a commercial minus the fists full of cash to use as tissue. I don't want to be the third member, "Dumby" or whatever he'd be called. I've always had a propensity for tearing up in movies like *How to Train Your Dragon* and *PS I Love You*, because I have a soul (if you didn't cry in those movies, you should get that checked out). I cried in *Love Actually* the first eleven times I saw it, but Liam Neeson is in it, so it's still manly. Crying in a commercial is a whole new level of weak. Does this mean I'm not a man? The answer is no... in case you weren't sure.

When I originally started writing this book, my wife (then girlfriend) made more money than I did and she wasn't raking it in. Does that make me less of a man? She also told me that when we had kids she would rather I stay home with them because of the money thing. Would that make me less of a man? It would've driven me insane (no offence to my kids). What if I have a physical trait commonly associated to women like gazongas (is that the proper term)? Would that make me less of a man (or just severely overweight)? If you are cheering "yes," you're a jerk (said with love).

A few years ago, I overheard two women complaining about their thighs rubbing together when they walked and it causing what they referred to as "chub rub". If you don't know what that is, you're missing out. Chub rub is when your legs are so big they can't help but rub together when you walk or run. Although most people with this don't run (waddle, yes, but not run). The rubbing is accentuated by moisture from sweat and broken dreams. It feels a lot like what we called in the 80s, an "Indian burn" (is the proper modern term, "the sovereign people" burn or is it still Indian because it's for people from India?)³. With every step, between your legs feels like another painful twist. If you walk for too long with this, the rubbing will wear away the top layers of skin so it stings like a rug burn. The best part is the pain is accentuated by the salt in the sweat. It's delightful (written as I mop up the dripping sarcasm). When I heard these women talking about this, I became oddly excited and out loud asked: (me) "You get that, too? I thought I was the only one!" The two women looked at me funny... not just because I was interrupting their private conversation (although I'm sure that didn't help) but because, as I later discovered, this is typically the problem of women and very large men. I'm neither of those. I'm in good shape. I don't *have* a "good" shape or I wouldn't have the chub rub issues, but at least I try to be *in* good shape. The main problem is I inherited my mom's hips and butt (thanks Mom). Most guys have a pretty much non-existent posterior, which allows the pants to droop. Not me. With my backside, I've been in a store where I turned around and knocked things over with it. It's like having a backpack on my butt accept it is my butt. I

³ My apologies if you find the term "Indian rub" offensive. I also offer my apologies if you find this apology offensive because you're sick of people being so apologetic. And if you find this footnote a waste of time, my apologies... but why are you still reading it? That doesn't make any sense. At this point, it's your own fault for reading it. My apologies if that's too honest. Yes, I'm Canadian, so that explains all the apologizing. I'm sorry if that racial stereotype is offensive to you... and now I need to apologize to myself because I'm even annoying myself at this point.

believe the term for it is ghetto booty... if you're a girl. As a guy, I think a better term is fanny-pack-butt because it's as sexy as a fanny pack.

My booty has always been an issue rather than a treasure. Until grade six, I was the boy who always wore sweatpants to reduce the chub rub, but that year I threw caution to the wind and got my first pair of jeans. It was exciting. When I showed up in jeans, my entire class cheered for me like I finally became a real boy. I proudly wore those jeans for two years... until I found out they were girls' jeans. This wasn't a skinny-jeans rock star or hipster thing. I was wearing girls' jeans because I didn't know they were girls' jeans. I just knew they fit great. Although I should've known something was up with the floral pattern inside the pockets. I was in elementary school in the 80s, so if they were obviously girls' jeans I would've been mocked the moment I stepped onto the school bus. The worst thing about this experience is those were the best fitting jeans I've ever had. They fit perfectly... unfortunately. Why do girls' jeans have to fit me so well? It's like they were designed for fanny-pack-butt.

My leg shape means that corduroy pants have always been my enemy because they accentuated the chub rub. Plus, when I walked, you'd hear, "Fft, fft, fft..." which to me, sounded more like, "Fat, fat, fat..." Among other things, this made me terrible at hide and seek: (me walking) "fft, fft,fft," (seeker) "I know where Chad is." Although I was terrible at hide and seek, this problem made my self-esteem a champion hider: (me seeking my self esteem) "I give up. You can come out now... self-esteem? Are you there? Hello? Why do you hide so well? You need corduroy pants and fat, girly legs like me, so I can find you easier."

The funny thing is even now on hot days my chub rub problem can make me walk like a cowboy who rode a horse too long... or I guess a guy who's pooped his pants. I prefer the former because it's manlier and doesn't suggest I have bowel control problems. I've found things that help, but it was a rough road finding what works. I remember the first time I used compression shorts. I decided to try them during a mission trip to New York City where we spent a lot of our time walking on the hottest day of summer. I quickly discovered the shorts just shifted things so other parts rubbed; that wasn't pleasant either, especially since those other parts still had hair to add to the rubbing... at least they had hair until the end of the day. I will say the rubbing was a cheap way to remove body hair... excruciatingly painful but cheap. At the end of the day, my eyes looked like I watched a Canadian Tire commercial. I hope my manliness isn't too intimidating.

I later discovered as terrible as the compression shorts were for walking, they were great for running. Before that discovery, I carried baby powder with me everywhere I went in order to put it on to reduce the chaffing, but that had its own problems. For instance, it's pretty hard to apply it and not look creepy: (me) "Don't mind me as I reach down my pants and rub around." One night I was in a rush to get on the field to play Ultimate Frisbee (real men play Frisbee), so I just dumped a pile of baby powder down my shorts (surprisingly refreshing) and walked on the field. As soon as I started running, however, a white cloud sprang forth from the bottom of my shorts. Some said my underwear just exploded because they couldn't take being on me anymore. Others said I was so old I was like a mummy and my man parts spontaneously disintegrated. Others... weren't my friends, so they didn't say anything... to my face. I heard talking, but I couldn't exactly see where it was coming from; the cloud was in the way. The bottom line is I have large, semi-bulging, Jennifer Lopez minus the muscle, feminine legs. Fortunately, this has become a great source of joking, but I clearly have both emotional and physical features that suggest I'm less man and more woman, which brings me back to my original question: Am I a man?

To add to this dilemma, when I was watching *Crazy Stupid Love* there's a scene where Ryan Gosling takes off his shirt. Without thinking, out loud I said, "Whoa." This is an okay response when the guy is super nasty and the "whoa" is a sign of grossness, but he was the opposite of gross. To be clear, I wasn't turned on, but with everyone in the room staring at me, I quickly added, "What? You're all thinking it." That probably wasn't the best add-on, especially since the guys all said no (liars). Gosling was jacked. I didn't want to "jack" him, but he was like Ned Flanders from *The Simpsons*; when he took off his shirt, he was a muscular beast. He earned the "whoa".

If this was an isolated incident, it wouldn't be so bad, bbbbbuuut it's not. The other day my wife randomly blurted out the lines, "How funky is your chicken." She then pointed to me, so I followed this up with, "How loose is your caboose?" We both suddenly froze and stared in confusion. That's not the right line... is it? How loose is your caboose? Fortunately, Google revealed the real lyrics: "How funky is your chicken? How loose is your goose? [a couple unnecessary lines], shake your caboose." What I said, "How loose is your caboose?" is a whole other cheer. Is this a Pepto Bismal commercial? "If you have a loose caboose and can't stop it, Pepto Bismal. (song) Nausea, heartburn, indigestion, upset stomach, diarrhea, loose cabooses, Yay, Pepto-Bismol!" "How loose is your caboose?" kind of sounds like a pickup line at a gay bar: (guy with one eyebrow raised) "How

loose is your caboose?” (intrigued guy) “Very loose-y goose-y.” (guy with both eyebrows raised now) “Pepto Bismal?” I already said I’m terrible at pick up lines, so this sorry exchange makes sense. This leads to another problem where I say things with an underlying homosexual feel without meaning to. Is that me being unknowingly gay or has society become gay obsessed? For instance, I love musical theater and after saying that one night my wife asked, “Are you sure you’re not gay?” My response could’ve been better, but I went with, “Hey, gay men aren’t the only ones who love musical theater... so do old women.” Not the best comeback. But even if I was gay and didn’t just have a gay vibe, would that mean I’m less of a man?

In my early thirties I used to supply teach for various high schools. That’s a dream come true. Can I have a job where I can be disrespected by the people who hire me *and* those I’m trying to help who are a fraction my age? Perfect. At the different schools I’d go there was one question that kept surfacing. For instance, one day while I was collecting tests (giving a class a test as a supply teacher is a sure way to get them to love you) I had a grade ten boy walk up to me and bluntly ask, “Are you gay?” How do you answer that? (me) “No, go fish.” What I wanted to say was, “No, but question for you: Are you socially stunted or just rude?” It turned out he assumed I was gay because I’m “enthusiastic.” How does that make me gay? The crazier thing is he wasn’t the first to think that way. During my stint as a teaching intern, I had an entire grade twelve class I had worked with for four weeks act very confused when the teacher said that I had a girlfriend. There were even two gay students in the class who were sure I was gay. They were actually very disappointed I wasn’t because they had been telling their friends how great it was to have their first gay teacher. The class said that they figured I was gay because I was “Too happy *not* to be gay.” What is wrong with heterosexual men if being enthusiastic and happy makes people think I must be gay?

In the Disney animated movie *Mulan*, one of the main songs is called “I’ll Make a Man Out of You.” It’s about encouraging men to be manly warriors, tough and rugged, but is that a man? Do I need to have “all the strength of a raging fire,” and be “as mysterious as the dark side of the moon”? Do I have to be “manly” to be a *real* man? Do I have to watch and quote cartoons to be a real man?

Men, in general, are not as “manly” as we’d like to think. Even the so-called manliest men have a feminine side. For instance, most men love to play dress up. They don’t call it that because that wouldn’t be tough and rugged, but that’s essentially what they do every time they put on a sports jersey with their favorite

player on the back. They're not dressing up like a princess, but they're dressing up as someone they wish they could be, which is no different: (obstinate guy) "I'm not trying to be like him; I'm showing the world that he holds the key to my heart!" At sporting events you see droves of men dressed up and it's not even Halloween. Please know, I'm not making fun of these men (they can easily beat me up). I'm just putting out a fact. Personally, I think we should do more dress up to celebrate what we love: (Dressed like a tiger) "I love Frosted Flakes. They're Greeaaatt!" (Dressed like a horse) "My favorite car is a Mustang." (Dressed like a dork) "I'm dressed like my favorite boss."

Fun Note: Football fans are the most gayish of all the sports fans. If they weren't then they'd be saying things like, "Can you stop touching each other's butts so much?" "Does the quarterback really have to be behind the bent over guy like that?" or "Can those pants be looser? I feel uncomfortable seeing every delightful curve of their chiseled bodies."

Before we continue, I think it's important to note that I'm not the way I am because of the toys I played with as a child. I didn't play with Barbies... unless they needed my G.I. Joes to rescue them. As a boy, I was obsessed with three things: sports, Hulk Hogan, and G.I. Joe. I feel it's important to point this out because even though I played with army men, I didn't grow up wanting to be an American hero. I didn't even want to be American (can I write that and still be allowed to cross the boarder?) I believe "Knowing is half the battle," (a G.I. Joe reference) but that's just good logic. I know some parents are scared about what toys their children play with, but I really don't see this as having that much of an effect. I may have been a Hulk-a-maniac, played contact hockey (my big butt was great for knocking people over), and played with toy guns, but I'm clearly not an overly aggressive, gun toting vigilante who attacks Cobra (that's another G.I. Joe reference because I'm that cool/old/out of touch). I think this is important to note because, despite this "manly" driven childhood, I still have a strong sensitive side. I wasn't nurtured to be this emotional. It's simply part of who I am. ***For my emotional health, it's important that I embrace this, and use it for all the good it offers. If I'm going to be more sensitive than the average male, I need to use it to my advantage and not see it as a disability.*** It's definitely not something that prevents me from being a *real* man. After all, being attracted to women or men doesn't mean you are or aren't a *real* man. Who you're attracted to is irrelevant... at least for this. For dating, it's very relevant.

So what is a real man? The simple answer is a *real* man tries to be a good person, which means they try to be patient, kind, and self controlled. It's about how you choose to act. To be more specific of common traits, however, let's explore the similarities between men and dogs. I should note that *not every* man will have *every* trait that is discussed, but the odds are you will recognize them in the men you know and have seen in movies and TV because the patterns are there (unless they suck).

Interesting Aside: Every young guy has something that they think will help them feel like a grownup man. For some, it's being in a happy relationship or becoming a dad. For others, it's a certain accomplishment like owning their own business or winning their dad's approval. Sometimes it can seem so impossible to be a *real* man, they've given up, and for others, the idea of growing up scares them to the opposite direction. I actively pursued what I thought would make me a grownup man, but it eluded me until I was 38 (as sad as that might sound). I longed for a sustainable career where I was the main breadwinner. I knew I wasn't going to be the nurturer that my wife would be, so I wanted to give her that opportunity to be home more, but it was scary for awhile there. I had a taste of a real career in my mid twenties working at a steel factory, but then I became a youth pastor making well below poverty level income for four years and then slightly above poverty level for another four years. This second position gave me benefits and money toward a pension, which was nice, but it still wasn't a sustainable wage even when I added in supply teaching. My eight years as a youth pastor was ultimately a stepping stone to getting a career I was confident about and in which I could thrive. Unfortunately, even as a therapist it took six years to get my practice to where I needed it to be and that's when I fully accepted I was a man. It was a long haul, but it was a very valuable journey with many wonderful memories. What's interesting is looking back I would say that during that time I didn't feel like a grownup man, but I was still a *real* man because I tried my best to be a good person.

**** *Please Note* ****

I will now focus on being more informative (at least that's the goal).

Chapter 3:

A Dog is Not a God

The first thing I should clarify is that dogs are not meant to be “gods” (even if you’re dyslexic). Some dogs are incredibly spoiled. It’s to the point where they’re essentially being worshiped by the owner: (crazed owner pushing dog in stroller) “The sweater you’re wearing is handmade by a local artisan who uses only the finest wool blessed by the pope himself. She tried selling me the one blessed by the local bishop, but I would have none of that for my little Poopsy. You’re just the cutest little pit bull.” ***On the one hand, a dog is a blessing, and on the other, he’s just a pet.*** We need to remember both sides because we’re neither meant to worship our dogs nor mistreat them. Ultimately, we need to be considering men in the same way: We’re different from women, but we’re all human. This idea of balance is taught really well in this passage:

Rabbi Bunam said to his disciples: “Everyone must have two pockets, so that he can reach into the one or the other, according to his needs. In his right pocket are to be the words: ‘For my sake was the world created,’ and in his left: ‘I am earth and ashes.’”ⁱ

I like to simplify this to: ***We should have gold in one hand and dust in the other to remind us that we are both as precious as gold and as worthless as dust.*** I believe we are all preciously created (yes, I’m a Christian even though some people might question that with my sense of humor), but we will all die and

return to dust. This belief goes for both men and women. ***We need to remember that in our humanity we are no better than anyone else and we are no less.*** We are all just human. Some of us make better choices than others, but we all face the same basic things: temptation, loneliness, criticism, fear, guilt, anger, sadness, acceptance, hope, love (hopefully), and happiness. How we experience them may vary, but we're all fundamentally human. Thus, we all need to remember this balance: ***We are precious and we are nothing.*** If we over focus on one, it throws off the balance. If we only see ourselves as precious, we become prideful and major jerks while if we focus on being nothing, we'll face anxiety and symptoms of depression.

Tip: Many good people struggle to see themselves as precious. Instead, they tend to be too hard on themselves and/or too easy on others. My advice to these people is to ***“treat yourself the way you treat others.”*** This, of course, is a spin of the original Golden Rule, but if these people treated others the way they treated themselves, they'd be pretty mean.

Side Note: I would argue that most young people in Western culture today have been raised with an over-focus on how they're precious, which has led to many of them being particularly self-entitled and lazy. At the same time, many of their parents and grandparents were raised in a more self critical, guilt, and fear driven society. This leads to some very interesting family dynamics and complications, especially if we project our views onto others. Ultimately, we all need to seek a balance in order to be healthy.

When I first came across this concept of gold and dust, it blew my mind. My religious background led me to struggle with fear and guilt, but that's because I missed the balance. I missed verses like “For we are God’s masterpiece,” (Eph 2:10) and “I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful.” (Psa 139:14b). I used to focus on being dust, but this concept helped me see things differently: I’m more than that. I could easily spend a lot more time on this, but the important thing to realize is that all people, men and women, rich and poor, sun resistant and sun burners (that’s me), young and old, country fans and people with good taste in music, we are all as precious as gold and as worthless as dust.

Chapter 4:

The Different Types

I once joked, “If the dog is less than 50 pounds, it’s not a dog; it’s a rodent of unusual size.” (Yes, that’s another Princess Bride reference; I’m that old, and if you got the reference, welcome to the club.) Whatever the preference, a dog is a dog no matter the size or the breed. It can be a big horse-like dog or a tiny cat-like dog, and it’s still a dog. It can be a Cousin Itt from *The Addams Family* kind of dog or it can have “canine” pattern baldness, and it’s still a dog. Whether an animal is a dog or not isn’t determined by the size or the amount of fur/hair. These are just different traits. In fact, I’ll go so far as to say that one type of dog is not better than another because they all have their benefits and drawbacks. The same goes for men. Men come in all shapes and sizes, loudness and calmness, looks and more “personality” based. One type of man isn’t necessarily better than another; we’re just different. Of course, the preference for the man we want around can change depending on what we’re doing. For instance, if I have to make a dodgeball team, I’m not going to the local nail salon to pick up guys getting a mani-pedi: (guy at salon) “But I like balls.” And if I need to buy a new outfit to impress a woman, I’m not going to the construction yard for fashion advice: (construction worker) “Plaid’s good. Before the date you could maybe shower. Maybe even go all out and use soap.”

In the book *Decoding Your Dog*, the authors divide dog breeds into seven basic categories, which I’ve summarized below:

1. ***Sporting dogs:*** These dogs were bred to hunt game birds both on land and in the water.
2. ***Hound dogs:*** These dogs were bred for hunting other game by sight or scent.
3. ***Working dogs:*** These dogs were bred to pull carts, guard property, and perform search-and-rescue services.
4. ***Herding dogs:*** These dogs were bred to help shepherds and ranchers herd their livestock.
5. ***Terriers:*** These dogs were generally bred to rid property of vermin such as rats and politicians.
6. ***Non-sporting dogs:*** These dogs vary in size and function, but they're more companion based.
7. ***Toy dogs:*** These dogs were bred to be household companions, and easily carried around.

Because men are like dogs, we can be easily categorized in a similar way.

1. ***Sporting guys:*** These guys love sports and living adventurously. This can be by actually playing sports and living adventurously, or it can be by living vicariously through someone else by watching sports or certain movies or even playing certain video games.
2. ***Hunting guys:*** These guys are always hunting something for their collection whether it is fur pelts from actual hunting or collecting things like stamps, coins, cars, or even notches on the bedpost.
3. ***Working guys:*** These guys always need to be working. Relaxing is torture and beaches are their enemy. In downtime they write books (there's a hint about me).
4. ***Herding guys:*** These guys always end up in leadership and have people working under them.
5. ***Terriers:*** These guys are super organized and like things their way. They don't like "vermin" upsetting their order.
6. ***Non-sporting guys:*** These guys prefer more relaxed or creative past times that aren't as competitive and are more about building relationships and/or supporting others.
7. ***Toy guys:*** These guys are more about fashion and the fancier things.

It is important to note that just like a dog can be a mix of breeds (aka a mutt), some guys don't exactly fit into just one of the above categories either. In fact, most men likely have a mix of qualities going on, or they will go through phases

where they're more one category than another depending on the stage of life, their environment, and the current influences. For instance, as a kid I was a sporting guy, but as I got older and forced to be more responsible, I switched into a working and herding guy mix (three young girls will do that). I still love sports and part of me wants it to be that way again, but this stage of my life requires I be in a different category. The good news about this is guys can change, but you should never get into a relationship expecting the guy to change categories for you. If being in a relationship means he has to give up something he really loves, this is dangerous ground for a long-term relationship as there's a good chance he'll eventually become resentful or do it behind her back. After all, people, in general, want to feel accepted for who they are and not just be taken on as a project to fix.

The helpful thing about these categories is it points out that there are many different types of guys and that to be a *real* man you don't have to just be one thing. A *real* man can like sports or shopping, killing stuff or crocheting. Ultimately, the question that needs to be answered is ***what kind of man do you want to be*** (if you're a guy) or ***what kind of guy do you want to have*** (if you're in the market to date one)? For instance, if you're the kind of person who wants to be in a relationship with a *non-sporting guy* then don't date a guy who's a *sporting guy*. It sounds simple, but I'm sure you know a couple where this happened. Ultimately, no one can be angry at a guy for being what he's always been. The author of *Breaking Bad Habits in Dogs* points out, "Dogs know what they are; most owners don't."ⁱⁱ Similarly, men tend to have an underlying understanding of what they are while bad partners don't. Sure, we can change categories, but we don't necessarily want to because we're generally fine with who we are. Sometimes things like work will force us to change, but that doesn't mean we want to. We do it out of necessity. Ladies, please do every man a favor (and your friends who don't want to hear you whine about your man for the rest of your life), if a guy's the wrong type for you, even if you think he's cute, don't date him, and definitely don't marry him. You can admire from a distance like window shopping, but don't get involved. Too often girls will get into a relationship because the guy had "potential." Getting into a relationship with a guy you need to change will cause you mountains of unnecessary frustration and eventually make him resent you. Don't try to make a guy something he's not. It's just like buying a dog. You can't buy a *herding dog* and expect him to enjoy being carried in your purse (although that'd be hilarious to see). You can't buy a *toy dog* and expect him to pull you on a dog sled (also funny). Just because the dog is cute doesn't mean he's the right dog for you. Just like buying a dog, don't pick a man because he's cute. Even more important, don't date him because you feel sorry for him or because you're

desperate and he's the best out of a list of terrible options. For instance, compared to a serial killer, a murderer can seem like a better option, but that doesn't mean you should go for him (hopefully you figured that out). And never go for a guy who promises he'll change for you because you know what happens after a few weeks, months, or years into the relationship? The old dog comes out. Hormones can only motivate a guy to change for so long before old habits resurface. There are exceptions to this rule, but it'll still be a whole lot of work to make this kind of relationship last, especially since it runs the risk of him becoming resentful for changing. I've heard girls say, "But I can see the good in him." Great, he's Darth Vader; good choice. Do you want to marry someone who has "good" somewhere tucked away where most people can't see or someone who is obviously good? ***If you're the only one seeing this good, you're missing out on seeing a whole lot of bad.***

Tip: Quite often a guy needs a woman to inspire him to change and even help him, but to use a house analogy (I'm trying to sound manly), if you're going to put the work and money into fixing a house, make sure the foundation is solid or it's eventually going to come crashing down.

Thought: Just like we are all precious and worthless, we all have good and bad in us. The question is are you a *good* person with *bad* moments or are you a *bad* person with *good* moments? For me, it was pretty clear what kind of person I wanted for a wife. I wanted a good person with really bad taste in men, so I had a chance.

If you want your relationship to last, picking a guy should be like buying a dog: ***Know what you want versus what you should admire at a distance.*** For instance, a St. Bernard is a beautiful dog and was great in the *Beethoven* movies, but... no thank you. Big appetites mean big... release orders. Choosing a partner is more than just "love" or attraction otherwise after watching *Free Willy*, I would've tried to get a pet killer whale (I still think that'd be cool). Now that would be manly. Whether picking a dog or a partner, it needs to be done with research and care. Know what you're getting and make sure that's what you want before you commit. If you're already married, sorry, you're pretty stuck because you made a vow to be with each other for life. There are exceptions like if he's actually Darth Vader or if there's betrayal without regret. Or I guess it also doesn't matter if vows (e.g. For better or for worse) mean nothing to you. If, however, you want to keep your vows, your best solution is to focus on appreciating what he does have to offer. Even better, knowing what his strengths are means you can

help bring them out more... as long as you want them brought out more: (girl) “I know you’re proud you can watch eight hours of football without moving off the couch, but how about we work on a different skill like turning on the fan when you use the bathroom.”

It should be noted that sometimes a dog will act differently than his category (or breed) suggests because he’s struggling with something. For instance, one author notes, “Not every dog can succeed in every situation. Watch your dog for signs of anxiety or aggression and change the circumstances so that the dog doesn’t get overwhelmed.”ⁱⁱⁱ The same thing can be written for men, “Not every man can succeed in every situation. Watch your man for signs of anxiety or aggression and change the circumstances so the he doesn’t get overwhelmed.” This is a good reminder that your dog or man might be acting up and/or being aggressive with you because he’s under stress. ***Sometimes this stress is nothing to do with you even if it feels like it is.*** For instance, work and money can weigh heavily on a guy. The rare time this stress is self induced because he’s carrying a secret from his wife like he has a gambling problem or he’s having an affair. I once had a guy tell me he was feeling an incredible amount of anxiety. I acknowledged that point, but then added he was cheating on his wife. When I asked if he thought this was connected, he was confused and asked if that was possible. As we’ll be discussing later, guys can be dumb, and this is a good example of that.

Work and money can weigh heavily on a man, especially if he’s looking for a job, but the most likely cause of a guy feeling overly stressed is the home front not feeling safe. Most men can handle anything at work if their home is good. We need a safe foundation to be at our strongest, and that’s what a happy family gives us. When the home life is a struggle, that’s when guys really have issues surface. Ultimately, if your man feels like he’s not good enough for you (even if it’s just in his head), he’s going to act out in some way. He can be outwardly anxious, noticeably downtrodden, or grumpy, but either way, it is a sign that something needs to be addressed. Of course, the problem with addressing it means he might feel more inadequate thereby adding to his insecurity and defensive behavior. I claim that guys are simple, but I never claimed that dealing with them is. Fortunately, I have found that a third party like a therapist or caring friend can sometimes help point the problem out. There’s unfortunately something about a partner acting like a parent and/or telling us we’re doing something wrong that can drive a man mental.

Tip: If you want a happy and healthy man, help him feel good enough for you with praise and appreciation. If he thinks he's too good... well, I'm sure you and your friends can take care of that easily enough.

Reminder: A man can change, but never get into a relationship expecting him to change anything... unless it's a little thing like if he leaves the toilet seat up. Of course, if he does that, he's a Neanderthal. Put the seat down! Better yet, sit like a civilized person and stop being a splatter slob. Sorry, I get defensive about my toilets.

Bonus Tip: There are occasions when there's nothing you can do to directly help because the problem is deeper rooted or possibly an undiagnosed mental illness is taking place. Of course, if you think getting a guy to go to see the doctor is hard, try getting him to go to a therapist to talk about feelings – yikes. I became a therapist, so I didn't have to see one (is that bad?)

Chapter 4:

Logical...

Dogs are logical. That means if you know your dog, it's not hard to predict how he's going to act. For instance, if there's a squirrel, logically, he's going to chase it. If you pick up his leash, logically, he's going to assume he's going out. If he sees a vet, logically, he's going to freak out. When Amber saw the vet's building, she would do this Bambi on ice routine where she suddenly couldn't walk properly and her feet slid everywhere. She didn't want to be there, so logically, she was going to make it as difficult as possible for us to take her there. Cats are not as logical, which makes them harder to predict. For instance, for one day, month, or year (no set timeline) a cat will have a favorite spot, but then suddenly want nothing to with that spot ever again. I have a cat right now that even changes what treats she'll eat. Dogs don't do that. They'll just eat it. This happens, however, because cats are more emotionally driven. All you can really expect with them is that they'll do *what* they want *when* they want, and if you try to change that, they're going to fight you. This logic versus emotion idea leads to the classic argument between men and women: (man) "You're too emotional! Try being logical!" (woman) "Well, you're too emotionally stunted! Try being less man-dumb, you jerk." Conclusion: Marriage is fun.

How emotional and logical someone is can be put on a scale. I set it up to follow the old idea that the left hemisphere of the brain is considered more logical while the right side is considered more creative.

Extremely Logical

Balance

Extremely Emotional

-10-----0-----10

No matter where you land on this scale, there are good and bad points about it. That being said, in order to connect socially with others in a healthy way, it is best *not* to be an extreme on either side, but rather we need to learn to be more in the middle. If you're wondering what a -10 looks like, think Spock from *Star Trek* or Sheldon from the *Big Bang Theory*. A +10, on the other hand, is more like... I'm sorry I need a moment to cry... nope, I need to scream... never mind, I'm fine now. Fortunately, wherever you are on this chart isn't a prison sentence; you have some control of where you land. Of course, a person who is a -10 won't magically switch to be a +10 and vice versa, but a -10 can work at being more of a -2, and a +10 can work at being more of a +2 in order to be more in the middle. In order to move along the scale, sometimes it just takes a little understanding of what the other side of the chart looks like and appreciating the way they work. The more engrained certain mentalities are, however, the harder it can be to change them. For instance, an older man who grew up being told not to "cry like a girl" is going to have this firmly rooted in his thinking. This means he won't suddenly become mushy without something drastic happening like a head injury, a serious health problem, or the loss of his wife, but he can still learn how to appreciate why someone else might cry, which will help him be more in the middle.

The idea that we can move left or right on the chart makes sense since different people and situations can draw out temporary fluctuations in our emotional or logical responses. Dogs are also affected in this way. I have a friend with a dachshund who is a good example of how men work. With my male friend, the dog loves to play and rough house, but with my friend's wife, the dog is a mush. He changes depending on who he is with at the time. Guys do this as well. We like to play and roughhouse, but with the right person and the right time, we can be a mush. Quite often we are at our mushiest with our mom, our daughter, or a girl we're trying to impress: (guy trying to get girl) "Yes, I have an emotional side that I'll share with you until we've been in a relationship long enough that I can be complacent and take you for granted."

I've found many men struggle to show emotions in long term relationships for three main reasons:

- 1) It takes too much energy minus grumpiness and the odd anger burst.
- 2) Showing emotion leads to conflict and/or getting in trouble.

3) Shared emotions in the past have been used against them later.

The truth is every guy has a mushy side, but it can get harder and harder to find as he gets used to not having emotions. That being said, some guys are giant mushy wussbags when they get the sniffles: (guy) “I’m sssiiiiccccccckkkkk. Hold me?” They’ll also have extreme emotions if you keep asking them if they’re fine over and over: (guy) “I SAID I’M FINE!!” (smug wife) “Then why are you yelling?” (guy) “That’s just loud logic!” When something bad happens, anger is safer than sadness for most men, which means sometimes it takes a bigger man to show vulnerability. Men need to realize that all emotions are healthy, and not a reason to put someone down: (guy) “You should be logical and stoic like me.” (girl) “I think you mean cold and unfeeling like you.” (guy) “Sexy, isn’t it? I’m like hugging a crocodile.”

Interesting Note: There are five primary emotions: fear, anger, sadness, disgust, and happiness. We ultimately need to learn how to experience all of these in a healthy way. For instance, emotions should be like breaths; we need to let them in and then let them out or we’ll start to choke.

Like it was mentioned earlier, our brains seek balance, which means we can change where we land on this scale based on who we’re around. For instance, my wife tends to be more emotional with me, but then logical (at least logical for her) with her even more emotional sister. Meanwhile, when I’m with my emotional wife, I tend to be more logical, and with my hyper-logical friend, I’m more emotional. We can fluctuate depending on the environment, but with practice we can move along the scale to a healthier position on a more regular basis. For instance, I’d say my wife and I are both overall closer to the middle now. Before, it was... fun. Before getting married, I lived with my mom, and I had this habit of using the towel like a handkerchief if it was time to put it in the wash. Logically, I’m putting it in the wash anyway, so why not get another use out of it, especially when it’s better for the environment not to use paper products. In my mind the towel has been temporarily turned into a handkerchief, but when the wash is done, it will be restored to its original purpose. No harm done, so what I’m doing makes sense... to me, but definitely not to my wife. When she saw me wipe my nose with the towel it was like I wiped my nose on her sleeve. How do I know that reaction? I did that as a joke early in the relationship. I thought it was funny... she did not. Turns out my flirting techniques needed some work. When she saw me use the towel like a Kleenex, she freaked out. Of course, what I said to make her feel better didn’t help: “It’s okay; I do this all the time.” Apparently, my soothing techniques also needed some work. I then told her my reasoning, my very logical

and intelligent reasoning. My conflict resolution skills also needed work. Her rebuttal was not quite as logical. She essentially said, “It just *feels* wrong.” What? How is that an argument? “It just *feels* wrong.” I asked her if there was any logical reason and she thought that was a silly question: (me using a girl voice to mockingly imitate her) “Who needs logic when you have feelings?” After realizing she didn’t have a real reason, she decided to get backup (a surprisingly logical move). She went for the big guns; she got... my mom. Have I said I’m a huge mama’s boy yet? My wife assumed my mom agreeing with her would prove her point. I guess she thought two emotional people make a logical pair. To her disappointment, however, my mom’s only concern was that I put the towel in the wash. Who’d leave a snotty towel out for other people to use? I’d never do that... although that does sound like a funny thing to do to the right person... which is not my wife. She’d go beyond freak out. She’d “girl-crazy” out, which is kind of like giving a lion with a toothache a sponge bath. Not only did I put the towel in the hamper, I rinsed it out first (that’s right ladies; I know how to put dirty things in the hamper; I’m that sexy. It’s amazing how sexiness changes as we get older). As this disagreement continued, the only thing we agreed on was that I didn’t get why it was so gross. You might be reading this and thinking I’m a disgusting pig, but in my logic, I see it as fine. It was going to be cleaned in the wash... at least I hope it gets cleaned in the wash. When I was a kid, I often had to help fold the *clean* laundry, so I touched everyone’s underwear. I would even put my dad’s tighty whities on my head and pretend it was the headgear for a boxer in training (I never said I was cool). I hope the washing machine cleaned the underwear because otherwise I have a whole other trauma about to hit me because I touched my brother and sister’s underwear. I don’t know if you know this, but a teenager’s underwear is way grosser than whatever I blew in the towel from my nose. Underwear hides stuff so private they’re called “the privates.” My nose is allowed to be seen... unless there’s a pandemic and then it’s the scariest part of my body to some people.

To go even further (because that’s what I do, and no, this never helps in a fight with my wife), it’s important that what goes in the wash gets cleaned because have you ever stayed at a hotel? That’s a fun thought. If washing did nothing, then sleeping in hotel beds means we’re essentially wrapping ourselves in some pretty darn nasty bodily fluid concoctions – fun. Fortunately, soap is a wonderful thing... but not to my wife back then. She went so far as to say she’d never use my hand towels again. I thought that was funny because in my head I was thinking, “Um, you put your head on my sleeve and that’s my backup Kleenex. I’ve wiped my nose on it and didn’t wash it before you put your head there. In your face...

literally.” I didn’t tell her that part, but one day it’ll be fun to share. I’m saving that for the right moment (aka a fight). Oh, and ladies, if you put your head on your man’s shoulder, remember there’s a pretty good chance he’s sneezed and/or coughed on that spot, too. Cuddling isn’t so cute now, is it?

The one logical argument my wife was able to use is that I’m supposed to be a germaphobe, which means I should find my nose blowing in the towel behavior disgusting. But here’s the thing: I’m a germaphobe with *other* people’s germs. Mine are fine. My germs are *my* germs. I’m not going to sneeze in my hand and then lick it after, but I’ll rub it on my sock like a man and carry on. I’m not then repulsed by my hand and shun it until I can wash it. Other peoples’ germs? Nasty crap. Them, I’ll shun. If you sneeze in your hand, there’ll be no hand shaking until you wash that with soap. That’s icky (to use a technical term). To be honest, one of the grossest things to me is touching a restaurant’s ketchup bottle because I see people lick their fingers before grabbing it. That bottle is now covered in everyone’s saliva germs. Logically, it’s gross to me, but my friends make fun of me because, logically, to them I look silly picking up the ketchup bottle with a napkin while to me, logically, I’m less likely to get sick since I’m not swapping second hand saliva cooties: (to my friends who tease me) “Enjoy your colds, ketchup-bottle-finger-lickers.” I promise I’m nicer than this makes me sound. Germs make me weird...er.

This germaphobe thing leads to an important factor about our emotions and logic: We can have good and bad logic or emotions. For example, you can use logic, but it can be bad logic like with the one guy I had in my youth group who proudly told me that he was going to try every kind of street drug because, logically, he can only tell his kids *not* to do drugs if he’s tried them all. Um... that’s stupid. That’s really just an excuse for doing something he knows he shouldn’t, but doesn’t want to feel guilty about. Similarly, we can allow the wrong emotions in. For instance, we can feel sad or depressed when we should be angry like when we get mistreated. We should be assertively standing up for ourselves; not wallowing in self pity. Probably the most common wrong emotion is guilt. It’s amazing how often good people feel guilty when there’s no reason, especially when the other party insists they’re fine. The biggest emotion problem is people being upset when they should be grateful that it wasn’t worse.

Tip: One of my favorite sayings is ***feelings can be liars***. Just because you feel a certain way doesn’t mean you should. On the other hand, ***you can have stupid logic***. Thus, we need to be using both our logic and emotions together

to make sure they are kept in proper functioning order while listening to the guidance of those we respect and think as wise.

This leads to another important note: ***Guys may be logical, but that doesn't mean we're smart.*** In fact, guys are typically not as smart as we want to think we are. For instance, many men argue that you should only shower because a bath is sitting in your own filth. Sure, that logically makes sense. A shower washes away the germs and dirt while a tub allows it all to pool around you, but here's the thing that makes this argument dumb: Men say baths are sitting in your own filth, yet many of the same men love sitting in hot tubs. Hot tubs are like a giant bath, which is why it's called a "tub" and the people in them are called "bathers" and not "swimmers." Ironically, this tub kills "swimmers." (Get it? That's another "I think I'm clever moment.") Not only is it a bath, it's a communal bath shared by a bunch of people. This is essentially claiming that sitting in your own filth is okay as long as you're doing it in a tub that's full of other peoples' filth. To add to this human soup (or stew if the people in the tub are particularly dirty), this tub is at a temperature that causes the bacteria to get worse. Hot tubs sometimes even have warning signs telling people not to put their head under the water because it's so germ filled. How filthy is the water if you can't put your head under? I know I've had people argue that's why you're supposed to shower before going in the hot tub, but the key words there are "supposed to". In all honesty, who does that? Who actually showers before the hot tub? Afterwards, absolutely. I need to wash off the dead skin of who knows how many people. Showering before is for anyone besides me. I don't like showering before going in the hot tub because it takes away from the heat shock when you first step into the water, which is the best part of using a hot tub: (bather stepping into hot tub) "Oooohhhh that's good... is that my dead skin floating by or someone else's?"

Guys may think they're logical, but at the same time, many men don't realize how emotional they actually are. For example, in a verbal fight your argument may have sound logic with a straightforward thesis statement and three supporting points and conclusion, but if you yell or talk down to the other person, you're still being emotional. You're trying to hide your emotions under logic, but the emotions are still there. If you were fully logic driven, logic says don't yell or insult the other person because otherwise that person will feel attacked and attack back, which is very counterproductive. ***People are essentially mirrors; if you're rude, the other person is going to be rude back while if you're nice, there's a better chance the other person will be nice back.*** Logic also says no matter how good your reasoning is the other person won't care when they're angry, ***so***

shut your yap and help the other person feel heard to help diffuse the conflict. When people are angry, anything you argue will only make them angrier.

As a man, I am familiar with the unspoken pressure by other men not to be emotional, but sometimes the greatest pressure comes from women. Probably the most damaging experience I've had for my emotional expressiveness came from dating a girl who would get counter angry at me whenever I was upset. I wouldn't even be angry at her, and she'd get angry at me. It was like I wasn't allowed to have a negative emotion because it somehow meant she should feel guilty for something. She quickly taught me that emotions only caused conflict, so I got better at suppressing my feelings. Of course, if you suppress the negative emotions, you end up affecting your positive emotions as well, which also got me in trouble: (girl upset) "Why aren't you happier?" (me suppressing) "I can't think of a single reason. Although it is strange that when I hear your name I twitch."

I should note that like a lot of guys my visible emotions were naturally on the decline before dating this girl. As a child, I was able to get very visibly excited over things like Christmas morning, puppies, and breathing, but at some point, that ability disappeared. Now I can't get visibly excited even if I wanted, and if I try it looks fake. The main problems with this is it can leave me feeling boring and make me look like I don't care even when I do. This means opening gifts is the worst: (gift giver) "Do you hate it?" (me) "No, this is awesome; it's my face that sucks."

On the plus side, I may have limited expression, but that doesn't mean I can't have emotional understanding. I recently met a couple and after hearing my professional background, the wife asked me if I had a suggestion for their situation. She really liked my idea (as if there was any doubt), but immediately the husband piped in, "That's what I said!" Here's the thing: It wasn't. It wasn't even close, but even if it was, which is sometimes the case in marriage counselling, if the guy isn't presenting his idea in a way that's wrapped in emotional understanding, it's going to be rejected. This particular guy was a huge know-it-all, which was ironic because he knew very little. He had no ability to ask questions or listen to other opinions because he was so worried about proving how "smart" he was. He was so emotionally disconnected, he didn't even realize that's what was going on. He just kept talking with an air of superiority despite being completely tuned out by his wife. Logic on its own can be annoying and very know-it-all-y. Men, no matter how smart you are (or think you are), unless your solutions are bathed in

love and understanding, your partner would rather hit you than listen to you.

Logic on its own is like putting a magnet on a plastic fridge; it doesn't stick.

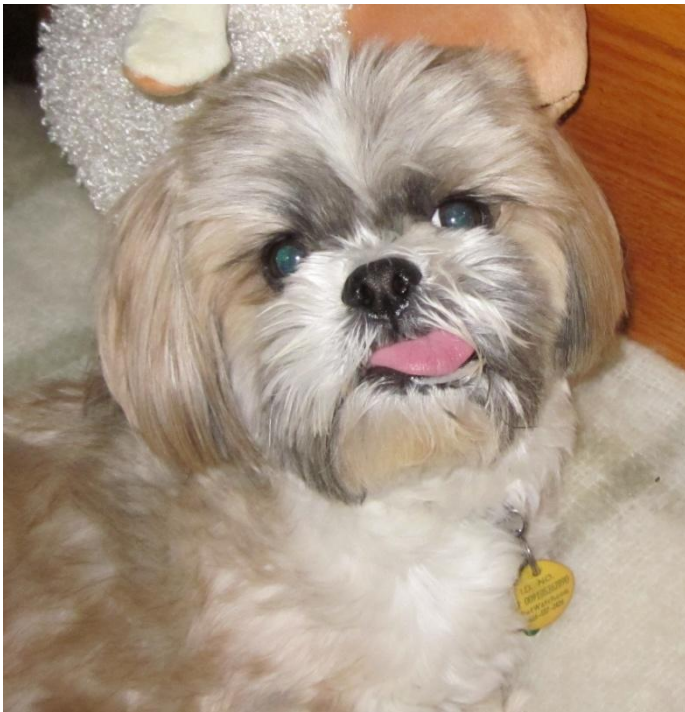
Tip: Finding the balance between emotion and logic will help you have your ideas and arguments be taken more seriously. No matter how good your idea is, being too heavily one way or the other is going to hinder your point from getting across.

Regardless of how emotional a man is, how good a man's logic may be, or even how intelligent he is, here's the thing: We're logical... but we are also dumb.

Logical BUT Dumb

My wife's (former) family dog, Charlie, was a wonderful pet. He was a purebred Shih Tzu, and a good example of the possible problems caused by inbreeding. He had a prominent under bite, and his tongue typically stuck out because it was too big for his mouth (not the most intelligent look). Plus, his tongue hung off to the side of his mouth (and that removed any hint of intelligence). What was fun was his back legs were bowlegged like a cowboy with a vitamin D deficiency. This was all accented by his one lazy eye. His look was cute... and sad at the same time. When my wife's family first got him, I called him Nipple Eyes because... well... it really bugged my wife, but I first said it because his eyes pointed in different directions like nipples. She really didn't find that funny... so I kept saying it because bugging her was even funnier. Yeah, I really don't know why she married me. Fortunately, as a dog these characteristics all add to his cuteness; a person who had these qualities wouldn't be so lucky: (guy with Charlie's features) "No, I'm not sticking my tongue out at you; my tongue's too big for my mouth. And no, I'm not a ballerina practicing a pose." I really liked Charlie because he was so friendly and welcoming, but... he was dumb; he was really, really, really dumb. I don't mean that in a cruel way or even in an inbred kind of way. He was just dumb. For instance, Charlie loved other animals, but they typically didn't like him. Of course, you can't blame gerbils for not wanting to be kissed by a dog, but even if they were massive gerbils the same size as Charlie, his kisses involved a lot of slobber. One of Charlie's favorite animals

was my mom's cat. One of the cat's favorite animals *to hate* was Charlie, and yet Charlie didn't get this. Every growl, hiss and swat was greeted with surprise, (Charlie) "Hi best friend... why are you hissing at me? You must have bad hand-eye coordination because you keep trying to high five me but miss and end up hitting me in the face. You're so funny." Before my wife and I were married, I lived with my mom, and my wife would sometimes bring him over so he wouldn't be left alone. It was the same thing every time: Charlie would get excited to see my cat, Charlie would get rejected by my cat, and we would have to separate them because Charlie kept going back like a drunk guy at the bar asking out a girl who's fed up with him: (guy) "Hey... (guy swatted). Hey... (guy swatted). Hey... (guy swatted). I love frisky Fridays."



This is Charlie (or I guess, was... which sounds colder than I meant)

I want to be clear, I love dogs, but they can be dumb. It's not an insult; it's a fact. For instance, dogs are known for drinking out of the toilet – ew. They clearly see people sit on them with their pants down and make horrible smells, yet a dog is like "Are you done? I'm thirsty." For some reason this isn't a turn off: (dog) "Mmm, flavor." Perhaps it's like needing milk after eating cookies except after eating garbage you need some "flavored" water to wash it down. The kinds of

things dogs eat are also strong evidence for why they're dumb. I remember as a child having to pry Amber's mouth open because she had gotten into the garbage and was eating aluminum foil. That's not the sign of a future Nobel Prize winner. My wife's family dog, Charlie, went a step further in the gross and dumb scale. When he was young, he enjoyed eating his own poop. That's not a sign of *any* intelligence, but at least he suits his look. If aliens landed and that was the first thing they saw, they'd be running away: (alien) "Let's get out of here. These creatures eat their own waste. Who knows what they do to their enemies." And now the mystery of why we haven't been invaded by aliens yet has been answered. Thank you dogs like Charlie. You keep our planet safe.

The bottom line is dogs can be dumb, and Charlie could've been the mascot. Similarly, guys can be dumb and I could be the mascot because I can be dumb (and unfortunately not as cute). As Denny Krane, a character from the show *Boston Legal* says, "Don't try to get in my head. There's nothing in there." I can recognize this quality of dumbness because I'm well accustomed to it. Every guy does strange things without paying attention. For instance, there are the guys who pick their nose at stoplights: (guy in car) "In my car, I'm invisible. Time to dig for green gold!" One of my favorite examples of when I wasn't paying attention was when I was thirty-one and I had taken a group on a mission trip to San Francisco. After a week of working in soup kitchens and doing various activities, we took a break and went to Alcatraz – fantastic experience. To get to the island you have to take a ferry, which sounds funny since it's San Francisco: (guy) "Excuse me; where do I find a ferry?" If you don't get this, don't worry about it; enjoy your innocence. The ferry we rode had multiple levels, and on the way back from the island, I ended up leaving the group to go by myself up to the roof to enjoy the night air. For some reason I had the song "Miss. New Booty" by Bubba Sparxxx in my head – it was a classy moment. Before I even realized it, I was singing the words of the chorus out loud, "I found you, Miss. New Booty..." On top of this, I was doing this hip thrusting, dangling hands, Mr. Bean dance I've never done before or since. In my defence, I thought I was by myself... but guess who wasn't? I really should've checked behind me first... or just not sang and danced. If you're wondering, I'm white and I've never taken a dance lesson, so I was "dancing" not dancing. I really should've paid more attention because I was singing, "I found you, Ms. New Booty..." and dancing away: thrust, thrust, dangle hands, dangle, dangle, for a solid 30 seconds until I turned around and saw a young, conservative looking family of four a few yards away staring at me. Not sure what to do, I stopped and stared back. What do you do in a moment like that? The father was the first to move as he started a slow clap... but that just added to the awkwardness

because no one else joined in; they just continued staring... minus the wife who turned and looked at her husband like he was the one who had been dancing and singing. Maybe the song really hit home for the dad: "I wish I could find Ms. New Booty. I'm stuck with Mrs. Old Booty who gives me dirty looks." Or maybe he was just grateful because now whenever he does something dumb he can say, "At least I'm not that guy we saw on the ferry." Either way, there's a strong possibility that I've become a regular story for their family get-togethers: "Do you remember that guy on the ferry? What was he singing again? Oh yeah, 'I found you...'" ***This leads to the benefit of being dumb – it can lead to great memories and many laughs.*** There is good in all things, and being dumb can make life a lot more interesting.

Sometimes what makes guys dumb is applying logic to a situation that would be better served by compassion and empathy. For instance, when I was dating my wife she said to me, "When I was on my way to work, I rear-ended another car." We had already spent the night hanging out before she said anything, so I figured she was fine, but instead of offering her comfort like I should've I replied, "That makes sense." I thought I was being impressively calm, and then I looked at her – nope. It's amazing how much can be said without words. To recover from this, I decided to add more logic. If you're thinking, "That's a bad idea," you'd be correct: (me) "Last weekend I told you that you stop too quickly, so it makes sense you rear ended someone." Her facial expression did change... but not for the better. What I said wasn't necessarily mean and it was true, she stops too quickly, but that wasn't the right thing to say in that moment. I could've gone with, "Are you okay?" "Is there anything I can do to help?" or "Did you need to make out to feel better?" I'm guessing that last one wouldn't have been her favorite option, but it'd still be better than what I used. Instead of a good response, I chose to essentially say, "Serves you right. I told you not to drive like that. I'm a genius." Fortunately, she was very good about what I said and didn't snap in defensiveness... although she might have been in too much shock because I was that insensitive. The good thing is my cloud of dumbness immediately disappeared after I spoke and I immediately apologized. In my defense, I'm a therapist, but I'm still a guy.

My response of "That makes sense," was not only logical, it followed the rule: Agree with the speaker to make her feel heard and not criticized. Unfortunately, agreeing in this case could be interpreted as criticism, "Yeah, you are a terrible driver," which I realized as soon as I spoke. Sometimes, like I did, guys look dumb because we *confuse* which social etiquette rule to follow (there are a lot) and

sometimes we just don't care (it's too much work). As men get older, it's as if we enjoy breaking the social etiquette rules. They'll say and do things that leave you stunned: (older man) "Today I'm going to wear my shorty shorts and mesh shirt that lets my gut hang out while cutting the grass. It's like lingerie for men... who don't want to look sexy." Fun fact, this was my late father-in-law's favorite outfit for cutting grass when my wife was a teen. I found this hilarious. My wife did not, at least as a teenager; now she'll laugh about it.

When my wife told me about the car accident, I did care; the problem was I forgot to be kind and used logic instead. This is a common problem for men. Our logic often leads us to being problem solvers. This can be incredibly helpful... at making people angry. Instead of listening and asking questions to further discussion, men will just give a solution. My dad did this and it drove me crazy: (me) "I have this problem." (dad) "Here's your solution." (me) "I've tried that." (dad) "Here's another solution." (me) "I've tried that." (dad) "Here's another..." (me in my head) "Stop giving me solutions; I'm not an idiot! Just let me complain!" What actually came out of my mouth? Nothing. Fighting with my dad never ended well, so I just shut up (a response young people today would benefit from learning). A short time later, my girlfriend at the time had a problem and right away I gave her a solution... yes, she had tried the solution I offered. I gave her another solution, and yes, she had tried that already. Before I gave her another solution, she snapped, "Stop giving me solutions, and just let me complain!" and I replied, "Whoooooaaaaaaa, I've turned into my dad." That was a fun moment. Fortunately, this lesson was the catalyst for me to do my best to stop offering unwanted solutions. Sometimes my male mind can't be stopped and I really want to offer a solution. If this happens, I'll now start, "Have you thought about..." or ask, "Can I give a suggestion?" and if they want a solution, I give it; otherwise, I hold onto it and start twitching until I can tell someone else later.

Tip: If we just want to vent, it can be helpful to open with that because it lets the other person relax and give you what you want: "Is it okay if I just vent for a minute?" You can even add, "If you tell me what to do, I get to smack you." It's not violence in this case; it's a memory cue... yes, the police always see it that way. To be clear, that was sarcasm, which I point out so you don't get arrested and quote me: "But officer, the author of the greatest book ever said smacking my husband was just a memory cue." (cop) "Are you talking about *Men are like Dogs*? I loved that book! Let me rip up this ticket."

If, however, you want to make a guy feel useful, give him a problem he can fix. This can be a great way to pick up a guy or to simply make him feel like a man. Be a damsel in distress and you'll bring out the knight... at least if there's a knight inside of the guy. Some guys are useless or too worn out to help.

Sometimes guys can have great logic and great emotions, but what makes us dumb is.... um, well, we don't pay attention. My wife recently bought a sign that reads, "Husbands are the best to share secrets with. They'll never tell anyone because they aren't even listening." As a therapist you'd think I was a great listener, and I am... at work. At home? Um. Sometimes I'm just tired of listening. Was I better before I started my career? Yes... ish. In my family it was known if I was reading the newspaper and you were talking, I'd respond, "Uh huhn... uh huhn... uh huhn..." I wouldn't even know I was doing it. That kind of listening is never a good thing, especially when the person is saying something you shouldn't be agreeing to: (girl) "I think I've put on a few pounds." (guy) "Uh huhn." (girl) "I think I should spit in your food" (guy) "Uh huhn." (girl) "I think I should Macho Man Randy Savage you." (guy) "Uh huhn." And yes, that was an eighties wrestling reference that only a handful of people will get, but consider it a gift to the really cool and/or old people reading this who get it.

A great example of a guy not really paying attention happened to my sister with her superintendent. At least I hope he wasn't paying attention because otherwise he's just sad. My sister's condo building has twenty floors, and she lives on the third. One night she was trying to return home tired and ready for bed. Her arms were full of stuff, so she took the elevator the three floors... or should have been three floors. The elevator had other plans. I'm not sure if it had become possessed, but it started to take her up and down to all of the floors. To make matters worse, the emergency button in the elevator didn't work – that's less than ideal. She also didn't have cell phone reception, so she was stuck going up and down, up and down, up and down, like a slow version of Disney's Tower of Terror. The elevator wouldn't stop or even open the door so she could jump out onto one of the passing floors like in an action movie. She was stuck riding the elevator until it randomly stopped where it originally started... fifteen minutes later. The good news is *I* wasn't on the elevator... that sounds more selfish than I mean. You see, if it was me, I would've thrown up from motion sickness. Yes, I'm that delicate. The elevator ride was bad for my sister, but it would've been considerably worse with me in there throwing up beside her because throw up never smells like freshly cut flowers even if the throw up was caused by freshly cut flowers (thank you to my cat for teaching me that lesson). When my sister was

finally released from her temporary prison, she reported this to the night-time superintendent. His response wasn't so smart: "Yeah, it's been doing that off and on all day. Just make sure you have a granola bar in your purse." How brilliantly terrible is that? I don't know what's worse, the first part of his reply or the second, but let's look at the second because it makes me laugh: "Just make sure you have a granola bar in your purse." Um, this is a solution to a problem that was never presented. Maybe if she had said, "I get hungry riding the elevator," then his response would make more sense, but even then, why a granola bar? When you're hungry, they're not very satisfying, so he should've said, "Just make sure you have a granola bar... and a banana, an apple, some carrots, and a giant cake." I think the first three balance out the last one. But maybe the granola bar wasn't for her. Maybe the elevator really was possessed: (superintendent) "If you want to leave the elevator, you need to grease the wheels a little bit with a sugary treat bar." Or maybe the elevator was like a bouncer, but instead of cash it wants sugary carbs: (elevator) "Do you have the payment to ride me? It better have chocolate chips." To add to the superintendent's dumbness, my sister asked, "What if it happened to one of the elderly ladies in the building?" His response was gold, "It's already happened... twice." What? Twice? I hope the two ladies had granola bars. He claimed the problem was it was the weekend and they had to wait until Monday to have it repaired. No, the problem is he didn't warn people it was broken. He should have at least put up a sign that warns, "Unless you have a granola bar in your purse, don't take this elevator. Take the one that works." Yes, there was another elevator. Even if he wanted a simpler sign that made more sense, it could have said, "Elevator broken". It's just two words. It could be spelled wrong and people would understand the message: "Elle-vader broak'n," (elderly woman) "That's okay; I have a granola bar!"

Sometimes guys may be paying attention to what's being said, but we don't pay attention to who our audience is. (*If you're sensitive to crude humor, you'll want to skip this next paragraph.*) Years ago when I was young and inappropriate (because now I'm always appropriate... minus the retelling of this story) I saw an age appropriate, good looking girl yawn and I whispered to my slightly inappropriate buddy, "Yeah, it'll fit." He thought that was hilarious, you know, because he's a guy. If you don't get this joke, good; it's probably best you don't. The important thing is I knew the audience I was speaking to, and he would appreciate the crude humor. Later that week he was with a female friend and he saw a girl yawn. Guess what he chose to say? He did not make a good choice. She didn't appreciate the crude humor... you know, because she's a girl and has class. He was not audience appropriate... unless his goal was to be verbally slapped, and then goal accomplished.

One of the hardest lessons for a guy to get is we can say things to our male friends we can't say to anyone else because our guy friends are likely thinking something similar. In the same way, I can write a line that's funny in a sketch, but it wouldn't be funny to say to an actual person. For instance, I once wrote a line for a guy to say to his girlfriend about to go away to school: (guy) "You know, you're not supposed to gain the freshman fifteen until *after* you go to school." If I said this to an actual person that would be both dumb and mean, but when's it's in a script, it's acceptable.

What's considered dumb is a variable. It's never constant and, ultimately, audience determined. This can be hard for guys to grasp because we often want to say the thing we think is funny because we're so proud of ourselves for thinking of it: (guy) "I'm a genius. Listen to this!" If we do screw up, ladies, please just accept the fact that we had a good intention and gently make sure we realize we made a poor choice; emphasis on gently. Guys are dumb, but a *real* man is not ridiculously dumb. We typically know when the listener doesn't like our comment. If this is the case, the last thing we want is criticism from our partner because we already feel bad. If you criticize a guy at a time like this, you become like me when I screwed up with my wife when she told me she was in the car accident. This means you essentially become dumb yourselves, which is like me calling you a guy... scary, I know.

One of the dumbest things guys do is take all of their thoughts and feelings and stuff them down until we explode: (wife) "You didn't take out the trash like I asked you to." (angry guy) "Yeah, well you snore in your sleep, you chew like a drunken goat, and last week you ruined my favorite shirt!" Brilliant, isn't it? Stuff, stuff, stuff, pop. Talk about a great way to start an unnecessary fight. I find there are two kinds of bottling up. The bad one is "I'm stuffing this down, so I can hold it against you later." This follows the idea of exploding at someone and then saying, "See what you made me do? You deserved that." This is the passive aggressive way, and not as common for guys. Guys are more likely to go the passive route: "I'm stuffing this down to avoid conflict. Oh, wait. Is that my soul being eroded away? That's fine. I can take it, so it's okay." ***Suppressing is good, however, if it means we bite our tongue in the moment, and then we need to find a way to get our emotions out later in order to process what's happened and give us a better idea of how to move forward.***

The ultimate time for guys to be dumb is when hormones ramp up (oh, the teen years). This is no different than for dogs, and why sexually driven men are often

called dogs: (annoyed girl) “You’re such a dog.” (guy) “So I’m cuddly and cute? Nice.” When hormones are involved, dogs and men can become mentally and socially stupid. This is why most owners choose to have their dog “fixed,” which means removing the hormones. We don’t say the dog is “ruined” or “disabled.” Having his sex drive removed means he’s “fixed” because he’s no longer as dumb (hopefully). If this helps dogs, why don’t we “fix” men? It’s different. Sure, the guy could become a eunuch, but that’s not a job title in high demand these days. Not having hormones would likely eliminate a lot of the dumb things we do, but those are often our favorite stories. Having hormones helps inspire a guy and give him purpose. If a dog is fixed, he typically stops humping people’s legs – that’s a good thing. If a guy is “fixed,” he gives up. Most guys agree we’d rather have hormones and embarrassing stories than no hormones and the ability to sing soprano. As I’ve experienced, the closest thing to being fixed as a man is having kids and getting older: (guy) “Did my hormones runaway or get kidnapped?”

One of the ways hormones make guys dumb is they push us to want to be honest with someone we like. It doesn’t matter whether we even have a chance; guys are drawn to confessing their attraction. ***For some reason guys try to hide their emotions, but not their attractions.*** It’s like we want to ruin a good thing with a girl who has clearly put us in the friend zone. Working with teenagers, I frequently told the guys to keep their feelings for a girl to themselves unless they were 99% sure she liked them back. Otherwise, they were setting themselves up for failure because if you tell a girl you like her and she doesn’t like you in return, you’ve ruined the relationship (or she’ll prove to be a terrible person who will use you like a slave). If she doesn’t like him, she’s not going to suddenly be like: (girl) “You like me? Wow, I never found you attractive before, but now... suddenly you’re the sexiest thing I’ve ever seen.” If a girl likes a guy, she’ll make it known. If there’s any question, shut up and wait to see what happens. If she calls a guy a “friend” or says, “You’re like a brother,” she’s not into them. If she is, do you really want a girl who finds her brother sexy? (girl) “I think you’re hot because you remind me of my brother; he’s delicious.” (proper guy response) “And now I need to never talk to you again.” (wrong guy response) “I think your brother’s delicious, too.”

If you’re a guy, the best way to know if a girl is interested is to watch how she looks at you. When a girl likes you, at some point, she’s going to look at you in this undeniable way that says, “You’re the one.” If she never has this look for you, enjoy the friend zone and get her to help you find someone else. If she does like you and you somehow missed it, she’s going to let you know before she helps hook you up. If she doesn’t like you and you say you like her, you’ve lost your

wingman; it's a lose-lose. The really dumb thing is I'm writing this knowing even if a guy reads this (the idea of a guy reading a book is pretty funny), he's likely going to ignore my advice and tell the girl his feelings and face the pain of rejection. Guys are that dumb.

One of the other ways hormones make guys dumb is we can become incredibly competitive over a girl. My favorite story about men being dumb because of hormones is from Fort Niagara on the American side where they have the story of a headless soldier. It's a ghost story... obviously. Although, a headless person would be a great tourist attraction: (tourist trying to be funny) "I guess this tour blew his mind... get it?" I mention this story takes place at the American fort because... well, this kind of irrational violence makes more sense happening in America. Perhaps, there's something about the American soil that makes people want to fight. That would explain the War of 1812, the American Revolution, the Civil War, all of the wars in the 20th century, and US customs agents. Those people terrify me... assuming they're people. To be an agent is it mandatory to never have been hugged as a child? Do they start each shift with a fierce wedge from their boss? They always seem upset: (angry agent) "What's in your bag?" (me) "A change of underwear."

The headless soldier ghost story begins with two French soldiers trying to win the affections of a local woman. This can sound romantic, but really, this is the human equivalent of two goats smashing their heads together to see who's dominant: (first goat) "I'm better." (second goat) "No, I'm better." (snobby female goat) "I'm popular!" This story is about two love struck soldiers fighting for their love... eh, let's be honest; they were two horny dudes about to prove who was more sober at the time. What's funny is these guys weren't seeing many women, so this woman could have been the female equivalent of Jabba the Hut: (soldier) "A woman!... Kind of." If she was the only female, by default, she'd be the best-looking girl. This proves *you don't need to be attractive to be popular; just lack competition*. For some reason, the two soldiers, believed to be friends, decided the only way to determine the most appropriate suitor for Miss Hut was to fight to the death. Ah, friendship for guys. I wonder if at some point one of them wondered, "I'm either going to die or murder my friend for a woman. Maybe this is a bad idea." Personally, I'm yet to meet a woman worth saying, "I need to date you or I'm better off dead." If I had that attitude, I wouldn't have survived elementary school or high school... or university...or being a young adult. Ah, the good ol'days. I like to think I was never rejected; I was encouraged to work on myself.

What's crazy is this dual and murder could have all been avoided if the woman made a decision. Instead, it was like, "I can't choose between you. I know. How about you fight to the death, so I won't have to feel bad for hurting someone's feelings?" Eventually in this battle, one of the soldiers gives the other a fatal blow with his sword. He then cuts off the fallen soldier's head and tosses it in the river. That's messed up. Why would he do that? Was the woman off to the side yelling, "If you really loved me, you know what you'd do?" (guy soldier) "Buy you flowers? Take a bath?" (woman) "No, you'd hack off your friend's head and throw it in the river?" Maybe he cut off the head and threw the head in the river because he was afraid his friend was only "mostly dead" (yes, that's another *Princess Bride* reference). After tossing the head in the river, Romeo dumped the dead body in a well. I'm not a water expert, but I'm guessing that wasn't beneficial to the safety of the drinking water... or the flavor. After dumping the body, the victorious soldier ran away with his love while the fort became haunted by a headless soldier. This story, therefore, proves that the pen is mightier than the sword... except in a real sword fight because then a pen is pretty useless just like a rational brain when there are a lot of hormones... and booze. That's a dangerous combination.

An Important Clarification: Guys may be dumb, but that doesn't mean we should be treated like we're incompetent, and we should definitely not be treated like we're inferior. Men and women are equal in our humanity, and in our relationships, we need to feel like we are treated with respect and love rather than contempt. Men may have a dumb side, but we all do. We all have dumb moments. It's just more obvious with guys. For further proof, do an internet search in images for "Why women live longer than men." It makes me feel better about myself.

Ultimately, men and women need to embrace a man's dumbness and enjoy the laughter it can bring. After all, it makes life more interesting and prevents snobbiness. This doesn't mean guys should ignore self control, but it's going to show up every once in awhile, so learn to enjoy it: (wife seeing me take off my coat) "You wore that to the engagement party?" (me) "They said dress casual, so I'm doing what they said... although since I'm the only one who followed that rule this is a little awkward." I was the only one in jeans, and to top off, I was wearing a t-shirt that said, "Please don't hold back your applause," (classy, I know) and the party ended up being a surprise wedding reception – oops. Fortunately, my wife laughed about it (later when the bride laughed), and it was a great conversation starter: (wife) "Welcome to nine years of marriage," so it was fine in the end.

The Loyal Gender

One of the most important facts about *real* men that's often missed is that we are loyal. No, that's not a typo; it's not a joke, and this is not me demonstrating I have early onset dementia. When I ask, "Where are my keys?" when they're in my hand that might be, but this is different. When I worked trade shows promoting my first book, I would say to passersby something like, "Do you want to hear about men being the loyal gender?" Guess how people responded to that? It was hilarious... to me. I received two main responses. The first, as you'd expect, would follow something like "You're joking, right?" The second response was a little more surprising, "That makes sense." Guess who gave that response? Not the ladies. As it turns out, men always agreed that they were loyal while women... not so much. Fortunately, I found a way to convince the not-so-impressed ladies that this is, in fact, true. No, it wasn't arguing: (me) "Let me prove why you're wrong." (woman) "Can you? That's so hot." The best way to convince women that men are loyal is by sharing the *10 Drawbacks to Being Loyal*, which we will be getting to shortly. The truth is one of the things that make men do dumb things is the fact that we're loyal. I know that's a weird thing to read, but ***all things have a good and bad side***. For instance, because a guy's loyal, he may stand by you forever, but that also means he's more likely to stick with friends who are losers, stay at a job that is killing him, and even be with a woman who is sucking the life out of him. As comedian Tom Papa says:

We never get rid of our friends, ever! Ever! You meet a guy in kindergarten; if he's your friend, he's your friend for liiiiff. He can be the biggest jackass on the planet too. He can become a drug addict, alcoholic, rob a liquor store, go to jail, come out ten years later, go to your house, pee in your pool, hit on your wife, and you'd be like, "That's Don. He's crazy, right? But you gotta love'm. Look at what he's doing to the mailbox. Hilarious dude."

The following list is also a helpful way to warn both men and women about the types of things they will likely experience if this loyalty is not kept in check. Fortunately, knowing the downsides of loyalty can help people limit the damage it can cause.

10 Drawbacks to Being Loyal

1. **Complacent:** Because guys are loyal, we can become complacent and take our partner for granted – both are bad choices. As Ray in the show *Everybody Loves Raymond* says, "I own you and you own me; that's marriage. It's not my fault you made a bad deal." Even if men are loyal, that is not an excuse to neglect putting in an effort to help keep our partner from feeling taken for granted, especially when women want to feel cherished by their man. This is particularly important to note since not tending to a woman's needs is a good way to firsthand experience why divorce is so common.
2. **Loyal to the Wrong Things:** With loyalty comes the risk of addictions because we can become loyal to things we shouldn't including drinking, work, and the Toronto Maple Leafs.
3. **Stuck in a Rut:** Following this idea of loyalty, guys can struggle with change, which can lead to using bad coping tools.
4. **Put Up with What Should be Changed:** Even if things can be improved, guys will put up with it because... well, it's easier. We'll put up with being mistreated without saying anything by stuffing the hurt and anger down inside. I love the line from the TV show *Scrubs* by the character JT: "Unfortunately for me I wasn't in love with Elliot (the girl he was dating), but I'm a man and even though I knew it would be tough I knew exactly what I had to do... I was going to stay with her the rest of my life." If a man actually asks for something to change, the odds are he was told to do it, which is the main reason if a guy tells me he's leaving his wife my first question is "Who's the other woman?" 99% of the time he'll admit there's another woman, but then he'll claim that's not

why he's leaving... sure. The truth is if there wasn't another woman, he would simply endure because that would be better than being alone.

Please Note: I've met women who stayed with guys they shouldn't because they were loyal, but it's more likely a foolish hope: "He'll change," whereas loyalty is about quietly suffering: "I can take it."

5. **Don't Get It:** It's not uncommon for a wife to leave her husband after years of complaining, and he'll be left saying, "Why would you leave? Everything's fine." He heard complaints and nagging about change, but that was just part of life... wasn't it? It doesn't sink in that this is such a big deal because they're together. Men will put up with things and assume their partner will as well, but that's clearly not true.

Tip for Men: The most common way to stop being nagged at is (drum roll) do the thing you were asked to do. It's a crazy concept I know, but most naggers nag because they don't feel loved not because they love it. Guys, if your wife asks you to do simple things, just do them. For instance, if your wife tells you to put your underwear in the hamper or your dishes in the dishwasher, just do it. It's not hard. Help her feel loved and make your life easier. If there's no pleasing her (that's a fun spot), do your best to limit the ammo she can use against you.

6. **Reduced Affection:** I've heard women complain to their husbands, "Why don't you say 'I love you?'" and they'll reply, "Of course I do. I'm with you." This can be connected to complacency and fear of vulnerability, but it can also be that affection is... well, girly. When a guy is hopped up on hormones, being gushy is easy, but in a committed relationship, hormones go into semi-retirement, so it's easier being lazy. Not being a naturally touchy person, part of me is like "Been there, done that; what's next?" (I sound so sexy, I know.) Regardless of the reason, **just because I'm drawn to something, doesn't mean I shouldn't fight the urge.** For instance, I may not care about affection, but because my wife does, I need to fight my laziness and keep it in the schedule because helping her helps me.

7. **Get Fatter:** When guys get into a comfortable relationship, we tend to let ourselves go (aka we get fat). A fat husband is a loyal husband: (husband) "I'm not going anywhere, so I don't need to try anymore." As you can imagine, this leads to some issues for the wives who are often like: (wife) "Ew, you're fat." This can make the woman frustrated as the fatness is a constant reminder that

he's getting lazy. What's funny is some guys will gain weight, yet expect his wife to still want them: (wife) "Um... can we watch a Thor first? No reason."

8. **Men Don't Break Up:** Men don't do well being alone. We'd rather be in a bad relationship than single, which is why men rarely break up. On top of this, breaking up calls into question a guy's problem-solving skills and is evidence that he is a failure in some way. This is why he often looks for permission to break up by a parent, trusted friend, or the world in one collective voice: "You should leave. She's not normal crazy. She's crazy-crazy!" On rare occasions a guy will break up and be single, which is a sign she was waaaaayyyyyy too crazy to handle, but 95% of the time a man breaks up because he's been given permission to leave by a new woman (aka a home wrecker). Are you thinking this is a giant turd thing to do? That's because it is, but they can always justify it: (guy) "I was going to leave anyway." Some men look for other girls in order to have a reason to leave their partner because it's a broken relationship they know they should leave but can't. This is called weakness. Other men crave appreciation and respect, and outsource this in order to *stay in* the broken relationship. They essentially make the affair a coping mechanism. A *real* man is man enough to address any unhealthiness in his relationship or at least end it before pursuing a new one.

Side Note: Because guys struggle with being single, if they become a widower, within a year of being single, most will be in a serious relationship unless there's a child who becomes a replacement person on whom they put their loyalty.

9. **Losing Someone Sucks Hard:** Losing anyone we love is extremely painful because of how attached we can get to things. Add to this the fact that men are typically less socially supported and skilled at sharing their feelings and it makes sense we can crumble with loss and typically resort to anything that numbs the pain. When it comes to dating, this also explains why men are more likely to commit suicide after a break up, become a stalker, or get stuck on the one who got away. This can also be why men are slower to be open to making new and/or deeper relationships.
10. **Fear of a Broken Heart:** When I was a youth pastor, if I asked teen boys would they rather sleep with a different girl every weekend or have a meaningful relationship, they always chose the latter. This desire can change after the first big heartbreak and the guy is so hurt he's slower to want to give his heart away, but at the core of a man is to feel connection with a woman he cares about. Yes, some guys sleep around because they're selfish horn-dogs

wanting to show off, but many sleep around to protect themselves from being emotionally invested. Of course, even if a guy has had his heart broken, a *real* man will pursue a healthy relationship with someone worthy of his loyalty rather than settling for random sex, which is really just masturbation with a partner. As Weezer sang: “I’m tired of having sex... why can’t I be making love.” These two things aren’t the same.

Aside: As this list demonstrates, if a guy is complacent and seemingly disinterested in his partner, this can actually be a sign that he can’t imagine life without her; romantic, I know. At least being aware of this can give women hope that a guy acting poorly can be a sign he still loves her. He likely just needs a metaphoric kick in the pants, which varies depending on the guy.

One of the main objections I hear about men being loyal goes something like this: “If men are loyal, why doesn’t my husband take out the garbage like I told him to?” Simply put, **loyalty doesn’t mean obedience**. You’re not his boss, and if it feels like you’re trying to be, he’ll likely do things to purposely tick you off. In fact, because he’s loyal, he may be less inclined to cover his to-do list because he’s not worried about “earning” his partner’s affection like when the relationship first began. Being loyal basically means that after he’s committed, it’s highly unlikely he will break up.

Before I continue, I should point out that **saying men are the loyal gender, doesn’t mean women aren’t loyal**. I’ve met some women who were arguably more loyal than men I know, and yes, they had all the negative traits I just mentioned. In my experience, however, **women are less about loyalty and more about passion**. They’re more likely to get really into a project for a short period of time and being into change and keeping things fresh. Who’s more likely to say, “I’m so excited; I bought a new outfit,” or, “We’re going to a wedding this weekend, so I need a new dress”? I’m yet to meet a guy who said, “I can’t wear that outfit again. I wore it to the last wedding. What will my buddies think of me?” We’re more likely to say, “I hope my suit still fits.” The same thing happens with hair. Women typically love to try new styles whereas some men will have the same haircut for life. My dad had the same old school, part down the side and brushed to the other, fifties style haircut from the day he had hair until the day he died. My mom? She’s had different styles over the past few years. **Women like to keep things fresher whereas men like to keep things simple**. The only change you might see with a guy is with facial hair, but that’s because shaving sucks and we’ll do things to reduce shaving even if it’s leaving a soul patch: (guy) “I just

saved two milliseconds of shaving; this is awesome! Who cares that it looks like a coloured cotton ball got glued to my face in some type of crafting accident?” Of course, a lot of male teens will try different looks, but that’s more about self discovery and trying to look cool. Even the guy with the multicoloured mohawk will eventually settle down and have the same haircut for the rest of his life. Ah, the joys of getting older; you stop caring about being cool.

To further delve into this topic, let’s consider a dog’s loyalty. My Nana, had three dogs over the time I knew her; one right after the other. What amazed me was how they each clung to her side. When the doorbell rang, each dog would welcome the visitor at the door, but as soon the greeting was over, they returned to my Nana’s side. There was no question where their loyalty was. This, of course, points out that dogs are loyal, but that doesn’t mean they don’t get distracted or check out other people. Dogs will sniff, lick, and play with whomever, but in the end their loyalty means they return to their owner. If the dog spent a day with someone else and at the end of it he was put in the middle between the owner and his playdate, assuming the owner isn’t abusive, the dog’s going to choose the owner. Dogs can be distracted with treats and fun, but, in the end, the dog will go back to the owner. That’s the kind of loyalty dogs have. Dogs may get distracted, but they still go home.

Tip: This idea of returning to the owner is why many men who leave a relationship for another woman, end up wanting to return to the original partner. Loyalty can get messy.

Since a man doesn’t have an owner like a dog, the best way to see a man’s loyalty is by looking at his favorite sports team. It doesn’t matter what sport it is whether hockey or a lesser sport (can you tell I’m Canadian?), every team in the league will have a loyal following. Even the worst teams will have a legion of loyal fans cheering them on for better or for worse because when a man commits to a team, he commits for life. This loyalty is why people who are bandwagon fans get mocked. A true fan is a fan through thick and thin; not just when things are good. The only thing worse than being a bandwagon fan is to wear sports attire for two different teams. For instance, hockey fans know you can never wear both a Montreal Canadiens jersey while wearing a Toronto Maple Leafs hat. You have to match. That’s the one fashion rule every man knows and cares about: You can only wear the logo of one team... ever. Of course, this can lead to the question: Can a guy wear logos for teams in different sports? For instance, what if he likes hockey and baseball? In this case, baseball’s not a real sport, so it’s okay. In

general, this is acceptable, but it is best to keep to one team and one sport at a time. It's like a polygamous marriage (not that I have experience with that); the wives may know there are other wives, but you don't want to flaunt it; you want to make each wife feel special on her own.

I should point out that as loyal as a guy is to a team or player, that doesn't mean he won't ever check out other teams. Many hockey fans will continue watching hockey well into the playoffs even if their team has been eliminated. They love the sport, which means they're going to check out other teams from time to time. He may even admit that there are better options out there, but in the end, a *real* man is sticking with his team because it's *his* team. A good way to see this idea in full effect is with football. The Super Bowl regularly has over one hundred million viewers because Americans have terrible taste in sports (that's right; I said it). It's not cheating to watch these two teams play, and to even cheer for one because it's about appreciating the sport (and to have an excuse to get together with friends to drink and overeat). Of course, there's a line. He can look but never get so close he might want to touch the jersey of another team. That means he needs to be careful not to learn too much about the other team because he may be loyal, but he's not exempt from temptation. Fortunately, if the guy starts to get too flirtatious with a new team, his buddies are supposed to keep him in line by mocking him severely; the way a true guy friend does. Thus, it becomes worrisome when the guy starts to hide from his friends, especially if this is in order to spend more time with this new team. ***Temptation is natural; nurturing and encouraging the temptation, however, is stupid.*** A *real* man knows when to say no in order to safeguard his heart and protect his relationship.

The other major demonstration of a man's loyalty is seen with his loyalty to his mom – mama's boys unite. It can actually be a challenge for some men to let go of their metaphoric umbilical cord and with both hands grasp their wife's heart strings. Why? Because guys are loyal to the one who has been good at making them feel important. On the plus side, if a man can demonstrate loyalty to his mom, he's more likely to offer this same loyalty to his wife. It's the guys who want nothing to do with their moms or are quick to trade the mom in that I'd be more hesitant to trust for long term commitments. If a guy doesn't have a good relationship with his mom, hopefully he's found another woman like a sister, aunt, or informal guardian he can treat with respect to prove he knows how to treat a woman properly. Of course, if a guy calls his mom "Mother" (creepy) or "Mommy" (creepy weird), you need to run or you're likely going to end up in a missing person's report.

When it comes to marriage, however, the guy is publicly declaring his wife is now number one in his life, and it's his job to help her feel that way without making the mom feel dismissed; moms are still significant (especially if you want free babysitting in the future). As an extreme mama's boy myself, I was aware of this transition because my mom taught me the wife comes first. She's a wise woman. I was very fortunate to have both a mom and wife who work hard to help cultivate a healthy dynamic between all of us. The one thing that I'm most grateful for is I was never told it's one or the other by my wife. As a therapist, I've found a growing number of wives who create division between a mom and her son because of her jealousy and/or controlling nature. Ironically, she'll accuse the mother-in-law of doing this when it's all her (i.e. gaslighting). It's unfair for a wife to demand the mom be ignored like it's some kind of elimination competition. A man needs both in his life. The trick is finding the right balance in order to help both women feel cared about and to help them understand and appreciate their role in his life. I'm sure there are exceptions, but moms typically want family unity whereas the wives who are outsiders coming in are more worried about themselves. For help on this, you should see a therapist and/or check out my book *52 Lessons for Better Communication* because ***the most dangerous person is almost always the first to point fingers.***

8 Risks Associated with Loyalty

- 1) ***Loyalty and faithfulness are not the same:*** A guy can be loyal and still have an affair because loyalty and faithfulness are different. In fact, a lot of men who have an affair have no intention of leaving their marriage. The affair is typically used as a coping tool in order to handle being in a difficult marriage or to fight their own depression. Cheating to feel better might sound stupid, but... welcome to humanity. We do stupid things.
- 2) ***Men can be slow to let things into their lives:*** Being loyal means we are less likely to be open to new things being brought into our lives whether people, pets, ideas, emotions, bands, cars, or a new job. When introducing something new to a guy, it is often best to plant an idea and let the guy adjust to it rather than expecting him to be all in right away.
- 3) ***Men can be slow to let things out of our lives:*** The best example of this is underwear. Because we're loyal, guys will often wear underwear that's ripped, worn thin, and even had our hand written names worn off (real men write their name in their underwear because it's like your

famous and have your own brand of clothes). Unless you're a kid trying too hard to be cool whose pants droop low to show off your boxers (something considered fashionable by those with IQs lower than a hamster), underwear is worn *under* other clothes, so who cares what it looks like? For men, underwear is really just toilet paper that we wear. It's a barrier that keeps our leaky and skid marking bits away from our pants. Are there any grownup women who have their "lucky draws" from high school with frayed edges and stains still in their dressers? Guys may never even wear them anymore, but we will keep them for life... or until the female in our life throws them out (or they disintegrate). I once heard a young lady mocking her husband for keeping his old underwear, and she was shocked when I said he's not weird, he's normal... for a guy. Ladies, don't be upset when we do this; be happy. We keep things in our life even if they're worn out and saggy... not that you'll ever be worn out and saggy, but at least you know it won't matter if you go that way (that's such a compliment, isn't it?). This, of course, is *not* to say that guys shouldn't be encouraged to get new underwear (which is why it's often a Christmas gift), but at least you don't have to be worried about his loyalty.

- 4) ***The One Who Got Away:*** Guys often have a girl who is the "one who got away." She could've been the girl he dated in high school or the girl he always wanted to date, but never got the chance. Over time this person becomes more of a fictional character as the guy remembers her from an overly positive perspective. This means there's a risk he'll be haunted by her memory from time to time. On the positive side, however, this other woman can be a reason for him not to cheat as no other woman will be as good as her, so why leave his wife for someone not as good as the one who got away? She can also be a good way for him to develop self control as he fights the temptation to think about her... but that's not a fun battle I wish on anyone.
- 5) ***Men can suddenly disappear:*** Because we're choosy with where we put our loyalties, when men start to get to know someone, we can suddenly get scared and disappear. The odds are the only thing the other person did wrong was be nice, but the guy wasn't ready for this kind of relationship or maybe he doesn't feel like he deserves to be treated so well – I already claimed we're dumb. The other way we disappear is actually quite foolish. When some guys get a new partner, they disappear from family and/or friends for awhile in order to be alone with her. This behavior should be warned against before the dating age because families

and friends should be around in order to help make sure the guy has chosen wisely and not hormonally.

- 6) ***Men have to be careful what they let into their lives:*** Because of our loyalty, we need to be careful what we let into our life since there's a chance it can be there for a long time. This includes being careful not to open our hearts to the wrong things whether people, video games, booze, pot, the wrong work, or anything that can be addictive in a bad way. This means being "addicted" to eating healthy is acceptable whereas being addicted to eating fast food is amazing... if clogged arteries are your goal.
- 7) ***Men can struggle prioritizing their loyalties:*** Men can be loyal, but sometimes we have the wrong priorities, especially since loyalty can mean taking it for granted. For instance, many men can make the mistake of prioritizing making money over their family, or their kids over their wife. This can be particularly challenging for men in helping positions like pastors and doctors who can get caught up trying to help everyone else while missing out on time with their own kids. There's a reason a lot of pastor's kids end up weird, but, unfortunately, ***it's easy to take your family for granted when you see yourself doing something for the greater good. The reality is, however, there'll always be another person to help, but your kids are only young once.***
- 8) ***Changing loyalties can be hard:*** I knew a young lady whose boyfriend was not ready to change his top loyalty from friends to her. For instance, after a year of dating, he had agreed to go to her birthday dinner with her family (makes sense), but he ended up dropping off some beef jerky he bought at a gas station on his way over (classy), and then took off to go camping with his buddies (heartwarming). To quote her, "It's a good thing it was good jerky." To quote me, "It's a good thing you're not married and can dump him." Fortunately, she soon broke up with him (smart move), and she found someone better (not a challenge). Prioritizing your friends isn't a bad thing if you're not in a serious relationship (they were), you haven't said I love you (they did), and you're not ready to be a grownup (they thought they were). Regardless of how serious they actually were, he made her feel like dirt. Ironically, that's what he was. Thus, we need to properly prioritize our loyalties, and then do our best to not make anyone feel worthless... unless we're cool with being dumped and hated by everyone, she tells the story to because then anything goes.

- 9) ***Men can get distant:*** Men hate breaking up... but there's nothing wrong with encouraging our partner to do it because then it's her fault. In the book *Bro Code*, the authors suggest six options for dumping a girl in six words or less: "Maybe try a side salad instead." "Cute! You're growing a mustache, too!" "She looks like a younger you." "I will finance a boob job." "Sorry I threw out your shoes." "Your sister let me do that."^{iv} The goal here is to say something so dumb that it'll drive the girl away. Of course, this is more of a joke because guys hate conflict; we're more likely to get distant than cause conflict. The question when a guy is distant for more than a simple processing time is whether he's struggling with something in general or specifically his wife.

Bonus Section: If guys are loyal, why are some so slow to want to get married?

If you want to make a couple who isn't married yet feel awkward (and who doesn't?), ask them, "So why aren't you engaged yet?" It's a great way to see them squirm as they look for the most politically correct way of avoiding the truth. Depending how close you are will determine how big the lie will have to be. The odds are if you're close enough and it's the guy's fault, the girl will use this as a springboard to launch into a tirade against him, which can be a lot of fun to watch (yes, I have problems). This is the time to pull out the popcorn and enjoy the show as each comment leads you to being happier and happier you're not him. The truth is, if a couple has been dating a long time and not getting married, it's typically because the guy might be loyal, but the thought of being loyal to her for the rest of his life is so terrifying that he can't take that next step. This means he can tolerate her craziness one day at a time, but forever... whooooaaaaa. The other option is he's not ready to grow up. Either way, asking why aren't you engaged is a fantastic conversation starter unlike asking, "So when are you having kids?" because the answer to that question is often the sound of a soul dying, and even I'm not that mean.

Bonus Section Part 2: "If my partner is loyal, why is he leaving me?"

When I'm told a guy is leaving his wife guess what I ask: How much weight has she gained? That's a joke. That's never the reason for a *real* man. Guys in committed relationships aren't that superficial... before the relationship starts, sure, but after loyalty sets in, it doesn't matter. Instead, when a guy is leaving, I ask, "Who's the other woman?" When a guy is leaving his family, he is almost always being pushed to leave by another woman. The other options are he's a serious

turd she should never have married (super rare) or he's spent years listening to constant criticisms and seeing regular looks of disgust that crushed his soul and he snapped like the one man I met who went 17 years without sex. That's not an achievement I'd want... or recommend.

Tip: If a couple goes a month without sex they should drop everything and have sex. If they go two months, they should drop everything have sex and call a therapist. God gave us sex as a gage. If couples aren't having sex once every week to two weeks, something isn't right in the relationship that needs to be addressed. If you hit a year, your relationship is in serious trouble. If you go 17 years... well, you're screwed... and not in the fun way.

From my experience, neither option, whether another woman or his soul being crushed is necessarily better for saving a marriage because they're both terrible. It's hard to regrow the trust needed for the soul to return, especially when the woman will also have her own hurts to address. And if there's another woman... ouch. The couple will first need the wife to be willing to have the husband back – not easy. Second, the guy will have work at healing the marriage without the support his affair partner gave him while also grieving that lost relationship because it's still a breakup – also not easy. And while going through grief, he'll have to hide his sadness from his wife because she'll have no patience for his pining after the other woman – obviously.

Getting caught having an affair leaves the cheater with two main options: Do I leave what makes me feel good and face the pain and repercussions for my decisions with hope that it'll be better in the future (and there's a good chance it will be better if both parties are willing to work on it) or do I enjoy this high while I can even though everything will soon fall apart and I'll be left having lost everything I previously valued. Neither path is easy, but there's only one option for someone with integrity and who wants a better future.

The big thing couples need to understand is ***affairs don't happen in healthy and happy relationships; they start when something is broken, and that broken part is its own damaging force that needs to be addressed.*** That means not only does the one cheated on need to find healing for this specific situation, the relationship as a whole, needs to find a way to heal and improve on the original reason the person was able to willingly get into an affair in order to help that person heal and prevent it from being at risk of happening again. If either person isn't able to find healing, the relationship is most likely going to end. The question is whether it'll be a year or fifteen. Resentment can become emotional cancer.

Tip: If the person having an affair has kids of the opposite gender (e.g. a dad who has a daughter), those kids often feel like the parent is cheating on them. In their mind it's like, "If you loved me, you wouldn't need to have an affair because I'd be enough for you." Of course, when you're blinded by hormones, even good people become selfish and blind to the pain they're going to eventually cause when their actions are found out.

Chapter 6:

The Importance of Training

I realized I have no pickup lines left. I mean, I don't need them. Everything's fine, but even if I did, I've been so *trained* as a husband I got nothing. If my wife left me tomorrow, I'd just be stumbling up to women at bars, "So... uh... I noticed you sitting there by yourself, and... uh... thought you might have a list of chores and errands you wanted me to do." "It's gonna be a beautiful day tomorrow; thought maybe I'd take out the convertible and swing by your place... and take your mom to Target. You like? You like? Then she can [complain] about your dad and yell at me if I agree with her.

Dana Gould

I once saw a young lady in high school tap on her desk and her boyfriend suddenly appeared asking what she wanted. That's not the kind of training I mean. Being whipped like this is more of a master and servant dynamic. The training I mean is part of a complete relationship. It's more about helping the guy understand the woman's expectations. To better understand what I mean, let's first look at dogs. A dog is always pretty much a dog. There are different kinds of dogs, but you typically know what you're getting. Some are a little smarter while

some are a little dumber. Some are a little slobberier while others are really slobberier. The only real difference with dogs is how well they've been trained. The same goes with men. How well we've been trained plays a major factor in who we are and who we can become (and how slobbery we are). At the same time, every dog and man has a limit of what he can be trained to do, which connects back to there being different kinds of dogs and men like we discussed earlier. For instance, no matter how much training I have, I will never be good with computers while my one friend looked at one as a toddler and was like, "That's the missing part of my body; we are meant to be one."

When I say a dog needs training, this is everything from training him to go outside to do his business, to not jump up on visitors, and to leading the blind. Training essentially means the owner teaches the dog how to behave the way the owner wants. ***A dog naturally acts the way he wants unless he's otherwise taught.*** For instance, a dog has no guilt humping your leg unless he's taught not to do it; it feels good, so he does it. Similarly, a guy would have no guilt groping random women unless he's taught not to do it like the non-English speaking, elderly guy at the retirement home my Nana was at nicknamed Gropey (he was not Snow White's forgotten dwarf). He was either never trained to follow this rule (doubtful) or he figured he's so old he can get away with not following it (likely). It was amazing how he never got slapped when he clearly deserved it. If guys need this kind of training, does that mean we're pigs? No, (although Gropey was) it just means we wouldn't really care if a woman randomly groped us. Do to others as you would want them to do to you, right? ***The benefit of training is men learn to suppress certain urges that make others uncomfortable like using curtains as a Kleenex.*** Dogs need training to fit into societal norms, and the same goes for men. We may not think we need training, but women say we do, so we go along with it. We're generally happy being unrefined and a little crude, but we change in order to appeal to women. ***Do women need to be trained? No, because they're the ones making the rules*** (that seems fair). Guys aren't the ones saying you can't wear white after Labor Day, stripes with stripes, or floral at any time unless you're an elderly woman's couch. Similarly, dogs aren't the ones wanting to go outside to go to the bathroom. People are the ones telling them they should. Ever see a puppy being sold in a pet store (i.e. back in the 80s)? The floor was grated because he went whenever and wherever he wanted. He was quite content living that way. Thus, he needed to be trained to live in a different manner in order to fit into normal society as dictated by people.

Note: You can argue that a dog “trains” his owner, but I’d say *the owner adapts and makes subtle changes to help life be easier and more enjoyable for herself.*

When I say women don’t need to be trained, I mean they are the ones making the social rules that men are fine without. Men are simple. For example, a bachelor apartment doesn’t need furniture or cutlery... or soap... or toilet paper. Men are generally less likely to be offended, less likely to stress about how their home looks to others (I like a clean house, but I don’t get stressed about it), and less likely to be worried about being formal. Rules guys naturally follow are essentially don’t spill my drink, don’t steal my stuff, and don’t be a jerk. Clothing wise, guys just prefer that others aren’t naked (at least the ugly ones... and other dudes). Guys don’t make rules like you need to wear a suit to a wedding: (guy) “Why do I need to wear a suit to a wedding that’s dry clean only? Oh right, because women made the rules.” A woman on the other hand: (woman) “Why do I need to dress up? Oh right, because I love it! What shoes will I wear? These are the most uncomfortable, so they’re perfect.” Not having the same type of rule mindset as women doesn’t mean we’re stupid; it just means we’re different. A foolish thing for a woman to do is talk down to her man for not caring about the rules like she does, and a foolish thing for a man is to wear track pants to a wedding even though it’d be way more comfortable.

According to humans, dogs need training. Dogs don’t think they do. They’re quite happy the way they are. According to women, guys need training. Guys don’t think they do. They’re quite happy the way they are. Dogs are loveable creatures who enjoy having fun and who don’t understand personal boundaries and social norms unless they’re taught. This is like guys. A dog will jump up on you and lick you (hopefully not like a guy). And why do dogs do this? Because dogs follow the desires of their heart unless they’ve been otherwise trained. They’re not purposely trying to be rude when they smell your crotch; they just don’t understand that this behavior is considered inappropriate by people. Why would they? They greet dogs this way, so it makes sense to do that with us. Fortunately, what makes dogs “smart” is their willingness to follow our rules. They may not naturally act “appropriately”, but they can learn. Guys are also willing to be trained... sometimes. Sometimes the new rules seem too dumb to bother. There’s also a chance we’re in a “screw you” mentality or we’re just really comfortable the way things are. ***The best time for training is at the beginning of a relationship.*** It’s no different than being at a job. When you start, new rules

are fine. If you've been there twenty-five years, however, new rules are incredibly annoying and cause a lot of complaining.

Thought: Women celebrate statements like, "Follow the desires of your heart," but they hate it when a guy does it: (woman) "Why would you do that?" (guy) "I'm following the desires of my heart." (woman) "Well, stop it. It's stupid!" It's almost as if some women resent or get jealous of guys who are more naturally carefree and relaxed.

One author notes: "Dogs work, train, and become good companions when the rules are clear."^v Notice it says, "...when the rules are clear." This is very important for both dogs and guys. We like things simple and clear. **Rules are good if they help make life better.** Sometimes rules just make you seem pretentious and uptight. That's another one of the balances that need to be found. The rules need to make sense, and you can't go overboard because then you look bossy. This also points out the importance of communicating the rules. You can't say to a dog, "If you loved me, I wouldn't have to tell you what to do." This is the same for men. We need the rules to be simple and clearly articulated (and often said several times to help us remember).

One of the benefits of dogs is they're easygoing. When comedian Bill Engvall was asked what kind of bed his dog would like to sleep on at a dog hotel, he replied, "Concrete's good." An author of a cat book writes, "You can give a dog a new bed and tell [him] to go and sit there and [he] will do so without complaint."^{vi} Dogs are more compliant and more trainable than cats, which is largely because cats are more independent. Dogs are happy following the leader.

Some dogs are more trainable than others like Labradors and German Shepherds who make great Seeing Eye dogs. Of course, it helps that they're also bigger. No matter how smart a Chihuahua is, he wouldn't make a good Seeing Eye dog: (blind owner with Chihuahua) "Did I drag you into the middle of the road again?" With the right guidance, Labs and German Shepherds can become a reliable worker. They just need someone to take the time to help them reach their potential. On the flipside, there are some dogs that are nearly impossible to train (like every dog I've owned). This can be because the dog needs a different form of training or it can simply be that the dog is too dumb. This is the same with guys. **Some guys offer a better foundation for training than others.** Some guys are too insecure, guarded, or frankly, too dumb/arrogant/rude to be trained very well. In my experience, **the best candidates for training are guys who have grown up with a healthy female influence.** For instance, my brother and I grew up with a mom

and sister who were very good at finding the balance between overbearing and passive, which means they've helped us be open to and appreciate following female direction. Even though we both came pretty well trained, our wives were still able to put their own stamp on us. Meanwhile, as a therapist, I've met my share of guys who have no use for their partner's training ideas or even accept that they might be part of the relationship's problems. In each of these cases there's always a connection to the guys having a female influence that's been either incredibly overbearing or nonexistent. These extremes leave the guy resentful of being told what to do or too arrogant to be open to listening. Unless the guy can become more emotionally pliable, this is the kind of guy women need to avoid because they won't be able to mold him into the partner, they need for a happy and satisfying relationship. Thus, when choosing a dog or guy, pick one that's willing to grow.

Regardless of how trainable a dog is, there are some things that can't be trained. For instance, you can't train your dog not to throw up if he gets motion sickness in the car. This, of course, points out the need to recognize the difference between what's trainable and what's not. This is the same for men. With men, some things are part of our inherent nature and other things have been trained by our parents, our environment, and our previous partners. For instance, with my first girlfriend I was allowed to work on my computer while watching TV beside her. My next girlfriend, nope. She retrained me. At the same time, she couldn't retrain me to like dance clubs because I can't be trained to *not* hate ridiculously loud music and crowded rooms bursting with dirt bags. Instead, she had to decide if this was a deal breaker or not.

When choosing a dog or guy, you'll want to consider the age factor because there are benefits and drawbacks to both puppy and older. For instance, puppies are much easier to train, but need a lot more work whereas older dogs come trained, but can have some habits you don't like. The good news is you can teach an old dog new tricks (para),^{viii} but it can take a lot more patience and work because the longer a habit's been in place the more engrained it'll be. For instance, a few years ago I planned on switching my breakfast of cereal for a smoothie. I even bought a Magic Bullet. Unfortunately, the Bullet lacked the magic needed for changing my routine. Even though I enjoyed smoothies it was easier to grab a bowl, cereal, milk, spoon, and brown sugar. That's right; I put brown sugar on my cereal like a grownup... who never grew up. After nights of trying to psych myself up for the next day's change of routine, I eventually gave up and settled on a cereal with a lot more fiber in it; you know, an old person cereal that's dryer and tastes worse (aka

cereal that needs more brown sugar). I may not have been able to switch the routine, but I could at least change the cereal (thanks to the brown sugar). This situation proves that older guys can change, but sometimes we need to be more selective with what kind of change that can happen.

At the same time, older guys can be fantastic because we can have previously trained habits that are beneficial. For instance, maybe they're amazing like me and they put their dishes in the dishwasher (not rocket science), they cut the grass (an excuse for alone time), and they will take out the trash without being reminded (like a woman). I do these things because of the great training I received from my mom, which was a huge benefit to my wife. I came well trained for marriage, so it was like my mom passed the baton to my wife rather than handing her a finished product.

This idea of new versus old dog mentality can be seen between the two main dating relationships I had. For the first one, I knew almost nothing about dating while for the second, I knew lots... that had to be retrained. When I started dating my first girlfriend, I was twenty-one. Yes, I started impressively young. I didn't start before that because I was so amazing the girls were intimidated (who doesn't love a teen guy decorated in acne, insecurity and shame?) This girl I started dating at twenty-one became the first girl I kissed (my apologies to her because I needed a lot of practice; I also give her my sincerest appreciation because that's what I got). She was the first to share a Valentines and Christmas with me (score for her since I was so eager to please). She was also the first girlfriend to *almost* have a relationship fight with me (we were both pushovers who hated conflict). She was also the first and only girl to break up with me (I was that amazing and/or lacked game). When she dumped me, being a man, I didn't cry... after three months of crying every day. All of these firsts meant we had a special connection (minus the breakup). It was a wonderful five years together, but there was a lot of learning going on. There have been many times I've thought back and wished I could have a do-over because learning involves a lot of mistakes, and that was the one thing I was really good at. That being noted, even though we had a special connection because of all the firsts, my next real girlfriend benefited because I was so well-trained. I was more confident and less defensive, which helped me get her in the first place. I was better at keeping our problems between us and not sharing with everyone around me, and I was much more understanding. Plus, by then I was a phenomenal kisser (I had a lot of practice). My wife basically got a really well-trained older dog... and that seriously confused her for quite awhile because she had only really dated puppies: (girlfriend) "You mean you're already trained to not

drink from the toilet?” Those weren’t her exact words (although I wouldn’t be surprised if her ex-boyfriends did that). As nice as it was to have a guy who was well house broken, it was disappointing for her because it felt like there wasn’t room for her to make her own mark... but that was soon proven wrong. Fast forward six years into the relationship, I finished my third Masters Degree and I wrote my first book, *Emotional Sex: Making Good Relationships Great* based on all the lessons I had learned while being with her. I may have been well trained, but I still had a lot to learn, especially since my first girlfriend was so passive. A major reason we broke up was because we were both so non-confrontational: ***You don’t resolve problems you never address.*** Back then I couldn’t understand why couples fought. That’s definitely changed. Now I know thanks to my wife who was my complete opposite. We were soooo different. How different? Soooo different with an emphasis on soooo. My wife grew up in the city using fancy three-ply toilet paper (yeah, that fancy) while I grew up in the country having to use single ply because we had a septic. She grew up in a family that was extremely social while I grew up being task-oriented. She was very fashionable while I wore a shirt I made that said, “Once you try Chad, everyone else is bad.” I think the biggest difference was she came from a very aggressive family who frequently yelled while I came from a passive family who hid from conflict no matter how much it hurt us. It was like I had been living in the desert and was suddenly thrown into the jungle. I was able to apply certain things from my first relationship, but in many ways, I was being completely retrained. Fortunately, I was still malleable enough to make this new relationship work while trained enough that I wasn’t being a total pushover. If I was twenty years older, I don’t think I could have handled such a drastic change, and if I was five years younger, I would’ve assumed it was all my fault and been pathetically whipped until I broke or she got bored with my pushoverness like she did with her exes. Despite our differences, there were enough important things in common for us to make the work in the relationship worthwhile, and most importantly, she was hot. Her hotness was a definite incentive to make it work (that’s my dumb, superficial side coming out). Not only was she hot, she was a younger model than my previous girlfriend (score). If you’re going to get your heart crushed in a breakup, it helps to have an upgrade.

Tip: When picking a dog or guy, remember that age will play a factor, and whatever you choose, you need to work with what you have and not resent him for what he is or is not. After all, if you chose him; that’s on you.

A Fun Moment: I did a ceremony for a bride who recommends all women go for much older guys like she did (fourteen years difference) because he wouldn't have the sexual energy to cheat. I'm not sure how valid that advice is, but when she said this the groom nodded wildly in agreement, which made me laugh.

Before we delve into tips for training a man, I want to reiterate the importance of choosing the right dog. When it comes to picking a dog, some women get one on a whim or out of loneliness while others buy one because they feel sorry for him, he looks good, or he “feels” right. These are all acceptable motivators, but they should all be backed up with an ability to handle the dog properly and the means to love and care for him the way *he* needs. For instance, having a husky when you live in an apartment is unfair to him because he needs space to run. The same goes with men. You shouldn't choose to be with a man if you can't handle his inherent traits or career. For instance, the late comedian, Greg Giraldo, talked about his wife hating that he was often on the road performing, but she met him as a comedian on the road. She was angry at him for doing what he was doing before he met her, which wasn't fair to him. It's like a guy I knew who dated a stripper he met while she was stripping (he was a classy guy). After a week of bragging about this girl, he became really angry at her for doing her job as he had become incredibly jealous with guys paying her to “dance” (he was also a genius). The problem was he didn't have a right to be upset because she was doing what she did when they met, especially when he was an idiot for wanting a serious relationship with a woman who made her living seducing men. Good or bad, some things are going to be there, and it's important we don't end up resenting our partners for them. I know people don't come with labels like items in a store, but that could really help. This is why in the first couple dates people need to amass a list of characteristics about each other to know if this is worth pursuing or not because if you should be breaking up, the sooner the better. For instance, I once met a girl who told me she said this statement to an ex: (girl) “We've dated a year and you didn't think to tell me that you collect your girlfriend's hair in jars?” People are funny/insane, aren't they? I still don't quite know how he collected it. Did he cut it when they weren't looking, rip it out when they were asleep, or did he pull it out of the shower drain? Lovely.

In the book *Breaking Bad Habits in Dogs* the author notes, “Too many people choose dogs that are unsuitable for their homes and lifestyles”^{viii} (underlines added). This statement can just as easily say, “Too many women choose men who are unsuitable for their homes and lifestyles.” When it comes to training a dog or

man, if you're choosing one to have in your life some options may appear attractive, but you should keep in mind the possible negative sides. Just like I pointed out the downside to guys being loyal; all qualities have their good and bad points. ***As a potential partner, you have the responsibility to choose what you can handle and what characteristics you think you can train into him:*** (Foolish woman) "You mean I went for you because you're a bad boy who hates being controlled, but you won't do everything I say? I am shocked! You are nothing like I thought you were."

Advice for Training

I'm sure many women are reading this section on training and thinking, "This is all well and good, but I want to know *how* to train him." I hear your imagined words and will answer... in a moment. First, I'd like to point out that training men is different than training dogs insofar that there isn't a formal training school to which you can take them. It's not like you can go to PetSmart where they have a training room. There's no "GuySmart" where you'll have a room full of guys with their partner holding their leash and an instructor calling out instructions like, "Pull his leash like this and lead him." The one thing that is very clear in the dog books I read is that no matter what type of dog you have or how old, it's better to reward good behavior than to punish bad. That doesn't mean you shouldn't correct bad behavior, but it does mean you need to be praising him more than you are correcting. If you're thinking, "But I have to correct him more than I can praise him because he's so bad," either you're too critical or you got yourself the wrong type of man. I should also point out that I'm not making claim to how you should train children, but I am saying that ***if you want to train a "grownup" partner you need to make sure he doesn't feel like he's inferior to you.*** That means you need to use the right rewards of praise and appreciation while doing your best to avoid nagging, belittling, yelling, or insulting him. After all, if you want him to move toward *your* standard you need to make it worthwhile – it's a lot easier being lazy.

Please Note: I've had a number of female clients say, "He should want to do what I want." My response to this is, "You're funny," which confuses them (that's fun to me). I then explain how guys are easygoing, drawn to laziness, and very routine based. If you want him to do something, even as simple as hold your hand, you need to train that. He's not thinking about it like you.

This means you need to be direct, “Now’s a good time to hold my hand,” or just grab his hand. If you want it, lead the way.

Suggestions for Training Men

All of these suggestions are Chad-approved. I can’t guarantee they’ll work for your man, but these are all tools that I accept when I’m being trained. Training your man will take some experimenting, but these provide a good starting point for things to try. Remember, any changes you’re going for should be like the minor alterations you’d make on a wedding dress. If you want too many alterations, there’s a point where you should be choosing a different dress.

Tip: It’s probably best not to tell your man that you’re “training” him. We may be like dogs, but we don’t like being outright told that we are a dog. It’d be like a guy telling a girl he’s staring at her chest when she’s not looking. People may assume something is true, but to hear it stated can be upsetting.

Tip for Men: I keep saying women shouldn’t go for the wrong type of guy, but it’s also up to the guy to look past a woman’s appearance and pick a good person. ***If he chose a picky partner, that’s as much his fault as it is hers.*** Make your life easier by finding someone who loves you for who you currently are and not what they think you can be.

Tip for Women: If a guy isn’t willing to work at improving, he might be going through his own issue, he’s tired of constantly feeling criticized, or he sucks.

- 1) **Offer Love:** Love is the greatest tool for change because if a guy feels loved by someone *he* loves, he’s more willing to do what she wants to make her happy. Ultimately, love is about helping people feel safe and cared about, which means ***saying, “I love you,” is a lot like saying, “I’ll be nice to you.”***
- 2) **Be Happy:** If our partner is always miserable, we’re not going to care about changing because we assume she’s going to continue being miserable regardless of what we do, and why do something wanting praise only to be disappointed? Seeing happiness is like visible hope and appreciation.

- 3) ***Celebrate Success:*** Dog owners say, “Good boy!” to celebrate a dog’s accomplishment. Find your guy’s equivalent, “You’re so great!” “That’s exciting!” or “I think my shirt’s falling off.”
- 4) ***Help Us Feel Accepted for How We Already Are:*** Change is often easiest when people, in general, feel loved the way they are. No one wants to feel like a house that’s a fixer-upper. Help the guy feel good enough and he’ll want to grow for you... that’s not an innuendo... or is it?
- 5) ***Admit Your Own Mistakes & Struggles:*** There’s nothing worse than feeling inferior to someone who is telling you to change: (jerk girl) “I’m so wonderful while you suck, so change.” (guy) “Huhn, I’m thinking you can shove it.” If you want a guy to change, make it clear that you are working on yourself as well. For instance, you can’t tell someone to diet while you’re eating a donut or tell someone to be nicer when you’re keying your neighbor’s car.
- 6) ***Remember You’re Not Our Master:*** You may have things you want to train a guy to do, but that doesn’t mean you’re always right. You are not the ruler of the world. ***You are the partner, not the parent;*** thus, we get a say as to what you can train us to do. We have to be a willing participant for it to work. We are your equal, so help us feel that way.
- 7) ***We’re Dumb, Not Stupid:*** Make sure you don’t cause your “trainee” to feel stupid. This is your partner. He is not incompetent or inferior; he has different standards. You chose him to be in your life, so help him feel that. If you give the impression you think you’re better than him, you’re going to get some backlash.
- 8) ***Environment:*** Training a guy should include the same environmental features you need for training a dog. As the authors of *Decoding Your Dog* writes, “First, the environment should be conducive to learning. That means no distractions – no squirrels outside the window, no loud music or other dogs barking. You should not be distracted either... For learning to take place, both you and your dog need a calm, focused environment.”^{ix} This, of course, means don’t try teaching a man when the game’s on, his buddies are over, or when he’s trying to solve another problem in his head because he’ll be distracted.
- 9) ***Timing:*** Following the importance of having an environment without distraction, pick the time of training carefully. Quite often the best time

to make a request is after a good meal or sex because the guy will be calmer and feel loved. That being said, you'll want to be careful not to do this every time: (girl) "You never want sex anymore." (guy) "I haven't finished my to-do list from the last time we had sex."

- 10) **Patience:** When training a dog or guy you need to be patient. You won't suddenly have the behavior you want. It takes time. Remember, part of the training experience is the journey you make together. In the movie *How to Train Your Dragon* (love that movie) the connection between the dragon and the rider takes time and discovery, which bonds the two characters and makes the experience all the more meaningful in the end. When it comes to breaking habits and routines, the trainer needs to remember that some things take more work, especially if a behavior has been in place for a long time.
- 11) **Train One Thing at a Time:** Don't fall into the trap of doing too much too quickly. Remember the previous suggestion of patience because too many rules can be overwhelming and discouraging. It's just like when you redecorate your house; it's easier if you focus on one room at a time.
- 12) **Timelines:** Having a timeline in place to guide change can reduce it feeling overwhelming. For example, you can ask something like, "For one week can you put your clothes in a hamper?" or, "For two weeks, can you focus on putting your dishes in the sink?" Giving change a short period of time can help the change feel doable, and then after he sees he can do the change you can discuss if he can do it for longer. I've found it helpful to have a calendar where I put my month goals on in order to know what the target is for that month. This can also be done for each day, week, or year. ***It's hard to be successful without clear and appropriate goals.***
- 13) **Know What You Want & Don't Change Your Mind:** It's exceedingly frustrating to change for someone you care about only to have her change her mind. Before you train something, make sure you really want it.
- 14) **Keep It Fair:** We tend to treat our partner the way we treat ourselves, and since women have a tendency to give themselves impossible standards to achieve, they need to be careful not to do the same to their man. Remember depending on a guy's job, he'll have limited energy and brain space for a lot of after work activities.

- 15) **Keep It Clear:** The goal needs to be clear, so your guy can know exactly what he's aiming to do. Writing down the goal encourages clarity and keeping it somewhere he can frequently see can help remind him, so you don't have to.
- 16) **Be Involved:** I knew a woman who couldn't get her husband to stop leaving things on the kitchen table no matter how many times she told him. Then one day she followed him into the kitchen and when he went to put his books down on the table, she directed him to put his stuff on another spot. ***He wasn't lazy or malicious; he was just following his routine and he needed help to break it in a nice way and help start a new routine.***
- 17) **Make a Deal:** While in my twenties, my mom decided she wanted the table by the front door kept clear of all my stuff like keys, gloves, and CDs (aw, the good old days). Instead of demanding I change this long-engrained behavior, she made me a deal. She said I would be allowed to have two comic day-calendars in the bathroom instead of one if I kept the table clear. It was very exciting for me. (I'm easy to please, which makes sense because I'm a guy). The big thing is this helped me feel respected and gave me an incentive to change. This also gave her something to take away if I didn't do my part.
- 18) **Make it a Competition:** Guys love competitions and are more likely to remember what you want when there's some type of challenge. It can be between the two of you or with another husband. Competition helps give the change a sense of purpose.
- 19) **Have Cues to Correct:** Simple gestures and noises that are agreed upon by the couple like clearing your throat or a certain touch can be a great way to point out if a behavior is problematic. Most wives have a dirty look they give their partner, but as a guy, those suck because it feels like a scolding parent. Having a signal in place is especially helpful when you're in public and we do something like carry a joke for too long or the conversation is becoming inappropriate. For instance, maybe a guy sees a bigger lady... sorry, I just pictured my partner's dirty look... he sees a puffy lady... an inflated lady... you know what I mean, and he says something like, "I was just reading a relationship book where the incredibly amazing author talks about having thighs so big they rub together in the heat he called chub rub. You must know what that's like." With a comment like

that a signal would be wise, and in this case, you might want to apologize for letting him out of his cage.

- 20) ***Flirt:*** Remember that thing you did when you first started dating? Yeah, there's a reason it won us over. It doesn't have to be as much as in the beginning, but be fun and have fun.
- 21) ***Keep it Fun:*** Training is a lot better for men when you're both having fun with it. Don't make it boring like school, and if you sound demanding, it'll end up in a standoff: (wife) "Here's your to-do list." (guy) "And here's my list of excuses." Try to make it something that leads to laughing and joking. Change can be stressful, but for every job that must be done there is an element of fun. You find the fun, and SNAP the job's a game! Sorry, that was a Mary Poppins moment. Joking and laughing can reduce the sense of being controlled and encourage a sense of safety to make mistakes. Just make sure the joking doesn't have a hidden message or jab feel to it.
- 22) ***Take Breaks from Training:*** Sometimes both the woman and the man need to take a break from training and simply enjoy each other the way they are. It's just like growing muscles; you need rest periods to grow properly.
- 23) ***Pair the thing you want with something positive:*** In the book *Decoding Your Dog* the author points out that to train your dog to do something he doesn't like you need to: "Pair the unsavory experience (such as teeth brushing) with something your dog really loves (such as chicken pieces), so he looks forward to the process." This takes "time, patience, a comfortable place to work with your dog, and, most important, some of your dog's favorite things – treats, toys, whatever he really loves."^x Training a man isn't much different. If you can pair, say going to church with sex after, he'll probably start liking church. If you pair going to the dentist with him having a hot hygienist work on him, he'll probably start to really like going to the dentist... although, I'm guessing you'll want something besides another woman to be his reward.
- 24) ***Have the Right Motivation:*** In the book *Breaking Bad Habits in Dogs* the author writes, "The motivation for your dog to learn is praise delivered in a pleasant tone of voice, pack behavior, food, and games."^{xi} This is no different with guys. We need the right motivation. Girls often try to change their guy with nagging and complaining, but those aren't the right

tools. If you want a guy to do something, learn how to praise him, get support from his buddies (if possible), and maybe bribe him with food and fun.

- 25) **Offer the Right Rewards:** Offering rewards for good behavior is tricky because you'll have to find the right rewards for the right behaviors. For instance, you can consider something like "You were so great this week I wanted to make you your favorite meal," or say, "Good game," and slap his butt like a football player. Find what works for you as a couple.
- 26) **Encourage:** Encouraging words include: "I believe in you," "You can do it," and "Yes, yes, yes, yes," which is great when you check to see he got everything on the grocery list. (I'm sure that's where you thought I was going with that.)
- 27) **Experiment:** Every man is different. Some training tools will be transferable from one to another, but experiment to see what works for your guy. It can be helpful to ask other women what helped them train their men, especially women with similar husbands and those who have been married thirty plus years with a happy relationship.
- 28) **Role Model:** Remember the Golden Rule: Do to others what you want them to do to you. For instance, if he's not holding your hand, he's likely offering you what he wants – space. If you want something; lead the way.
- 29) **Ask:** Sometimes it can be helpful to simply ask the guy a question like: "If I could change one behavior you do, what do you think it would be?" You might be surprised at his answer. You can then follow up with something like, "And what can I do to help you start doing that?"
- 30) **Don't Rub Our Nose in Our Mistakes:** Remember we're not actually dogs. When we make a mistake, don't rub our nose in the mess and expect us to respect you after. You can point out a mistake or remind us what you prefer, but be careful it's not said in a condescending way.
- 31) **Be Gentle rather than Harsh:** A harsh rebuke makes us get our back up. If you end up making your man defensive, back off and try again later with a new approach that helps him feel safer and more loved.
- 32) **Control Your Temper:** As the author of *Decoding Your Dog* notes, "It is very hard to keep your temper when a dog does not do what you ask. But you must remain calm and relaxed if you want a well-trained dog."^{xii} The

same goes for men. Yelling at us isn't motivation to do what you want... unless you're yelling at us to eat more dessert then maybe it'll help.

- 33) ***Sometimes We All Need a Kick in the Pants:*** Life can have a way of lighting a fire under our bums (e.g. you're going to die unless you quit smoking), but sometimes we need someone to help us get started. For instance, after my brother had been miserably single for awhile, my sister and I secretly signed him up on a dating website. I wouldn't say he was happy when he received an email confirming his registration: (brother) "What the heck is this? I'm going to kill Chad!" but he got over it... and that's how he met his wife. In this situation, my sister and I gave him a kick in the pants to do something, but you need to be careful with this kind of thing because sometimes it can be meddling and/or upsetting to the person you're trying to help. For instance, even though my sister helped me sign my brother up for a dating website, she didn't appreciate it when I did it for her Christmas present a few years later... but that was mostly because the guys on the site were garbage.
- 34) ***Request rather than Complain (the best route):*** Complaints feel like criticism, but a request is a sign of trust and faith. If you start: "Can I make a request?" How often does the other person respond like: "Screw you!" If you start by asking to make a request or for a favor, the other person can say yes or no, which gives them a level of equality. Be careful not to overdo it: (girl) "Can you do me a favor? Do this list of 100 things I wrote out for you. What? It's just one favor." Asking permission helps the other person feel respected and sets them up to be ready to pay attention. That's when you ask: "Can you do (what you want) instead of (thing he does)?" That's it. It's one sentence. It's not a conversation or a need to say: "We need to talk." And if he forgets your request, you simply ask something like "Did you forget I asked you to (request) or are you trying to break a habit and need some help remembering?"
- 35) ***Ask for Requests in Return:*** If you're going to ask to make a request to change something you need to be willing to change something about yourself or be okay being a hypocrite (hypocrites are like hippos criticizing people for being fat). Of course, if you ask a guy what he wants, he might assume it's a trap and he'll avoid being honest. Probably the best move is to guess what he'd want you to change: "If you could change something about me, I'm guessing you'd want _____," or "For my New Year's resolution this year I'm thinking of _____. What do you think?"

Training Issues

Since we're talking about training, here's an important point: ***Don't set yourself up for failure.*** Ladies, make life easier on yourself and don't be in a relationship with a guy with a history of a lack of self control. If you don't like strip clubs, don't date a guy with a membership to one. If you don't want a guy who might cheat on you, don't go for a married man (I'm demanding, I know). These points seem pretty obvious, but this last point happens shockingly often. Remember, for everyone who cheats, someone was willing to cheat with them. If a relationship starts as an affair (a stupid choice), there will be a permanent trust problem in this new relationship (thank you karma).

To go a step further: ***Don't set yourself up to be tempted.*** There's a reason why there's the phrase "Pride comes before the fall." Most affairs started with someone saying, "I would never actually do anything bad." A lot of good people have put themselves in very foolish positions because they didn't think they could be tempted, but that's pride. ***We're all capable of all kinds of evil.*** Anyone who doesn't think they can have an affair is very foolish, which is why we need safeguards in place to protect us from ourselves. This is especially important when there are women who are power hungry wenches who go for men in power positions even when they're married.

I think the stupidest rule is public schools not having a dress code because "girls shouldn't be ashamed of their bodies." ***Rules are meant to protect everyone from others and themselves.*** A dress code is meant to protect girls from being tempted to be cheap with their bodies because it gives them a taste of power (i.e. the wrong kind of power). ***You can't receive respect if you don't present yourself in a respectable way.*** Real power is found in accomplishments, integrity, and kindness. A dress code also protects the girls who feel inadequate against the more confident girls who act overly sexualized. It also protects the guys from being extra dumb: (teacher) "What's the formula for this experiment?" (boy) "Tiny skirts plus thongs equals sexy... I mean belly ring plus nice abs... I mean..." If a guy has a choice of focusing on cleavage or calculus... yeah, not a hard decision. Hormones make everyone dumb. If you combine that with teen boys who are already dumb from a lack of life experience, you get some serious dumbness. We need to protect young people from themselves: (principal) "The new rule is if you don't want your mom to wear something because it's too sexual, you can't wear it either. And if your mom is a sleazebag like Jen's mom, ask yourself if you'd be okay seeing your dad wearing it." (This statement also proves

why I'm not a principal). ***Girls can be a huge motivator for guys to work harder, but they can also be a huge distraction. Ultimately, we are all responsible for our own actions, but we need to help each other not be set up for failure, especially young people.***

I should point out that Western culture tends to be sex obsessed. ***On one hand sex is a wonderful gift that should be enjoyed in a responsible way to prevent unnecessary trauma or unwanted pregnancies. On the other, it's just sex.*** We won't die without it, but people have made it this ultimate experience. They'll even justify affairs for it: (foolish cheater) "I deserve to be happy and be close to this person because my spouse doesn't meet my emotional needs." That kind of selfish reasoning makes me so angry. ***Someone else's bad behavior doesn't justify ours. A good person does good things. They don't use "good" excuses for being bad.***

When you walk a dog there are two guarantees: He's going to mark his territory and he's going to get excited if he sees the right creature. Just because he gets excited seeing a human, a squirrel, or another dog doesn't mean your dog loves you less. It's the same with men. We may get excited to see a certain "creature" (aka a hot woman), but that doesn't mean we love you any less. That being said, there needs to be an understanding between the couple as to what is acceptable and what is unfair displays of excitement. A man shouldn't be expected to pretend another woman isn't beautiful or be terrified his partner will think he looked at her, but at the same time, he also needs to be trained to know what won't hurt his partner. Sometimes a guy can get away with thinking another woman is attractive because he's so good at helping his own partner feel safe and loved. I'm lucky enough to have a wife who is equally comfortable as me to point out if someone is attractive or not (a fact is a fact)... although she has terrible taste in women: (wife) "She's pretty." (me) "For a 4." (No offense to fours.) (me) "Wow, that dad is ripped!" (wife) "Yeah, but I bet he's always at the gym and never home with his family." (me) "That sounds like a win-win to me." Other times, it doesn't matter what is said or done because the partner needs to work on their own self-esteem: (wife) "You think she's more attractive than me, don't you?" (guy) "Yeah, but I've never gone for looks. I needed someone like you who was desperate enough to go for me."

Ultimately, a good dog is taught to suppress certain desires, which is the same for men. ***Just because you want to do something doesn't mean you should.*** It's just like the idea of having to go to the bathroom. You may have to go really,

really badly, but that doesn't mean you start peeing where you are (unless you insert a catheter... although, that's a not a comfortable option). You need to suppress the urge until you can find a bathroom. Some actions need to be suppressed until later, and some thoughts need to be kept to yourself... unless it's in a book and then you can say whatever (I may have that wrong).

The truth is how sexual a man is allowed to be is based on his environment. I quickly learned this when I was nineteen and in London, England. On the first day I picked up a newspaper and I responded like the pent-up teenager I was: (me) "These girls are topless!?! England newspapers are awesome!" Of course, being from North America there are guys from more conservative countries who will come here and be just as shocked at what we show in our newspapers: (man with conservative cultural background) "These girls are in their underwear? And there are two pieces! I love Walmart ads!" On that same trip, I ended up in Switzerland, and one night I was walking down a busy street with two beautiful young ladies (it was a good night for me). They would've described me as, "The nice guy I could never date," but whatever, I was single and two hot girls were hanging out with me. We ended up passing a cafe with tables and chairs beside the sidewalk where an older man with a strange accent was sitting with friends. As we walked by, he grabbed the one girl's arm and pulled her onto his lap. I assume she didn't appreciate that as demonstrated by her swearing profusely at him. She quickly pushed herself off and we walked away. She was upset because he was so forward. The other girl was upset he didn't choose her, and I was upset because this guy must have figured she wasn't my girlfriend... she wasn't, but that's pretty presumptuous. I don't know if this lap introduction was a European thing or if this guy was like Gropey, the pervert I mentioned earlier from my Nana's retirement home. I do know that I was very Canadian and spent the rest of the night apologizing to her. I should've responded better than with stunned silence: (me in the moment thinking) "Is that where the term 'picking up' came from? I'm so clever... Oh shoot; I should say something to him... nope; I got nothing. And I think I guaranteed me being single for a while longer." Maybe that guy in Switzerland was following the Golden Rule of "Do to others as you would have them do unto you" because he wanted girls to pull him on their lap, but that was a breach of personal boundaries. Another breach is saying anything overtly sexual to the person like: (guy who thinks rhyming is sexy) "With you, I'd have sex in a zoo. It'd be fun to do, especially riding a kangaroo." I'm guessing no one's used this exact line, but now that I've written it, I am curious to know how girls would respond: (girl) "I'm offended, but riding a kangaroo? That's adorable."

The whole idea of objectifying as bad can be hard for a guy to understand because I grew up dreaming about being objectified for my looks. I wanted to be able to bend over and have girls check out my butt. If this made them happy, I'd randomly bend over all the time: "You're welcome... and you're welcome... and you're welcome." Even now I'd love to walk down the street to women whistling and saying comments about how sexy I am. That'd be awesome. I know most women don't appreciate guys catcalling and there's a line of being rude, but I'm guessing it can suck hearing nothing: (in girl's mind) "Are they not making comments about me because they're respectful or am I too ugly? I knew I should've worn my other shoes." I know it's hard being a guy and not having catcalls: (guy's mind) "Are they not making comments about me because they're respectful or am I too ugly? Oh right, I'm a dude who's not rich, so I'm invisible unless I catcall to a girl... or somehow fall flat on my face. That gets attention too." With catcalling, at least you know what the guys are thinking. Of course, acknowledgement should be tasteful like a friendly greeting, a nod of the head, a smile, or even a simple "Wow." Going beyond this is rude... at least to a woman. To a man, you can say way more than that and he'll love it: (woman) "Shake those buns, hun." (me) "You got it." (another woman) "That's some sweet junk in your trunk." (me) "That's because I like chocolate chip cookies and skipping leg day."

Tip: Movies have taught me to never trust a hot woman who wants to sleep with you. She's either going to rob you, she's a prostitute who will want to be paid, or she's a spy for your wife.

Listening to the Ricki Lake biography (I like biographies) I learned there is something even worse than hearing or not hearing catcalls. When she was an overweight teenager, she described how construction workers would moo at her. Ouch. Those guys deserved a good jackhammer accident. Nothing fatal, but maybe losing a few teeth is fair. What's even worse is when she said they mooed, I laughed. Apparently, I'm a horrible person, too. I wouldn't say I laughed because I thought it was funny as much as it shocked me... and in my head I pictured her turning to the guy, taking a moment to glare at him, and with a clear voice saying, "Oink, oink," and then walking away with confidence. She would've earned their respect while also giving the underlying message: "You don't have power over me."

The line of appropriate and not can be confusing. I love the conversation between Allan Short and Denny Krane from *Boston Legal*.

Short: (sad) I am sexist. When I see a woman my first thoughts are sexual. It's not that I don't respect her intelligence. It's not that I wouldn't want a woman to be President. There is a part of me that sees a woman as a big human mitten perfectly designed to keep my cockles warm at night.

Krane: (laughing) Oh Allen. It's cultural. It's biological, and it's fun. There are many ways men go dead as they age. The one way is they start incorporating all of the learned politically correct behavior and thoughts into who they are and, in the process, they deny what they are.

Short: What are we?

Krane: Animals. These evolved men talk to each other about politics and kids and education. They talk about anything and everything, but are profoundly lonely. Why? Because they are ashamed to share their most base instinct. Embrace your inner wolf.

This leads to the question: Can you respect women and want to sleep with them? Absolutely. I respect my wife and want to sleep with her. She'd be hurt if I didn't. Of course, Short isn't talking about his wife, which starts getting into a gray area because do you want to sleep with this person because you see her as somehow inferior (e.g. like she's a sex toy), superior (i.e. a grand prize), or do you see this person as an equal? Seeing someone as an equal means she is someone you want to please and from whom you'll accept pleasure.

What's interesting is if you flip the original question: Can you respect a man and want to have sex with him? My guess is it's easier to answer yes: (guy) "You want to sleep with me and you respect me? You had me at 'sleep with me.'" Logically, if it's okay for one, it makes sense it's okay for the other... unless you believe in having a double standard.

Considering Short's discussion, we should be able to acknowledge beauty without needing to assert power over it. For instance, if you see a beautiful painting I'm assuming you don't need to have sex with it... otherwise there'd be a lot higher security at the Louvre. The same thing should be with people. We should be able to acknowledge someone's beauty without needing to have sex with them. This becomes important because how we choose to look at someone will affect how we look at people in the future. A number of years ago I was walking by a group of teenage guys and I heard one say, "I'd tap that." No, he wasn't saying this about me... and no, I wasn't disappointed. This comment was directed towards a girl

nearby. In case you haven't heard this phrase before, "I'd tap that" is saying you'd have sex with the person. It has nothing to do with a cult ritual: (cult leader) "At Club Woodpecker we greet one another by tapping our noses on each other's shoulders." What was strange to me was the guy said this inappropriate comment like it was the ultimate compliment every girl longs to hear: (guy) "I'd tap that." (girl) "Would you really? You think I'm tap-able? This is the greatest day of my life! All of my hard work has finally been recognized. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my parents and everyone who ever believed in me unlike Jennie. Hey Jennie, you said no guy would want to use me for my body, but I proved you wrong! Take that (gives hair flick to show attitude)!" Ultimately, the whole concept of this statement is stupid because single, teenage guys aren't known for hating sex or even being picky: (guy kissing random girl) "Don't worry when I tell my friends about this, I'll make you sound way hotter." Thus, this guy saying he'll have sex with a girl is redundant because it's basically saying, "I'll treat you in the normal way I want to treat all hot girls my age because I'm a jerk." Maybe if the guy changed the context a bit it would make more sense. For instance, maybe if he said, "She really loves eating her boogers, but I'd tap that." In this case it's bordering a compliment because despite her obvious flaw (I hope you thought that was a flaw), he's still willing to use her. The only exception to this idea is if someone like Ryan Reynolds said, "I'd tap that," because he's a rich, Hollywood celebrity who can sleep with pretty much anyone he wants. If he said "I'd tap that" about my wife I'd be thrilled, "Yeah, I have a girl hot enough the Reynolds would want to sleep with her. I'm the man... but it's never happening." And if he said this about me? Still a compliment... a very weird compliment I wouldn't follow up on, but I'd happily accept... the compliment; not the offer.

If a guy really wants to show he's attracted to a girl, what he should be saying is a statement like, "She's so special I'd wait for marriage to have sex with her." Now that would be special. A guy saying he'd have sex is like saying, "I eat food." It's normal. Maybe if people were like the praying mantis where having sex means the guy dies then saying he'd have sex with her would be a compliment because he's saying she can bite his head off if she'll have sex first. That's pretty intense. He's saying, "I'd die for you." That's even a little romantic... and yes, I'm thinking of Bryan Adams's song right now too: "Yeah, I would fight for you. I'd lie for you. Walk the wire for you, yeah." Come on; sing it with me: "You know it's true: Everything I do, ohhhhh, I do it for you..." Love that song! If you're under thirty-five, Google *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* where it's on the soundtrack; both are amazing... unless you're my wife, but she has terrible taste... in music and movies;

not men. She has great taste in men as evidenced by her liking Ryan Reynolds as well.

One of the problems with saying something derogatory like “I’d tap that” is it will likely lead to the guy thinking this way more in the future – not helpful to anyone. Of course, if it’s just with his friends it’s acceptable. It makes him sound like a knuckle dragger, but at least he’s being true to his real self. That being said, it’s important that he’s trained to know the difference between talking to his buddies versus talking with the general public. He should know the difference of when this is inappropriate but acceptable versus completely inappropriate and not acceptable. Can you imagine this guy saying to the girl’s father: “Sir, I just want to say your daughter... I’d so tap that.” (father) “That’s fantastic. I’m so glad you consider the child I love to be a sexual object you would use for your own selfish desires.” I’m guessing the father’s response will more likely involve a fist and a swing towards the guy’s face. Why? Because some behaviors are acceptable between guys. This guy needs to know the difference because if he was MC at a wedding, he wouldn’t want to introduce the bride as someone so beautiful, he’d “tap that...” although, that’d be hilarious... to messed up people like me. The truth is, guys need to be trained to know what is acceptable based on their audience. This means even if the partner is okay with overtly sexual comments in private, these won’t be appropriate around others like at a baby baptism: (priest) “There’s no greater love than to lay one’s life for another.” (rude guy sitting with partner) “I’d lay my life down to have sex with you my little praying mantis... You know it’s true; Everything I do, oooh, I do it for you...” (priest) “That’s not what the verse means... and you may want to learn how to whisper.”

I had a young lady in high school tell me that her boyfriend would say “I’d tap that” about other girls in front of her and then he’d be angry at her for being hurt: (dumb boy) “What? I’m being honest!” As a dad, if I was allowed, “I’d knock that” in a non criminal way because that’s extremely inappropriate/mean/dumb. The problem is he hasn’t been trained, which is why I’m thinking a good “I’d knock that” would be a helpful option. Remember, just because a dog doesn’t think he needs training doesn’t mean he’s right. In this situation, this young lady would’ve been better off finding a new partner because he needed more than a few rough edges smoothed out.

An even dumber phrase I’ve heard guys say is “I’d do her so hard.” What does that even mean? It sounds painful for her. It’s definitely not loving or romantic: (girl) “Um, I’d rather you ‘do’ me like you care about me.” By “hard” he could

mean he's putting more energy into it: (guy) "She's hot, so I'd do her hard. That girl's okay, so I'd do her half-heartedly. And her? We can nap together." It'd kind of be like a grading system where how hot a girl is will determine how good the guy will try to be at sex for her: (girl) "I guess you think I'm ugly because that was terrible." (guy) "That was my 'A' game." If a guy uses "I'd do her so hard" as a way to say the girl is super hot then what he's really saying is: (guy) "With her, I'd finish so fast." Although, I can't imagine a guy bragging like this. It'd be hilarious, but not overly flattering: (guy) "That girl is a 10... I'd be done in *10 seconds*." (buddies) "Ohhhhhh, that's hot!" For most guys, if they were honest, what they should be saying is, "She's so hot... I don't have a chance." Presently, now that I understand how guys exaggerate their abilities, if I hear a guy use "I'd do her so hard," all I hear is, "She's so hot, I bet her expectations of a man are way beyond what I can provide, but I'll say, 'I'd do her hard' to hide my inadequacy." What's misleading is normal men aren't as sexually aggressive as this statement suggests. They're not angry gorillas trying to assert dominance (although they might lose to a gorilla in a test of manners if they talk like this). There's a good chance this is simply an expression they've heard others use and they think it makes them sound manly. Whatever the reason, this isn't an expression of someone using their brain to its full intellectual capacity. In the movie *Funny People*, Seth Rogan's character does a stand-up bit that further expresses this idea. Don't worry, I've cleaned it up:

My friends are very sexually aggressive, which is hard for me, you know, to watch television and just see a hot girl come on and be like "Man I want to [boink] the [stuffing] out of that girl, man. I'd [boink] her so good." I can't even pretend that I'd say that. If I was honest, I'd be like "Man, I would friend the [crap] out of her; I'd friend her all night. I would be her girlfriend. I would drive her to the airport, man; I would hold her purse while she shopped. I would respect her as a person, man. Screw equal rights; I'm treating her like a princess." (paraphrased... and in my opinion, improved)

The truth is real men want love more than sex; we prefer both, but ultimately, we want to feel loved by the person we love. If men were given the choice of limited sex with a loving partner, or lots of loveless sex with an uncaring partner? The answer is easy. Granted, some men who are in loving relationships with limited sex may take a moment to consider this other option, but in the end, ***real men will choose love.*** Just like a lonely teenage boy, men can

find alternatives for sex with our partner. What you can't find alternatives for, however, is love. ***We need love; we don't need sex. Of course, sex can help us feel loved, so it's still valuable.*** Sure, sex is an urge that wants to be satisfied like eating and sleeping, but our lives are more than sex. Men will use sex as medicine for loneliness or to relieve hormone build up, but as a gender, we're not as sexually obsessed as it's often joked. Sure, we have moments, and some guys have more moments than others. Some guys even go a little crazy during those moments (for some reason Hugh Grant comes to mind) but it's not the life goal of a *real* man like a lot of comedy writers portray. Sex isn't our life goal, but it's what we hope to have in a loving relationship. In the words of Tim McGraw, "We like it; we love it; we want some more of it."

Tip: Men are initially trained by their parents, siblings, and friends. If you don't like how these influences treat women, be careful because there's a good chance your man isn't far off.

If Allan Short from the earlier dialogue was a real person, I wonder if being married to a woman for a few years would change his sex drive: (Short, if married) "So I can either have sex with you right now or continue watching TV? (Pause) It has been a long day... tomorrow?" Married people get this line and have probably experienced it. ***Sex drive changes for people in a long-term relationship.*** Comedian Daniel Tosh puts it in an interesting way (as he always does):

I blame Hollywood for ruining every relationship I've ever been in... Everyone's aware of the liberal media bias in the news, but what about the way they portray couples in every sitcom when there's a dumb husband chasing his wife around the whole episode like (dumb guy voice) "I want to have sex," but she's never in the mood. They just hammer that stereotype home that men always want to have sex and women never do. Let's get this out of the way right now. Women want to have sex way more often than men (audience cheers in the background). I assure you ladies this is not the perspective you're going to enjoy. I don't know if you're new to my comedy or not... but I have a very specific gender slant that I ride pretty hard. Because the reality is whether you want to admit it or not, no man has ever loved you more or been more physically attracted to you than the first time he had sex with you. And from that moment it goes down. Now don't look at him right now and make the evening uncomfortable: (girl voice) "Is that true? And he has to be all like:

(tough guy voice) “No, I’m pretty sure he’s gay. I don’t care what he says.” It’s true 100% of the time. How fast it dives is case by case. It doesn’t have to fall off a cliff immediately; we’ve all been there when it does. Can you be happily married for 50 years? Of course you can, but know that for him, every time you have sex, it goes down a notch. Men die ten years earlier because we [frig’n] want to. Don’t make him feel inadequate. Don’t challenge his drive: (girl voice) “I’m with the only guy in the world who doesn’t want to have sex all the time.” Uh, no you’re not. When I’m in a relationship, I can go two to three weeks without thinking about sex. When I’m single, I need to masturbate twice a day before I step outside or I will sexually assault someone. I assure you his drive is fine; it’s the product that’s sour. Is that too harsh? And I know what your response should be: “Maybe you shouldn’t be in a relationship if that’s how you feel,” but that’s not how I’m wired. I like to be in a relationship... at first. I won’t cheat on you and I won’t break up... so every time I fall in love, I’m like [frig] here goes three years of my life.

As Tosh so eloquently points out, a man’s hormones settle down when in a long-term relationship... and I think most women are grateful for this: (wife) “Can’t you get a hobby? We’ve been together for twelve years and have five kids!” In fact, it’s not uncommon for the woman to eventually want sex more than the guy as she wants to feel connection while he wants to exert as little energy as possible because he’s tired (it’s very chivalrous). I’m also doing my best not to mention the fact that as wonderful as our partner is they’re not likely visually what they were when we first got together... shoot, I just wrote that... and not erasing it; apparently, I’m not afraid of death. Even if our partner ends up looking better as she gets older (not likely), our partner is no longer as mysterious (crazy isn’t the same as mysterious) and the connection isn’t as exciting like in the honeymoon phase. Instead, she’s familiar. Fortunately, the post honeymoon phase (aka the boring phase) is wonderful in a different way. I actually prefer it. I like the safety that comes with it. I’d rather someone I can share my heart with than someone who’s just about being physical. Yes, I’m lazy, but I’m old and married so I’ve earned it. (I’m a true gentleman.)

This would be a good time to consider the main reasons people want sex:

- 1) **Hormones:** This includes being visually turned on, curious, caught up in the moment, and simply blind to what the repercussions can be.

- 2) **Emotional Connection:** This can be the pursuit of feeling emotional connection or wanting to have sex because there's such a strong connection.
- 3) **Power:** Some people see sex as a way to feel empowered and/or to punish. This is arguably the unhealthiest reason for sex, and why sex should only be done between two equal parties.
- 4) **Weakness:** Some people have sex because they feel like they can't say no.
- 5) **Right Thing to Do:** As someone who has been married a long time, ***sometimes you have sex simply because it's the right thing to do, and then you're grateful you did.*** It's like working out. You don't "feel" like doing it, but you know it's good for you and there's a good feeling after. This is especially true when you have kids and you feel like doing nothing after they go to bed, but couples should be pushing themselves to have sex at least once every week to two weeks in order to maintain a healthy relationship.

Looking at this list where do you think most guys are? At the beginning of a relationship, number one is a huge factor, but in long term relationships, number five often takes over. Ladies, please know, ***a guy being less visually attracted to you after a year isn't an insult; it's love. He was originally drawn to you for your looks, but it's who you are as a person that's made him want to stay*** (that and you probably do his laundry). This change means the relationship has gone from superficial to meaningful. As comedian Christian Finnigan said:

The last time I screwed up my marriage was this last Christmas... I bought my wife a humidifier, which apparently makes me a dick. I was not aware of that. My wife got mad at me because I did not buy her any lingerie. Hear that people? Lingerie for Christmas? Like that's not going to start a fight. Let me tell you something your boyfriends and husbands will never tell you. If a man has been with the same woman for more than a calendar year, 90% of lingerie has no effect on him whatsoever because we know who you are at that point: "Woo, now your boobs have lace on them." That's just reality; that's the way it is. Yeah, and the 10% of lingerie that does still turn us on is probably pretty degrading. Maybe that's not the way you want to spend Jesus' birthday... What am I supposed to buy a naughty schoolgirl outfit? Like that's not supposed to start a daylong argument? "No sweetheart.

I'm not saying I want to have sex with younger women. I want to have sex with you; you know, just a younger version."

Guys can move from number one to number five, but they can flip back hard to number one... with someone else. No matter how uninterested a man is with sex in a long-term relationship, that interest will likely flip to overdrive if he ends up single again. This overdrive is a natural response that will inspire him to work at being at his best in order to attract a new relationship. When guys end up single, they typically start working out more (they want to look good) and buy a new truck (they want to feel manly). Of course, if he finds a new partner, this overdrive will quickly burn off and he'll return to his original drive. It should be made clear that in a good relationship (emphasis on good), a man's drive has little to do with the woman. Biologically a single guy has a stronger drive in order to have the motivation to work at impressing a woman and risk rejection. In fact, any decline in interest can sometimes be harder on the guy than the woman. It can make him feel inadequate and/or old, and if you add in his wife not being happy with him, you have a strong recipe for him feeling sad and/or incredibly defensive. If there is a low libido, single or not, it's always wise to have testosterone and stress levels checked, and to consider his nutrition, exercise, and sleeping patterns because all of these have an effect on a man's drive, especially as we age. It's also good to be aware that erectile dysfunction can be a sign of heart issues that should be addressed. The human body is impressively designed to give us warning signs.

Claiming a guy cares more about number one and five on my list isn't to say guys don't care about emotional connection; it just isn't sexually motivating. ***Romance is pleasant, but it's not sexy to a guy.*** Making a guy feel loved and special is great, but it's less likely to lead to sex with a guy because making him feel special and loved is what his mom did for him. I hope knowing this will make it easier to accept now: (guy) "You make me feel like my mom does. I'm so hot for you." (girl) "I don't know if I should say thank you or throw up." This can help him feel more confident, which can lead to him wanting more sex, but intimacy is typically more sexually appealing to women, and that's okay. ***Men and women are supposed to be different in order to help make our relationships stronger; my weakness is my wife's strength and vice versa.***

I should be clear that emotional connection may not be sexy, but it's still really important to a guy. For instance, in the books *Freakonomics* and John Crier's biography (he's from *Two and a Half Men*), both describe middle to upper class hookers saying that at the heart of their returning clients is to spend time talking

and to feel cared about. John Crier's original reason for talking to a prostitute was after his divorce (which ironically coincided with his character's situation); he was depressed, lonely, and he was friends with Charlie Sheen, which is a recipe for a bad life choice. Ultimately, this experience showed him that he cared more about the warmth of a woman's heart than her body. I find a lot of guys are drawn to talking to a woman that helps him feel safe, which means there isn't any defensiveness or judgement. I'm guessing talking to a prostitute is appealing because the guy won't be given a to-do list or have to face any nagging... unless that's the guy's thing, which I highly doubt: (guy with prostitute) "Can you give me a list of chores to do and keep reminding me to do them every five minutes. And can you say you have a headache? That reminds me of my late wife... I miss her so much."

From my experience, women care more about emotional connection than looks, but looks still matter. They just don't matter as much to her as the typical guy sex wise. When my wife and I started dating, she definitely cared about looks, but not nearly as much as me (that's how I got her). Now that we've been together almost twenty years, I'd say she cares more about looks than I do. I don't mean superficially because younger me had more of what women want visually (youthful skin and a back free of random hairs) and less of what a girl doesn't: (woman) "Those bags under your eyes remind me of shopping. That's soooo hot!" My wife worries about how I present myself to others because she's worried about being judged for not dressing me better. ***Women typically care more about how a guy looks for fear of being judged by other women.*** Guys are essentially an accessory like a purse... actually, we're more like mobile coat rack because we hold the purse when we're told: (guy) "I'm so glad I'm here to hold things for you... and that when we shop you have the listening skills of a guy watching sports, so I can say anything I want... I don't in case someone else hears it, but it's nice to have the option."

Women caring about emotional connection is why a lot of women say they want their partner to be their best friend, buuuuut no. If I was to get married again, my wife's not a candidate for my best man (that'd be weird). Growing up, my best friend was my buddy, not my lover (gross). The reality is there are some things our partner can't give us (e.g. space, silence, low expectations) and there are some things we don't want our best friend giving us (you have an imagination). There are also things a guy can't give his long-term partner (e.g. giddiness, the ability to talk for hours about nothing, expectations higher than a dog's). We all need a best friend who connects to us on our level, and more importantly, who doesn't live

with us, so we have someone to complain to about the person who does. My best friend is my best friend. My wife is my wife. She is part of me. As the Spice Girls sang (always a source of brilliance), “When two become one;” my wife and I are one. I’m not my own best friend (that’d be sad), just like my wife isn’t my best friend (also sad). My best friend is the person I go to in order to complain/make fun of my wife just like her best friend is the person she goes to in order to brag about how amazing I am.

Some guys say their wife is their best friend, but they’re either saying that to make their partner happy or it’s early in the relationship, which means they’re in the honeymoon phase (aka dork phase): (guy new to relationship) “I just want to spend all my time with her. I don’t need anyone else, and I’d give anything up for her. She is everything... and I’m a giant loser for thinking this way.” Sorry that last part just snuck in there. In the end, a woman should want her man to have friends because otherwise he’ll be clingy and never give her space.

Final Thought on This

Women have a very strong effect on men... at least if the men want to impress them. This power can fade as the relationship develops, but there’s always room for training when it’s done properly. The trick to proper training is to know how to balance acceptance for who he is and encouragement for who he can become. This means the best starting point is to be with a guy who is close to what you want, which makes the training like adjustments to a new outfit rather than trying to make an entirely new one out of an outfit that’s been botched.

The Importance of Praise

When training a dog, the most important thing to do is offer praise. As one author puts it, “When dogs, large or small, find a behavior to be rewarding, they will repeat that behavior again and again.”^{xiii} Being a logical animal, dogs follow the basic concept that good behavior should be rewarded, and praise is a great reward. Dogs respond really well to praise. They get excited when you cheerfully say things like: “Good boy!” and “Hoo-ga-booga-nooga.” This last phrase isn’t made of real words, but as long as you’re happy saying it, they’ll be excited to hear it: (dog) “She said hoo-ga-booga-nooga? Yes, she must be happy with me!” Men are just like dogs; we love praise too... although preferably with real words: (guy) “Hoo-ga-booga-nooga? Is she having a seizure?” Guys love hearing things like “Good boy” because we thrive on praise. One of the main reasons guys love their moms so much is because as a guy’s mom was/is likely his biggest fan. Mom’s will say things like: “You’re so strong,” and “You’re so smart.” Dads? Nope. Dads are more likely to say, “Be stronger!” “Be smarter!” This doesn’t mean one parent is better than the other – just different. In fact, this is often the ideal set up: (mother) “You fell off your bike and cut your knee. Let me put some disinfectant on it and kiss it better.” (father) “Get back on your bike and try again.” This is the perfect balance: ***One parent makes sure the children are safe while the other pushes them to keep going.*** Children need both “You can do it!” and “Go do it!”

When guys reach a certain age, the importance of a mom's praise typically takes a temporary hiatus as we're more concerned hearing girls our age cheer us on. Thus, boys join rock bands, strive to be the star athlete, try to stand out as the class genius or class clown, dress a little better, and even write poetry to impress a girl and hear her praises. Having a girl choose to praise us is a great accomplishment and makes us feel more like a man.

Tip: A guy will continue a certain behavior even without praise if he finds his own reward in it. The bad news for wives is not many guys are going to respond with enthusiasm for things like taking out the trash: (guy) "I love the smell of garbage! It's invigorating!" Unfortunately, it's more like: (guy) "Yeah, I'm just going to leave this because eventually when it's spilling over my wife will get so fed up she'll do it herself." I'd argue this isn't manipulation – manipulation takes effort. This is laziness and playing the system.

It should be noted that praise can take different forms. It can be words or actions. Praise can even appeal to more than our ears. Guys have five senses, so mix it up. For instance, praise can be a cake to celebrate something big (my mom did this). Praise can be a note in your lunch wishing you a great day (my mom also did this). It can be a strip tease (my mom never did this... for anyone; she's a saint whose children were delivered by a stork). Praise can be certain aromas like cooking with cinnamon (amazing) or if your guy is messed up and likes incense burning (weird). Praise can also be a massage or a sexual favor (best reserved for spouses and not work colleagues). Men are simple, but there are still ways to be creative.

Tip: Words of praise may not mean much to a guy if he's really hard on himself or if he was raised with insincere praise. They also don't mean much if he's given praise one minute and he's made to feel stupid the next. It's like saying, "You're good, but..." The "but" erases the compliment.

I've heard women complain, "Why do I need to praise my husband for something trivial like taking out the trash? I do stuff and never get praise for it." If this is true, yes, that sucks. Your guy should work on being more appreciative to you. People have a tendency to take family for granted while being more polite to strangers. Appreciation, however, is important because it encourages good behavior and lets the other person know we noticed the work they're doing. Saying "Why should I give praise when he doesn't?" is actually very childish. Just because your partner has a bad behavior doesn't mean you should follow his example. It means you need to role model and request he appreciate you and what

you're doing. If nothing else, you get to be proud of yourself for being appreciative and being the better person.

On the plus side, praising and saying thank you can really boost the health of a relationship. Even if it's something that has to be done like emptying the dishwasher, picking up groceries, paying the bills on time, or going to work, we should be saying thank you. There are five main reasons for this:

- 1) It helps your partner know that you notice what they're doing.
- 2) It helps you see the good in your partner and their value to the relationship.
- 3) It's the right thing to do. We tell children to say thank you, so maybe we should take our own advice.
- 4) It's excellent role modelling for others, especially children.
- 5) It encourages better behavior in the future, which helps us and the relationship.

If you want to increase the love in your relationship start praising and saying thank you more and mean it. Sarcasm won't help... or will it?

Tip: It can be beneficial to have a daily/weekly routine at bedtime where you both say thank you for one thing the other person did that day/week in order to encourage awareness of what the other did.

The reason guys need praise goes back to the idea of training: Women set the standards for things, so ***if you want a guy to continue doing what you want, you need to praise him.*** Guys typically don't care as much about things like cleanliness or decorating (or wearing pants), so we need encouragement to raise our standard closer to our woman's. Fortunately, ***by praising him now, he'll hopefully be better tomorrow and with any luck, you won't have to worry about asking him to do it again in the future; he'll just do it because it's the new routine.*** This includes putting dishes away, tidying up, doing the laundry, and anything else you care about more than him.

Everyone needs praise, but praise is especially important for men and dogs. As one author notes, "Dogs need incentives... They will offer a response many times for a reward but eventually will stop responding if there is no reward."^{xiv} People praise dogs for the smallest things: (owner) "You rolled over... you didn't eat your poop... you laid down... lied down... lane down... whatever the grammatical way of saying that is." We celebrate these things, but let's be honest, what they're doing

isn't that impressive. You're basically saying, "You did what you were told to do and you did it despite having a fraction of a brain!" What *is* impressive is the dog is listening and doing what you ask (for some men, this is way beyond their grasp). ***What you're appreciating when your dog does something you ask is the fact that he obeyed you.*** Men aren't much different: (wife) "You did the job I asked you to do? Wow, you're a fraction of a step ahead of the kids when it comes to doing work around the house." Remember, your man is likely fine with living with bad decorating, nasty furniture, and generally messier conditions. If you want him to be up to *your* standards, you need to give him a reason to obey *your* wants, and threats aren't wise... most of the time. Sometimes you gotta do what you gotta do (like use improper grammar to make a point).

Fun Aside: Comedian Dan Cummings has some playful advice: If you're going to threaten someone:

You can't be too serious, or realistic. Guys, right before your girl falls asleep you shouldn't lean over and whisper (in creepy voice) "I'm so much stronger than you. I hold the pillow down; you quietly slip away... sweet dreams." That's not fun; that's terrifying. If you make it much, much, much, much more violent you make it socially acceptable. "You're so annoying right now. I want to uppercut your head off of your body like two miles into the air and then wait for it to come down and then punt your face into the woods where a bear will catch, eat, and [defecate] your smug little grin..."

Ladies, that means don't say something like: (woman threatening) "When you're asleep I'm going to pluck out a handful of hair every night, so you'll think you're going bald." That's too realistic... and mean; don't mess with a guy's hair. (Wife threatening in a better way) "If you forget to pick up the groceries, I'm going to karate chop your arms off and then use them like nun chucks to smash the TV into tiny pieces and then sew your arms on your feet like skis." Actually, that's probably terrible advice, but I'm hoping you already figured that out. Who'd have thought a comedian like Dan Cummings who uses a lot of sarcasm would give bad relationship advice?

Ultimately, women should be willing to praise their man because... well, it works: ***Praise helps get you what you want.*** As the saying goes, "You catch more flies with honey than vinegar. After all, it doesn't have to be about him. It can be fully about *you* having an easier time getting what *you* want. Besides, you might really start to enjoy seeing him happy when you praise him. The reality is the happier

you seem, the happier he'll be, which means he's more likely to continue acting better, which in turn helps you be happier. It's the ultimate positive cycle.

Praising your man is as much for your benefit as it is for his.

Sometimes all a guy wants is to have his partner happy to see him. I'm not saying greet him like a dog by jumping up on him and licking his face... but if you do, get that on video. The point is there's nothing better than for a guy to come home to the woman he loves happy to see him. If you want a man who'll listen to you at the end of the day, greet him with warmth and then give a few minutes of space before you throw any negativity his way. If a woman is desperate to feel cared about, she'll get a much better response greeting her man at the door with a warm hug and saying something like: "I'm so glad to see you; I've had such a bad day. In fifteen minutes, can I tell you about it?" This should help your man feel safe, respected, and empowered. Before unloading your day or give him chores, offer him a few minutes to settle in. This will hopefully help him be more open to offering the support you need. It can feel good to be useful, but it's draining to be on instant demand, especially at the end of a long day. Once again, being good to him should make life easier and more enjoyable for you. ***Why be kind? It helps you...*** at least if you're doing it right. If it's causing resentment, you're doing something wrong.

The Worst Thing for a Guy

Since praise is so important to a guy, ***criticism is our kryptonite***. Criticism tears us down and eventually leaves us giving up. This includes saying things like "I feel..." and then sharing your feelings because that will feel like criticism to him. If you want to have a terrible marriage or push your husband to shut down, constantly criticize him and erode his soul. Make him feel like nothing he does is good enough, and he'll soon be really good at keeping you at a distance as he distracts himself from the pain with something like booze or even another woman often less attractive than you (he'll take what he can get) who will make him feel better. The criticism a guy faces doesn't even have to be that harsh. For instance, no guy wants to hear, "You're the most average, middle of the road man I've ever met. Come have your mediocre way with me." This isn't necessarily harsh, but it's not flattering. It's like saying, "You're not that fat," or "You're not that ugly." Putting in a "that" doesn't make the statement a compliment. Statements like "Are you going to wear that?" or "That's an interesting choice," sound gentle, but

they have strong undertones that even he can hear. It's these "innocent" kinds of comments that will actually drive him crazy. Arguably, even worse are looks of disgust (husbands know what I mean). Either might make him want to defend himself, but over time they can both erode his soul. ***Small criticisms and looks of disgust can be like dripping water; overtime it can drive you insane.***

As a man, I would rather my partner hit me with a rolled-up newspaper than criticize me. Not only is the physical attack easier to deal with than emotional pain as a guy, we can make fun of you later: (guy to buddies) "It's hilarious. She hits me with a rolled-up newspaper like she's from the 50s disciplining a dog." Meanwhile, criticism is demeaning and makes a guy feel like less of a man. Can you imagine trying to have sex with a partner continually saying, "You're doing that wrong... I don't like that... How many times do I have to tell you what I want?... Forget it! I'll just hire someone else to do it." Talk about a mood killer, but that's what's happening in many marriages. The woman, whether justifiably or not, is criticizing her partner to the point he gives up: (nasty wife) "Why would you wear that?... Why don't you share your feelings more?... Do you know anything besides sports?... I better call the plumber because you won't be able to fix it... why don't you tell me how I'm so much better than you anymore?" Even if there's truth to these statements, there's a nicer way of saying them. Some women will argue, "But I need to be mean because he doesn't listen to me." The fact is there's a good chance he hears you, but something is getting in the way. It could be he's burnt out, he's hiding from something (possibly his wife), and/or he's tired of feeling bossed around and/or controlled. Another possibility is he has other things he wants to do; your to-do list is not his priority. The other option is you married a jerk.

Tip: Just because a woman wants a job done doesn't mean the guy has to do it. If my wife wants something done while I want something else, we need to come to an agreement with a clear timeline for addressing both of our wants. ***I am a partner with an equal say, and not a servant.***

Warning: Here's the one tricky thing about guys: ***Too much praise, we give up; too little praise, we give up.*** Have fun. The same thing goes for sex. If it's too easy, we'll get lazy. If it's too hard, we give up. There's a line that needs to be played with for men for optimal performance. There's no set rule on this because all guys are different and go through different phases. ***We're simple, but we can still be annoyingly complicated.***

Making Their Partner Happy

One of the things I love about dogs is their desire to enjoy life and to help those around them enjoy it, too. They'll happily bark when you get home or try to get you to play with them. They also have a wonderful ability to try to support you when you're sad. I remember being upset and my wife's former dog, Charlie, moved over to sit next to me while I cried... I mean he was beside me during a workout where I was sweating from my eyes. Dogs even try to heal physical injuries. I once scraped my leg pretty badly from a heroic diving catch at Ultimate Frisbee. (I actually tripped after a catch, but it was still heroic-ish.) As soon as Charlie saw I was bleeding, he dropped his toy, trotted over to me, and tried to lick my leg. I was told this is normal for dogs because the licking is supposed to help the healing. He's not a vampire dog... I think. Either way, I didn't want to take the chance, so I washed my cut in the sink, and saved him the job. The point is dogs have an inherent desire to make the people they care about happy. Men have this same desire for their partner. ***We want to make the one we love happy.*** This idea follows the classic line, "Happy wife, happy life." It doesn't get much clearer than that. I once had an older therapy professor joke, "There are two rules for having a happy marriage. Rule number one: Keep your wife happy. Rule number two: Don't forget rule number one." We joke about this because there's truth to it. Every *real* man's goal is to make a woman happy (at least a heterosexual man). This makes sense because if his woman is happy that means he'll get something that starts with a 's'... huhn, huhn, yeah, you

know what I mean, *silence*. This idea is closely connected to the previous section where a guy wants to hear praise from his partner because we're more likely to receive praise if the person is happy with us (obviously). The odds are you're not going to hear something like: "You make me miserable... but you're strong, and smart, and wonderful, and..." I'm sure you're thinking this is a pretty simple concept, but for some reason women either don't realize this, they forget about it, or they're stuck in their own self-criticism because there are a lot of husbands who feel like a failure since their wife never seems happy. It's hard for a guy not to take it personally when he's supposed to be the provider and protector. Ladies, if you want to have a healthier relationship, work on smiling at home. Stop worrying about "fixing" the relationship and work on being happier because this will in turn make your husband happier (at least if he's a real man and not a turd). A wife being happy can do wonders for a relationship... or it can allow the guy's internal struggles to come out because now he can face his own issues.

Tip: The more we praise someone, the easier it is to love them because we'll recognize the good about them. The same but opposite happens if we only complain about them because all we'll think about are their faults.

Ladies, please know when I say a man wants to make his partner happy, I'm not saying *you* don't want to make your man happy. The difference between a man and woman is simple: ***A woman wants to make everyone happy.*** Men have a simpler focus (as usual), which follows how a guy thinks:

1. ***A Narrow Focus:*** Making one person happy is easier to focus on, which follows how a man's brain has a more compartmentalizing and narrow focused thinking style. As one book teaches, *Men are like Waffles and Women are like Spaghetti*, which means men have a brain that works more in boxes while women have a brain that meshes everything together giving them more to think and talk about at all times.
2. ***Problem Solving:*** As problem solvers, if our partner isn't happy, we clearly have a problem we need to solve, which can weigh heavily on a guy if she's never happy.
3. ***Providing:*** Men want to feel like a provider in some way. If our partner is happy, we're doing our job.
4. ***Accomplishment & Acceptance:*** Making our partner happy is like making a baby smile; it gives us a sense of accomplishment and acceptance.

5. **Feeling Good Enough:** Men crave having a woman's approval because it helps us feel good enough. This is especially true for males who didn't have fathers confirm their manhood and/or mothers who could never be made happy. This is why praise is so valuable.
6. **Security:** If my partner is happy, she's less likely to criticize.
7. **Sex:** A happy wife is more likely to have sex. Need I say more?

I should point out that it is unlikely men are consciously thinking, "I need to make my wife happy, so I feel more accomplished and prove I'm a good provider." We may not even be aware of why our partner's unhappiness bugs us so much. We just know it feels awful (especially if it leads to being criticized). Typically, our partner not being happy can cause us to feel like a failure. It's a form of rejection where we feel like we have fallen short of being a man. ***Men aren't complicated; if we can make the one we love happy, we're happy. If she's not, we have a job to do*** (or a problem to hide from if we're weak).

Tip: A guy may take it personally when you're not happy even if it has nothing to do with him. If it's not about him, make sure he's aware of this. It's also a benefit to you to make it clear if you need space to process something or if you want him close, so he knows what to do.

Sometimes a guy screws up trying to make his partner happy because what makes a guy laugh and be happy is often very different than a woman:

(proud man) "Smell that? That's me!" Hanging out with guys growing up we get conditioned to see what makes a guy laugh, so we often need to be retrained to know what makes a girl happy. Guys don't buy terrible Christmas gifts thinking, "This will ruin her Christmas and make her mad at me." Guys like practical gifts (preferably on sale). Women? Not so much. Sometimes men can forget that women are different than us, but that's just an innocent mistake. Years ago, my brother was in the living room reading and I ran in, did a dance, and let out a triumphant toot before raising my hands in the air and cheering like I was the king... you know, like a guy. He burst out laughing and pointed behind me. When I turned around, there was my new girlfriend staring in shock. I almost never had gas back then, which was largely why I was so excited (that and I'm like a five-year-old). The fact that I could share this with my brother was all the better because he was way better at that than me: (dorky male) "Hear that? I'm a man." This was not a good moment for my girlfriend: (girlfriend) "What am I dating?" It also wasn't a good moment for me: (me) "Oh no; she saw what's she's dating..."

I'm screwed. I'm supposed to wait for marriage to reveal the truth." When I saw her, I immediately started apologizing while wafting the air away from her with my hands. Fortunately, my girlfriend had the best possible response – laughter.

When guys screw up, all we want is for you to laugh or at least be relaxed and give us space to be angry at ourselves. Ladies, men aren't dumb to the point we can't read your face to know we've done something wrong, and we don't need you to remind us over and over about our mistakes. You can mention it again as a joke, but make sure there isn't an undertone: (girlfriend) "I think I might have gas. What's the dance I'm supposed to do before triumphantly tooting?"

Tip: Teasing is a typical way guys express and feel love. ***The best joke is like the best criticism; it's wrapped in acceptance and love.***

A good man has good intentions even if the follow through isn't the best. It's like Charlie who starts barking wildly when someone rings the doorbell. He's not barking to drive us crazy (even though it can feel that way). He's doing it to tell us someone is there. I'm not a dog whisperer, but I'm pretty sure Charlie thinks he's helping because after the door is opened, he stops barking and trots away proud of himself: (Charlie all smug) "I told you someone was there."

Tip: Since guys want to make their woman happy, women have three important jobs to do:

- 1) She needs to know what she wants (and keep it fair).
- 2) Communicate what she wants in a way that doesn't feel bossy or demeaning.
- 3) Praise the guy when he does it right.

If she does these three things she's setting herself up for a great relationship (unless the guy is a loser and then it won't matter).

Using Sex to Explain How this Works

The best way to understand this idea is by looking at sex... through words. Sorry this isn't suddenly becoming a picture book. Guys are easy. We're easier to get interested in having sex (at least when we're young), and we're easier to satisfy during sex (especially when we're young). It's pretty much one lever and one motion. You can do other things, but you don't need to because it all leads to the

same result: Ta-da, nap time. If you can't satisfy a guy, the odds are it's not about you and more to do with him having something physically wrong or emotionally off like stress, fear, or guilt. Men are easy; women... are not. Women take work. There are levers, pullies, innies and outties, roundies and slatherings, and there's a chance she won't finish if her brain is busy thinking about other things. Fortunately, guys like a challenge, so a little work is okay. What we don't like is a lack of appreciation and reward for our efforts. We want to see and hear our partner enjoying herself. We want to hear "Yea, yea, yea," and not "Okay, okay, (yawn) okay (burp)." And even though it's positive yelling, "Okie dokie, okie dokie, okie doooooookiiiiieeee," is less than desired.

Life is a lot like sex for a guy; we want to make our partner happy. Criticism like, "Why is it if I want it done right, I always have to do it myself?" can inspire the odd guy to work harder, but eventually without any return or direction, he'll give up. This is often what happens in marriages. If the woman is continually complaining about life, a guy will see this as his failure and give up trying. If she complains whether he does something or nothing, he's logically going to do nothing.

Sex also points out how stubborn a guy can be. For instance, even if he knows buying his partner flowers will help her feel loved and increase his chances of the boingy-boingy (yes, I'm that mature), some guys will be like, "Screw that; she should just want me." It's amazing how people, in general, can sabotage themselves. Hopefully your man isn't this dumb because if a man wants sex, he needs to be willing to make his woman feel special even if it's doing a particular chore for her.

The Glitch in this Happiness Idea

There is a glitch in this idea that a man wants to make his partner happy. Just like with praise where we need the right amount because too much or too little can make us give up (men are so fickle), the same happens with happiness. If making our partner happy is too easy, we can get lazy, and if it's too hard, we'll eventually give up. This means working with men, you don't want to overdue the positivity: "You put your shoes on the right feet? I'm so happy. You're just the smartest!"

Just like a child, we'll do less in order to see what we can get away with.

This also means we don't want the compliments to be too scant: "You finished building a house six months ahead of schedule and saved us thousands of dollars

doing things yourself. I guess you deserve a smile from me. Do you want a full smile for five seconds or a half smile for ten seconds?”

How many married men have spent hours after work at a bar or in front of a television ignoring their wife? A happily married man doesn't do this. When I was in my undergrad, one summer I worked for a bigger landscaping construction company. After work I'd be rushing home to see my family while most of the other guys were trying to find excuses not to go home. As one guy put it, "Why go home and get yelled at?" I'm not saying this is always the reason a man is avoiding his home, but if he was going home to a happy and welcoming wife, would he choose to spend more time with a bunch of pathetic, middle-aged men too afraid to confront the relationship problems they're having at home? He's essentially choosing the lesser evil. If this is the case, however, please know it is both partner's responsibility to do something to fix it. I want to point this out because I know a lot of good women and men who will solely blame themselves if there are issues in the relationship. ***It takes two people to have a conflict, so both parties are responsible for preventing conflicts and fixing it after.***

If it's impossible to make the owner happy, a dog will give up. If a dog is told to sit, roll over, give a paw, and do any other mundane dog tricks without positive reinforcement, he's eventually going to stop listening: (dog) "Make up your mind for what you want and be happy with what I've done for you." If a woman keeps changing what she wants and never appreciates what her man does, he'll go crazy. It's like a woman who says, "Let's redecorate this room," and when it's finished, she's not happy because all she can think about is redoing another room. Unless her man is offered her approval and a break, he's going to snap, "Will anything make you happy?" I remember dating a girl who said she wanted to go to clubs more, but when we did that (an activity I've always hated, but did for her) she then said we should be seeing friends more (an activity I enjoy) and when we did that, it turned to we don't have enough alone time (something I wasn't sure I cared about anymore). This drove me insane because there was always a complaint waiting for me no matter what I did, especially when she didn't acknowledge how I was adjusting to satisfy her wants. If it feels like a never-ending battle, eventually we're going to retreat.

If it's impossible to make the woman happy the guy gives up, BUT at the same time, if it's impossible to make the girl unhappy, he'll also give up. If you continually gush over a dog for doing nothing, the odds are he's going to keep doing nothing. He's already being praised, so why would he work for it? If you

give the dog a treat before asking him to do the trick, he's not going to be interested. He's already got his treat. Logically, it doesn't make sense to do the work. Looking at history, people who achieve greatness had to struggle in some way to be motivated to strive for change, but they couldn't struggle so much that it crippled them. It's a fine balance. In this, men and dogs are complicated: ***Women and owners need to find the middle ground between giving too much and too little positive reinforcement for good behavior.***

If you're a woman who thinks she's good at praise and being happy, but it doesn't feel like you're getting enough of a return you'll want to:

- 1) Double check that your expectations are fair.
- 2) Consider if you need to ease up on the praise because you're being too quick to praise (I've seen this).
- 3) Double check with your man that your praise is being heard and accepted.
- 4) Check if there's anything in your man's life that's bringing him down. Don't just ask, "Is anything going on?" because the answer will be "No." Be more specific by asking something like "Are you carrying extra stress right now or is there something else going on?"
- 5) Consider calling in reinforcements like his mom or a therapist to help him share what's bothering him.

Tip: No matter how bad we feel, we should still treat others with love (i.e. patience, kindness, and self control), especially our partners. ***Just because we have a bad day, week, or life, doesn't give us the right to be a jerk.***

Tip to the Tip: We all need to consider what we need to do in order to help ourselves be at our best in order to be at our best for our family.

Tip to the Tip to the Tip: Sometimes we just go through difficult phases. I'm currently month 31 of a four-month renovation that couldn't have gone more terribly. I also have a six, four, and one-year old daughter who know how to add to the family stress. This has been the hardest two years I've ever experienced, which means my happiness won't be what it used to be for now, but hopefully that will change when the project is finished.

Tip to the Tip to the Tip to the Tip: We all need to be allowed to experience our emotions without judgement or to be forced to talk about it. It's not up to other people to "fix" our emotions, but it is up to them to offer us kindness.

Tip to the Tip to the Tip to the Tip: Because we will all go through rough patches, it is important to establish good habits when things are going well. Good habits are like storm shelters. When the storm hits, we're not nearly as hurt because we have protection. When we have ways we are supporting our body, mind, heart, and soul, (i.e. the four parts of the person) we'll be in the best spot we can for facing life's challenges.

Space

When dogs know they've done something wrong they look sad. This can include a possible head tilt, chin down, ears lowered, and eyes looking up. Dogs will also tuck their tails in between their legs and have it shoot forward as a sign of submission. Guys can have a similar reaction. Although if they had an actual tail that tucked down and shot out the front between his legs that'd be confusing: (girl) "Are you sad or happy to see me?"

I've heard women complain their guy will "mope" or "pout." They might even ridicule him for this, which means they're ridiculing him for having an emotion – brilliant. That's worse than something I would do, so that's saying something. Mocking him is clearly not going to perk him up: (guy) "Thank you for encouraging me by discouraging me." **Often the best thing to give a guy is space.** If he's mopey (the eighth dwarf who was hiding in his room while Snow White was around), let him mope. The odds are he just needs a little time to process something and then he'll be fine. In order to give him the power in the situation, it can be helpful to ask, "Did you want space or to talk about what's bugging you?" but there's a good chance the answer is space. Another good question is "Do you want to talk about what's going on now or tomorrow?" because it subtly creates a timeline. You can also ask, "Are you struggling with something I've done or is it something else?" You can even make a guess: (wife) "I'm guessing you're upset about (fill in the blank)." Guys typically don't want to talk, but it is helpful for them to define the problem in one sentence and a question or guess can be helpful for figuring that out.

Tip: If a guy wants to be given space when he's down, guess what he'll likely give his partner? A reason to yell at him: (wife) "If you loved me, you'd know I'd want to talk." (husband) "Looks like I gave you something better – something to direct your anger at; you're welcome... now I'm going to need some space."

Be Honest

As much as men want to make our partner happy, we prefer honesty. Once you start lying about being happy or pretending to like something you don't, you're setting your man up for a whole lot of confusion. Lying may spare his feelings in the moment, but it'll likely end up hurting him more in the end: (old guy) "I thought you liked it when I sang for you." (girl) "Honestly, you're terrible." (guy) "I've been singing to you for 15 years... in public." (girl) "I know, but I didn't want to hurt your feelings." A number of years ago, I had a disastrous gift giving experience with my girlfriend at the time. I'm a big Christmas fan. I start playing the music right after Halloween (I'm that cool). One of my favorite things is giving gifts to my family and partner. I take pride in what I buy. I rarely get anything from a Christmas list because I like to think of something unique and special. This one year I was particularly proud of what I got my girlfriend at the time... that is until I gave the gifts to her and saw her reactions. Gift after gift I gave ended up being terrible for some reason: "This one I can't use... this one is too practical... this one takes up too much space... this crazy scarf thing I said I wanted when I had been drinking; why is that the time you chose to listen to me?" I was striking out hard, but I kept brushing off my failed attempts because I still had the big gift left; I was particularly excited about it. We'd been together for awhile, but I had never given her jewelry... but that was about to change. I had bought her a nice silver necklace. It was not a stupidly expensive necklace that screams "I'm compensating for something," but it was jewellery kiosk kind of nice (said as proud as possible for someone who bought jewellery at a mall kiosk). When she opened it her response wasn't what I had planned: (her serious) "Did you cheat on me?" (me) "Why would you think that?" (her) "Because of that *According to Jim* we watched where they said guys only buy jewelry when they've cheated." (me) "But this is Christmas. You're supposed to give presents. It's not random." (in my head) "If I cheated, I would've bought the necklace at a store and not a kiosk." After I explained myself, her anger turned to guilt: (her) "Then why did you spend so much? (she recognized the niceness of the kiosk necklace)" (me anxious and defensive) "Everything else I bought was on sale (because that's a good argument), and I wanted to do something special for you (that's a better argument), so I bought you a good quality necklace from a mall kiosk (I really didn't need to add that last part)." Here's the funny thing... I say funny, but I mean in the big kick-in-the-pants kind of funny way because when she pulled the necklace out of the box the chain clip was broken. This so-called good quality necklace was defective. Gah! Thus, my well thought out, well budgeted gifts were

a total bust; something I had never had happen before. That being said, as disappointing as this was for me, I was glad she was honest, so we could fix it. We returned a few items and replaced the chain on the necklace, and in the end, it worked out quite well. She was happy, so I was happy (and I got to keep the fun scarf she didn't want sober). It would've been much more disappointing if she lied and said the gifts were great and threw them away, but then years later told me the truth because then it'd be the question: Did you think Tom Cruise was talking about me when he said, "You can't handle the truth!?" As hard as the honesty was to hear at the time, I preferred it because we could fix what was wrong, and the next time she looked happy I'd know that she was truly happy and not faking it because she thinks I'm too fragile.

Tip: There is a difference between nice honesty and mean honesty. For instance, saying a house is cozy is nicer than saying it's small. ***Nice honesty is factual, but tries to be kind while mean honesty makes you a jerk.*** Simple rule: Don't be a jerk.

Honesty should be done with love. My worst gift giving experience was with a girl who gave me honesty, but it lacked love, so it was pretty terrible. At the time of her birthday, we had been dating ten months. Four months leading up to this late August birthday were the busiest I've ever had, and as a lifelong workaholic, that's saying something. Looking back, I have no idea how I did it all. To end my whirlwind summer, I was running a seven-day mission's trip where I had to drive a van full of young people ten hours to Philadelphia. That's a brilliant idea when you're already overworked. This girlfriend's birthday was the day before the trip, which should have been fine, but it was also the final day for me to hand in my schoolwork for all the summer classes I took. That might not sound too crazy, but this was a summer load of Masters courses the school admin told me I could never finish even if I wasn't working, running two Ultimate Frisbee teams (I like control), performing my first two wedding ceremonies, presenting my first sermon, and running my first camping retreat weekend for twenty young people. Past students struggled to finish three summer courses and I was signed up for six (I told you I was a workaholic). I ended up finishing on time and doing really well in the classes as I learned week long intensive courses are easier for a male brain than balancing a semester of classes because of the narrower focus. I showed them (and the twitching eventually went away). To add to this, this girl didn't have anything specific she wanted as a gift. So... I was creative... or thought I was. I figured she was going with me to Philadelphia and she loves spending money, so I ended up giving her the gift of money to spend on the trip. I even wrapped the

money in two different boxes to give her two gifts to open, which I thought was brilliant... until I saw her reaction with the first gift: (me) “If you hated the first gift you’re going to hate the second one, too.” To be honest, I still question whether giving money was wrong. I love getting money as a gift: “Sweet, a gift I don’t have to store, return/exchange, or lie and say I like.” I thought it was a great idea, especially since it was a different currency. Being Canadian, I still had to go to the mall to get it, and I wrapped it in two boxes; not just one, but two, so she had two gifts to open. I figured this was a brilliant present because what I really gave her was guilt-free shopping. Isn’t that a thoughtful idea? As I learned the hard way, no; the very biggest NO you can possibly give. In her eyes the rudest thing you can give someone is money... except at a wedding because then cash is preferred. I didn’t know there were so many rules to giving. What happened to, “It’s the thought that counts?” This was probably one of the angriest moments she had with me and one of the most painful for me, especially when I was worn pretty thin from a ridiculously busy season and I was so happy about my gift idea. Ladies, you have no idea how hurtful it is for a guy to have this type of rejection. When we try really hard to make you happy but flop... that sucks. But then to be accused of being uncaring and inconsiderate? That’s painful enough to make us want to give up ever trying again. This can mean tuning you out, being lazy, or looking for another girl who will appreciate our efforts. ***If you want to kill a man’s desire to make you happy, shoot down his attempts at making you happy.*** Even if my partner didn’t like the gift, she should’ve been appreciative in the moment and then *requested* that I not give her money in the future. What she did, scolding me and talking down to me? Well, there’s nothing worse... besides cheating; although in that moment I’d prefer if she cheated, so then I could break up and be angry at her instead of feeling broken. Men may be dumb, but we’re not stupid. More importantly, we still have feelings. The truth is ***women have a power over us unlike anyone else.*** They need to be careful how they use it because they can make us great or crush us into nothing.

The Main Reason We Want to Make You Happy

It’s often joked the main reason a man wants to make his partner happy is for sex. That’s definitely a bonus (when you’re young), but the main reason men want to make their partner happy is because men hate having conflict with them. We *baaattttie* it. Guys are generally fine with having conflict at work or with people in general; that’s part of life. At the end of the day, however, we just want to relax.

We want to feel safe with someone who loves us and thinks we're the greatest thing in the world. We essentially want someone to love us like our mom did when we were kids. Nagging? That's not the kind of love we want. Constantly being criticized? Um, no thank you. Guys don't want to be talked down to like a child. Slightly coddled and spoiled? Absolutely. There's a major difference between those two worlds.

One of the things that amazes me about men is how we can put up with some really terrible jobs, but it's okay when there's a purpose and a loving partner ready to welcome us home. Yes, women work some bad jobs too (PSW's are impressive), but women are more likely to ask questions like, "Does this fulfill me?" and "Does this job make me happy?" and then do something about it if they're not. Guys are more likely to ask, "Does this pay the bills?" or "Does my wife approve of this job?" How many men have worked in mines knowing they'd die younger from it, but they were willing to do it to provide a home for their family? I recently met a young lady who worked at a farm testing bull semen for its potency; not the nicest job. You know what's worse than that? Being the guys who had to extract the bull semen. That's nasty. That's so nasty the owners wouldn't let women do it. Men? They were fine.

The main reason guys hate fighting so much is because it means our partner isn't happy, and ***we can't be happy unless she's happy. Women, on the other hand, can be happy when their guy isn't.*** She'll be annoyed he's bringing down the mood, but her main concern is that the kids and everyone else are happy. To most women, if everyone else is happy, the guy not being happy means the guy is being a problem.

Dogs also hate fighting with the one they love: "Dogs have a range of what are called appeasement behaviors—lifting an apologetic paw, lowering their body and crawling, lying on their backs, or turning their gaze away."^{xv} Guys will often do this too; not the exact same behaviors (hopefully), but the equivalent. We do things like pretending nothing happened, buying flowers, giving you space (even when you don't want it), lowering our gaze, hiding, pouting, and maybe putting our dishes in the dishwasher like you always ask but we somehow normally forget. I never met my maternal grandfather because he had passed away before I was born, but he was known for this. My Nana would angry about something and not talk to him until he bought her a gift. This could go on for a week, and she might not even remember what made her upset. She just knew she had been upset and

now she wanted something to prove my grandpa cared. That's appeasement... maybe delayed appeasement, but it's still proof who held the power.

On the other hand, if a man is really angry at his partner, the odds are he won't be using behaviors to *appease* as much as he'll blow up. Proper behavior is holding in the rage and letting it out privately, but that's something as a therapist I regularly have to teach. The big thing to note here is guys are less likely to be vindictive and do something spiteful like leave the toilet seat down... while we go: (angry guy) "I think it's time the seat was given a golden, spotted glow." We tend to be more direct. In a fight, a guy is more likely to say "F" you and then suppress his hurt whereas most women tend to be more cutthroat and hold onto resentment to use again later. A woman's "P" you moment is more like, "And that's why you mom doesn't love you." Another popular option is she will list all of a guy's mistakes since they started dating: (angry girl) "Do you remember when you..." (confused guy) "No." (girl) "What about this, or that, or that other thing?" (guy) "I did all that? Really? Are you making that up? Because I don't remember any of it." When a woman is bringing up the past, she's typically trying to present a theme: "See how I'm the good one and you suck?" "See how you don't listen to me?" or "See how I'm crazy and make things up that never happened?" ***In proper conflict resolution, the guy will want to help his partner figure out what this theme is in one sentence in order to better address it if she doesn't do it on her own.***

Tip: My one friend says the list his wife has of everything he's done wrong over the past ten years is less about his mistakes than it is proof of her one big mistake – never forgiving. Since he's already apologized for everything on her list, it's now actually a list of everything she refuses to forgive, which says more about her character than his. Thus, she needs to start looking at her own heart.

The Downside to this Happy Idea

"Why don't you have an opinion?" "Why can't you do anything on your own?" "Why do I have to plan everything?" Are these types of questions familiar? Are you getting tired of every sentence ending with a question mark? It's arguably worse not making a question, but ending with a question mark? I know people who talk like this where they end every sentence with an inflection like it's a question, but it's not? Talk about annoying? Okay, I'll stop?

A lot of men, in their desire to make their partner happy (or just being lazy) lose their voice. We stop having an opinion or thinking for ourselves because, well... we have a wife. It's either we don't have to think or we're afraid to think. The unfortunate truth is most men I meet don't voice their opinion because it's not worth it; why risk a fight? Saying, "Yes dear" has become the mantra for many men because it's safer. Dogs often have this trait as well. When a dog is reprimanded, he normally just takes it. Sometimes the dog will be pushed too far and he'll snap because every dog has a breaking point. Similarly, a lot of men bottle their emotions and just take it and take it until they snap. Snapping can be anything from yelling to using a bad coping tool to disappearing to punching walls. Snapping can also be the transference of anger to an innocent party like a parent, co-worker, or child. When a guy is taking it, I would argue that most women have no idea this is even happening, and the odds are they're just as frustrated with this set up as the men. For instance, **women don't nag because it's fun. Nagging comes from frustration and feeling out of control and/or helpless.** Most women don't want to hurt their partner, but if that's what it takes to get him moving then it feels like acceptable damage because it adds to the greater good.

I should note people shouldn't let this caring "I want to make you happy" side fool you. **A guy can want to make his woman happy, but still be a jerk.** For instance, my wife and I were once friends with a young lady who was one of those rare people who could be described as joy. She was a leader in my youth group, and everyone loved her because wherever she went it felt better because she was there. This kind of joy can't be taught; it was part of who she was. She was already a leader in the group when I took over and she quickly became a regular in my circle of friends. We felt lucky to have her around because she was so awesome. After several years, she started dating a guy who had been hanging around us. If you guessed it was to be near her... you'd be wrong. I eventually found out he had a crush on my wife who was my girlfriend at the time and that was his main incentive for coming out to our youth group. On the surface he was a decent guy (despite his original intention), but once he started dating this other girl, he changed (or the real him came out). Like a normal guy he wanted to make her happy and he would go out of his way to do things for her like drive her places (a typical male gesture), but then he bought her and made her wear expensive clothes. This can sound generous, but she was known for her fun and creative flair with clothes she often made herself. Instead, he would belittle her original fashion until she only wore his choice of clothes while he started to complain that she wasn't "mature" enough because of how much she laughed and joked. This girl eventually told him that he was passive aggressive (he was) and he was furious

(because he's an idiot). What's funny is he didn't even know what passive aggressive meant (I said he was an idiot), and I know this because he complained to me about it (poor choice). When I gave a quick definition of what passive aggressive behavior is, he stared at me for a moment and then said, "Oh yeah, I guess I am." Controlling? Check. Demeaning? Check. Manipulative and uses guilt trips? Check and check. Unfortunately, instead of leaving him, this young lady focused on his good side (aka the side my friends and I couldn't see anymore) and started changing for him. Maybe she watched *Grease* too many times, but she would just take it in order to make *him* happy. It was like they switched gender stereotypes because she was the pushover and he was the witch (or something that rhymes). Before she dated him, she was an incredibly loving person, but then she traded all that in to be a name-brand, judgemental snob who cared more about image than love. It was tragic. She went from having a list of friends to having *his* list of friends. This situation should never have happened. For one, he shouldn't have dated someone he felt he needed to change so much (but he's a jerk), and two, she should have said, "I appreciate that you want to make me happy with driving me places, but you're a colossal jerk head. Go jump in a lake of kindness." Remember, ***just because a guy has a caring side that wants to make his girl happy, doesn't mean he also doesn't have this "I'm the biggest jerk alive" side.***

Tip: Your partner should inspire you to become a better person and not a bigger jerk. She, unfortunately, chose the wrong type of guy, and the result was her losing her joyful presence.

As far as abusive husbands go, I rarely see this in my practice, but I work with middle to upper class couples. What I do know is when a man abuses a woman something is wrong with him just like when a dog bites its owner. This isn't normal behavior. They might be sick, injured, confused, or broken to the point of desperation. Watching *Dog Impossible*, ***the main reasons dogs misbehave are not being properly socialized and not feeling safe.*** When a guy is abusive, I assume similar problems are happening: he hasn't been properly socialized (i.e. apples don't fall far from trees) or he doesn't feel safe. Regardless of the reason, an abusive man shouldn't be a DIY project. He should be more of a DNR.

Tip: I've heard many people say they were abused, but they weren't. For instance, when a client tells me how their partner was verbally abusive with their yelling and insults, I'll ask them if they quietly took it. Guess what their answer is? "No! I had to yell back!" This isn't "abuse". ***This is a fight***

because it's two people doing the same thing. If a boxer knocks out another boxer, it's not abuse; he's just a better fighter. If a boxer knocks me out, it's abuse because I wouldn't have been trying to fight. I would've been in the fetal position crying and begging for mercy. Fortunately, I learned a long time ago, don't be a jerk because people are typically going to be a jerk back and they might be better at it.

Tip: Whenever I've worked with a guy being accused of being physically abusive, the accusation was from a very manipulative and vindictive woman and the guy simply snapped after continual jabs and looks of disgust. That being said, I once had a young lady in her twenties in my youth group who was in a relationship with an abusive guy, but he was uneducated, he went to an elementary school for kids with anger problems, he couldn't hold a job, and he didn't have any friends before meeting her. Can you say, "Red flags?" Fortunately, she was eventually able to leave him, but unfortunately, she found other ways to make bad choices and life never really got better. ***When you're a pushover, it's hard not to get pushed over.***

Our “Screw You” Side

As much as I believe men want to make their wife happy, there is a rebellious part in our brain that says, “Screw it and screw you!” Men obviously aren’t always working in their partner’s best interest; no one does because *we all have times of selfishness (some more than others)*. I doubt anyone would argue that all men are saints... although, it is interesting to note that most saints never marry; is there a connection? I’m not saying marriage ruins men or that the smart ones avoid women, but someone else can. Maybe these single guys are trying so hard to impress women they end up being looked at as saints when they really just wanted a girl to notice them: (Saint) “I cured the plague. Want to go on a date with me?” (woman) “I can’t. You saved Billy the Bully, so I’m going out with him instead.” (Saint) “I should’ve waited until after his funeral to use the cure.”

Dogs definitely have this “screw you” side. Even if a dog appears to obey his owner, there’s always a chance that as soon as he’s alone, he’s going to dig up the lawn or chew the owner’s favorite shoes. This kind of behavior is often believed to be more the result of boredom and not getting enough exercise, but whatever the reason, there’s rebelliousness to it. Some dogs will even drink from the toilet against their owner’s wishes. Guys won’t do this (unless maybe they’re dared and alcohol is involved), but this is a form of “screw you,” which is topped off by the dog licking the owner’s face (hilarious). Charlie, the special looking Shih Tzu, had this side in him. I think the funniest display of that was before my wife and I were

married. Normally when I visited my then girlfriend at her mom's house, the first thing I'd do is take him for a walk. One night, however, we weren't able to, and when Charlie realized he wasn't going for a walk he ran downstairs. Did he run down there to cry? No, not unless you consider it crying when the liquid's coming out his dooingy-begoingy (or to use the technical term, his doo-doo... and yes, that's the term I grew up using). Charlie went to the spot where we always sit to watch a show after the walk and he peed on it. You might be thinking, "He must be a puppy and playing." Nope, he was seven years old and fully potty trained... or mostly potty trained. I wasn't exaggerating when I said he was slow. You might be thinking, "Maybe Charlie was marking his territory?" Nope. He made sure he had our attention as he ran downstairs, and then while staring at us, he started his impersonation of a water fountain. My pre-marriage wife was furious... I was laughing hysterically (it helped it wasn't my couch). Part of me was excited because I was thinking, "Who's your favorite boy now?" Normally Charlie was ahead of me, but that night I jumped ahead of him in that race... I better have or I'm going to wee wee on something too... like a toilet seat... and then wipe it after. I'm not as dumb as Charlie. I don't want to risk a woman's wrath, but I like to talk big... when she can't hear me.

Some people call it ego, others will call it male honor, pride, or respect, but it's all the same thing. ***In the grownup male mind, there's a battle between making our partner happy and saying, "Screw you; I'm focusing on me."*** This is the part of us that puts our friends before our partner or that leads us to cheating and justifying it. This is the part that makes us stubborn and difficult. This is the part that makes us think: (guy) "You don't like this? Good, I now know what I'm going to do Miss Too-Good-for-Me when I feel like being a jerk." All guys have both sides. The difference between a good guy and jerk is with a good guy, the nicer side wins out the majority of the time. If a woman is with a good guy who is being unusually rebellious, there's an underlying reason that needs to be addressed. Typically, this stems from a guy feeling hurt and trying to regain some sense of his manhood. This doesn't make his actions right, but it does point out that he's hurt and trying to fix it. This rebellious side can also be a sign of fear, but either way, it needs to be addressed, which may require a third party to help like a parent, friend, or mentor to sort out the feelings he's burying. Notice "wife" isn't in that list? Most men would rather struggle than accept help from the wife when they're in that state: (partner) "Can I help?" (guy) "Nope, I'm good." (partner) "But you're bleeding." (guy) "I'm fine... unless my mom's here; then I'll admit there's a problem." It's as if in long term relationships we don't want to be vulnerable.

This “screw you” side can also be out of frustration. Every once in awhile some men will have a moment or a phase where we’re tired of the power women have over us. I know this well. Before I was married, my girlfriend at the time and I were on the verge of breaking up, so I became bitter towards all hot girls (a very mature response). Of all the times in my life, that was when I had to go to Las Vegas for business. Talk about bad timing. There were hot girls everywhere: (me) “There’s a hot girl... there’s another hot girl... this sucks!” As a guy who’s had to work hard for everything I have, it can get really frustrating seeing girls be shown favoritism: (me) “Girls have life so easy, especially all these girls with their rich sugar daddies. I wish I had a sugar daddy... or mama... definitely a sugar mama.” My wife has always gotten special treatment from guys: (her) “He was so nice.” (me) “You mean the guy who ignored me and stared at you? Yeah, he was very nice... selectively.” This dynamic creates a power imbalance that can be incredibly frustrating for a guy. ***What’s even worse is if something goes wrong in the relationship people will likely presume the woman is innocent while pointing a finger at the guy like a wizard whose only powers are casting judgment and guilt trips.*** Why are we the ones assumed to be wrong? ***Having relationship, problems takes two people;*** if there are problems, both the guy and girl are participating members and both need to accept responsibility.

My “screw you” side is currently triggered by my wife giving me jobs to do, especially jobs that don’t make any sense to my logical brain. Being a recovering workaholic, I already have a list of jobs I’m trying to get done in a limited amount of time, and being given extra jobs can push me over the edge. On top of this, being given jobs can make me feel controlled or treated like a child. Unfortunately, there isn’t anything my wife and I can do to eliminate this. She should be asking me for help and I’m allowed to have my own jobs and emotions. ***Thus, the only thing we can do is try to be nice and be ready to apologize when we’re not. Why? Because this is marriage, and marriage sometimes means accepting things that bug us*** (or so I tell my wife).

In one of his stand-up routines, comedian Christopher Titus shares how men will use sex as a coping mechanism, especially in a break up. This is also an example of a “screw you” moment:

She’d break up with me day after day after day, and I don’t think a man should break up with a woman ever when she’s this upset... until the fifty third time she’s broke up with him. I finally said “Is that the way you want it? I heard you say yes. Is that what you

want? You better be careful with those yeses. Fine!” (makes noise of phone slamming down and starts crying). I was so upset that I went to drown my sorrows in a 19-year-old waitress. I know... ladies, be clear; saying, “I don’t want to see you anymore,” means something to us. And we don’t have the three days eat cookies and cry period that you ladies have. We have the five minutes then I’m going to find a girl who looks just like you and [do] her to prove I don’t need you, period. And we’ll feel bad while we’re doing it too: (whimpering) “I miss her so much.” I’m not saying we’re right; I’m saying we’re stupid.

I like how he admits that he cried while with the other girl. He was saying “screw you” to his ex, but this didn’t make him happy. It also shows how his sensitivity and loyalty still come out despite cheating. This experience wasn’t what he really wanted. He was just trying to find a way to deal with his emotional pain. Like we discussed before, *real* men want love over sex, and we would rather make our partner happy than say “screw you,” but, as with Titus’s example, we need a backup plan to help us deal with our hurt when it happens. Of course, hopefully we can come up with a different backup plan than him. Sex with other women is rarely a wise choice (who knew?) For the record, neither is drinking or smoking pot (shocking).

By quoting Titus, I should point out that this doesn’t mean that men should be allowed to act like this. It just means we have a propensity for it. Of course, this wouldn’t have happened if he was like most ordinary guys (e.g. me) who can’t pick up a girl for a one-night stand. Instead of revenge sex with a random girl, my only option is revenge rejection from a random girl, which isn’t as empowering: (me) “Yeah, well if you break up with me, some other girl is going to be the lucky lady... to reject me tonight.” Unfortunately for Titus, he was attractive enough to pick up a girl (sucker). The kicker was shortly after his one night stand his partner wanted him back (oops). Pays to be like me with the charm of a recycling bin and the looks of mediocrity: (me) “Hey ladies, my power is making other guys look better. Sexy, right?”

Chapter 10:

The Importance of Play & Adventure

I recently drove past a car with a big dog in the backseat with his head out the window. And when I write “with his head was out the window,” I don’t mean a little. His had his head and the greater part of his neck out like he was trying to lick a stop sign. I’m nervous putting my hand out the window behind the side mirror because, as a kid, I was told that’s how you lose a hand. How horrible would that be? You’re happily waving your hand out the window and then suddenly your hand’s bouncing down the street waving at you as you drive away. I love Luke Skywalker, but I don’t want to *be* Luke Skywalker, especially when I can’t be given a cool lifelike robot hand replacement. This dog hanging out the window could’ve lost something more important than a hand, but he couldn’t have been happier. His ears were flapping and his tongue was waving like a flag of joy cheering, “I surrender to fun!” Have you ever tried putting a cat’s head out the car window? Rannrrrrr! Scratch, scratch, claw, your blood spurting. Dogs have this innate desire for fun and adventure. Cats, on the other hand, they’re more about being safe (aka boring). For fun, cats attack mice, bugs, and string – woo, dangerous. They attack things that have no chance of beating them. It’s like a hired ninja assassin killing someone in a coma. Cats play it safe. Dogs... nope. Charlie, the not so smart Shih Tzu, would go after full grown German Shepherds. He was like the mouse taking on the cat. It couldn’t end well for him, but dogs aren’t as worried about being safe. There are always exceptions, but like dogs, guys crave adventure and fun. My wife craves everyone being safe. Me? I’m way

more selfish than that. A guy's desire for adventure and fun can be hidden because we've had to take on responsibility or something bad has happened and fear has set in, but this side never fully dies in a *real* man. Ever wonder why so many men love watching sports, playing video games, and watching action movies like *John Wick*? It's a way to get a taste of adventure. This is also the reason why guys are generally more up to driving in snow storms. It's an adventure. Why do we like this? It's partly for the sense of not being controlled and also for a story. Where guys are like: "I'm a man; look what I did," women are more: "I'm a woman; look what I was smart enough *not* to do." Women tend to be more cautious. Guys? Nope. Women are like: "I'll get judged if I *do* this," whereas guys are like "This will be fun or make someone laugh? Get your phone out in case it goes terribly wrong/hilarious." Guys tend to be more impulsive and driven to fun whereas women will see a guy about to do something and be like: "Whoa... man, let's rethink this." That's why we call them a "whoa-man" or "woman" for short because they like to say "whoa" to stop a man from a possible dangerous situation (aka fun). I might have that wrong, but it works.

One of the reasons dogs love going on walks so much is because they're a time of exploration and adventure. What smells will be discovered? What friends will be made? What bushes will be decorated with a glistening coat of liquid? Similarly, eating garbage is an adventure: (dog) "I wonder what this will taste like? Huhn, that's nasty. What about this? Hmm, not bad; it's crunchy with a hint of squishy like it's rotten. This is exciting!" Eating garbage is like what Forrest Gump said: "[It's] like a box of chocolates; you never know what you're going to get..." unless it's a box of Pot of Gold chocolate because then it's not *like* garbage; it *is* garbage. It's so bad it might as well be a vegetable. By the way, well done on your impersonation of Forrest Gump for the box of chocolates line. I know you did one because you can't quote Forrest Gump without saying it like him. It's funny because it's true; right *Jenny*?

Adventure is a form of play, which is incredibly important to dogs. One author writes, "Time spent playing with your dog helps build up the bond of friendship between you."^{svi} Whenever Charlie sees a visitor, he greets them with a toy hoping to play. He doesn't want to cuddle or be still. He wants to play. Men have the same attitude. We love playing and joking with our friends because that's how we connect. I'm a therapist and if a guy asks me to go for a coffee, not a chance. Sitting and talking is the worst! We want to play and laugh. When we get together with friends, we want to do something like work out, play poker, throw a ball around, or work on a car. These are good connecting activities because there's no

pressure to talk, but the option is there. If we do talk, the odds are we're going to be sharing facts or making fun of someone (ideally our partner). Almost every guy has a voice he does to impersonate his partner with his friends. It's typically nothing like hers and far from flattering. Mine involves a lisp and sounding like an airhead. It's not about accuracy; it's about being funny. When it comes to other people, guys will exaggerate and bend the truth in order to get a laugh because that's how we connect. It's not about being mean; it's about being funny and getting those around us to laugh. ***If we could have it our way, everyday life would have recess, so we could stop and play.*** This is one of the main reasons we want to make our partner happy – we want to have fun. Just like dogs, we don't want to sit around doing nothing, which includes talking about our feelings unless we absolutely have to. We want to play and laugh together with times of sitting and relaxing.

Fun Thought: Dogs love to play fetch, but men hate it because fetch for a man is pretty much doing errands for his partner. It may be more elaborate than fetching a stick or ball that's thrown, but it's the same concept: He goes out and brings it back. Playing fetch with a stick or ball would actually be better for a guy because we couldn't screw it up: (woman) "How many times do I have to tell you? I don't want the medicine that makes me drowsy!" (guy) "But it works so well... at giving me peace." The only time guys like playing fetch is when there are noisy kids at home or unwelcome family visiting and he wants to escape. Suddenly errands are a cherished gift: "Anyone need anything? Chocolate? Sedative? Muzzle? I know a really great place that sells stuff across the city."

Tip: One of the best ways to attract a guy and keep him is to connect with his sense of fun. We love being able to laugh with a girl. If you're laughing, you're happy, and if you're happy, happy life.

A Second Tip (Because I'm so Thoughtful): If a guy doesn't have any interest in adventure and fun then this can be an indication of depression and/or anxiety problems. This is often demonstrated by hiding or being a workaholic. There's also a chance the hope of fun has been trained out of him. Either case... good luck. Hopefully some guy time can help.

Maturity

When I was a kid a lot of people thought I was incredibly mature. Nope, I was super uptight and seriously boring. I didn't know how to have fun because I was so worried about getting in trouble. Now that I'm older, I've thrown off my boring ways (kind of) and I'm much more open minded (sometimes). Oddly enough, I became "mature" when I learned that I'm allowed to be silly and have fun. Maturity just means I have social understanding for when to be more serious and when to be more fun. Of course, this is a debateable point because some people have continued being super tight. I once had someone in his sixties tell me that I could be a good preacher one day if I stopped using humor. Apparently, he thought the joy of the LORD meant the joy of having a pickle lodged up your butt. ***In a world where some people suck, it can be challenging to know if someone's criticism is a sign of maturity or uptightness.*** Fortunately, we can find help through life experience and having good people in our life to guide us. ***After all, I shouldn't worry about making everyone happy with me; just the good people because bad people will always end up not liking good people on some level.***

Easily Pleased

Have you ever tried making your dog happy? It's easy; show up. Have you tried to make a cat happy? It'll take more than showing up: (cat owner) "I'm home! Oh, right; you're a cat and don't care." Dogs are incredible because little things make them happy. There isn't a lot of guessing; it's simple and clear. One of the things I loved about Charlie was I just have to say "walk" and he'd freak out with excitement. I didn't even have to take him. I just say the word and he's happy. Don't worry, I'd take him; I'm not that mean: (me) "Walk?" (Charlie excited) "Bark, bark, bark." (me) "Just kidding. Silly dog... you're going to pee on the couch again, aren't you?" This is a fantastic set up: I want to make Charlie happy and I know how, so I do it. If this was a math equation where D is for dog and I'm B for boy, it'd look like:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{B wants to make D} \\ \text{happy} \end{array} \quad + \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{B knows how to} \\ \text{make D happy} \end{array} \quad = \quad \begin{array}{l} \text{B makes D happy} \\ \text{because that makes} \\ \text{himself happy} \end{array}$$

This is such a simple and wonderful set up. If women were like dogs, life would be fantastic. I'd be taking my wife out for walks all the time: (me) "Walk?" (wife) "Yes, yes, yes." (me) "Okay, let's go. I'll even use the sparkly leash this time." Life would be good for both of us; she'd be happy and I'd be happy making her happy. Unfortunately, it's not so easy for her. For me? It's not so far off. In fact,

because I'm so easy to please, it can actually annoy my wife. If this was a math problem where G is for the girl and B is for the boy it'd be:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{B is easy to please} \\ \text{+} \\ \text{G knows how to} \\ \text{make B happy} \\ \text{=} \\ \text{G is angry at B} \\ \text{because he must be} \\ \text{hiding something} \end{array}$$

Am I making this up? I wish. One night my wife said, "I don't know how to make you happy." I thought she was joking, so I started laughing. Not a good go-to response. But I was confused because I'm easy: I love burgers, watching movies, and on special occasions, going to Broadway shows. That's three very clear things. When I pointed this out, her response baffled me, "But that's boring." Boring? Even if that's true, why is that a problem? Why are you upset with me? I didn't know what to say, so I just responded, "But that's what I like." It was as if she was angry I could be happy with so little or she wanted more of a challenge. Maybe she was jealous because making her happy changes on a moment-to-moment basis. Personally, I'm jealous she has it so easy to make me happy. I wish I could date me. I'd be buying me burgers and taking me out to movies all the time: (me) "This makes you/me happy, so let's do it. I love you/me." Talk about a dream come true. Instead, I'm stuck with a math equation that looks like this:

$$\begin{array}{l} \text{B wants} \\ \text{to make} \\ \text{G happy} \\ \text{+} \\ \text{B has no idea} \\ \text{what will make} \\ \text{G happy in this} \\ \text{moment} \\ \text{because it} \\ \text{always changes} \\ \text{+} \\ \text{G may think} \\ \text{she knows} \\ \text{what will make} \\ \text{her happy, but} \\ \text{really has no} \\ \text{idea either} \\ \text{=} \\ \text{B tries stuff and} \\ \text{often fails} \\ \text{miserably,} \\ \text{disappointing G} \\ \text{and getting in} \\ \text{trouble for not} \\ \text{knowing her} \\ \text{better} \end{array}$$

In general, women tend to be trickier to please. If you want to see a good example of the difference between what makes a man happy versus a woman, talk to a couple who's planning their wedding. If you ask the guy what will make him happy: (guy) "Uh, no debt." If you were to get him to be more specific, he's likely going to say, "Good food, good friends, and lots of booze... oh, and fantastic gifts from people so no debt." If you were to ask the bride... you will need some free time because she's going to have a list of things from place settings to colours to locations to times and flowers. Guys are just easier to please. I once got in trouble for wrapping a birthday gift. No, it was neat enough (I was trained that way). The problem was my girlfriend-at-the-time had wrapped the other part of the gift, and

we ended up using different wrapping paper, so it didn't "match." Match? They were wrapped, which is the point of wrapping paper (and wrapping paper soon becomes "ripped" paper, so who cares?) Even though we were already late, she unwrapped my gift in order to rewrap it with her paper because she wanted it to look as nice as possible for the person receiving it. See the difference? Easygoing versus detail driven. Neither is wrong (at least that's what I'll say here). We both wanted to make the receiving person happy. We just saw this goal being done in different ways. Of course, in my girlfriend-at-the-time's defense I will admit that it was a December birthday and I used paper with snowflakes on it. If you're a guy you're probably thinking, "What's the problem?" If you're a woman... I'm sorry. I am now aware what a big no-no this is even if it was December and there's snow on the ground. You can never use Christmasy paper for a birthday. The paper needs to "match" the occasion. I promise to never do that again... even though I'm still thinking who cares? Right; women... at least uptight women. The girl who received the gift didn't care about the paper after all of that.

I once heard it said, "Give a dog a treat, and he'll love you... at least for a moment." This works for guys too: "Give a guy a treat, and he'll love you... at least for a moment... unless you're hot then it'll last for a bit longer." If this was for women it would be, "Give a woman a treat, and she'll judge what you gave her and then second guess your motive as to why you gave it and/or feel guilty for being given a gift." Women have a way of complicating things when guys are simple. For instance, how many guys have been told, "We can't have sex because I didn't shave"? Most guys would think, "Um, is the hair full of bugs? No? So why is this a problem?" If it's a new relationship, the guy really couldn't care less: (guy) "You say you have a contractible disease? Um... how bad is it? I have medical insurance, so I'm thinking let's get some barbecue sauce and get busy." Thank you, Fresh Prince of Bel-Air, for that classy line.

Tip: Men typically don't have hidden messages or secret agendas

because...frankly, we can't be bothered. The whole "read between the lines" and being vindictive thing takes too much brain space. There is a benefit to our laziness.

(Originally written when I was 32) Magazines like Cosmo make me laugh with their headings like *101 Ways to Please a Man in Bed*. 101? Why do you need so many? Men aren't complicated. Clearly a woman wrote this article and it's based on asking a guy: (writer) "Do you like this? What about this? Or this?" (guy) "If you promise to have sex with me, I'll like all of that weird stuff including that last

one that sounds terrible.” If a guy wrote this article, it would be called *1 Way to Please a Man in Bed because that’s All You Need*. It’d be the same answer for how to please a dog. As Harrison Ford said in *Six Days and Seven Nights*: “You know how a woman gets a man excited? She shows up.” The rest is a bonus. A second option: Be ready to play with us and clothes are optional. That last point is the difference from dogs; clothes should always be kept on for dogs. Guys are easy. Visually, we can be turned on by the smallest things. The late comedian Greg Giraldo said, “I saw a sales girl pulling panties off a mannequin; it was the hottest thing I’d ever seen in my life. She was just doing her job pulling the panties off. It didn’t even occur to her that she was doing anything erotic...it wasn’t even a full mannequin. It was a torso mannequin; no arms; no legs.” I know a lot of young women have times where they resent the power they have over men and complain when strangers check them out, but if I found a magic genie in a lamp that’d be one of my wishes, to simply stand in one spot and be able to turn women on. That’d be amazing. If running my hand up my stomach and across my chest seduced women, I’d be doing it all day long. I’d start taking the bus in order to have an audience. Beautiful, ugly, old, young but legal, teeth, no teeth, I wouldn’t care. I’d turn all of them on; I’m not prejudiced. It’d be like doing community service: (me) “Enjoy your day ladies.” (ladies) “Oh, we will now thanks to you. You’re like a superhero with the power to excite.” To have that kind of power over women would be my narcissistic dream come true. I wish it was that easy to please a woman. Women have it so easy. Ladies, embrace how easy it is to make us guys happy, and be grateful because it’s the one thing in your life that doesn’t have to be complicated. Enjoy it. And if you want to have fun, rub it in your guy’s face: (girl) “It’s so easy to make you happy while I’m a complicated mess. In your face sucka!” I’m guessing you won’t want to say that last part, but you get the idea.

(Current 45-year-old self) Women have sexual power... and then suddenly they don’t. They go from sexual creatures to moms. This, of course, is next level power since a mom protecting her kids can beat up the best UFC fighter if that would save her child. As a man, I’m still waiting to figure out what power I have... besides making people laugh when I get hit in the groin.

Easily Distracted

Men have a wonderful heart for helping their partner and/or friends... unless they're distracted. Just like a dog who gets... squirrel! Sorry, I was distracted... and apparently, I get distracted by something that distracts dogs. Distractions can be temporary... squirrel!... or it can last for years: (guy) "Wow, it's Jim. We haven't seen you since you started dating. That was what, four years ago?" Women are frequently our long term distractions, but we can also be distracted by work and hobbies; hence, I'm writing this book instead of hanging out with friends. There are seven main distractions for a guy:

1. Hot girl
2. Hope of sex
3. Food & Beverages
4. Fun
5. Goal (e.g. work, hobby, job around the house, see buddies, etc.)
6. Doing or watching someone do something impressive
7. Someone about to get hurt

The last one can be a good distraction for anyone... you know, if you're mean like me. For instance, seeing a guy being hit in the groin is hilarious. It's terrible happening to you, but a treat to see happening to someone else. Of course, there are those who see someone about to get hurt and their response isn't, "Sweet, this is gonna be good," but rather, "I need to prevent this," you know, like good

people. I call those people women... unless it's the woman's partner about to get hurt; then it's hilarious to them, too.

One of the biggest distractions for a guy is his partner's food. Just like a dog who begs at the table with big droopy eyes: (dog) "May I have some please... and by 'some' I mean all." This problem doesn't usually take effect until the guy has finished his own plate. That's when he stares longingly at his partner's. Staring longingly at his *partner* is romantic; staring longingly at his *partner's* food, not so romantic. The apostrophe "s" makes a big difference: (guy) "I could stare at you all day." (girl) "That's so sweet." (guy) "No, I mean I'm going to stare at you all day until you give me your food." If a guy is staring at his partner's food, it doesn't really matter what the girl says; all he's thinking is: "I hope she's full and offers me the rest." Even if the guy is full, "Mmm, food." My dad did this to my mom through their entire relationship. Without realizing it, I followed in his "food" steps. Guys don't mean to be rude, but our stomachs are bigger than our brains, especially with some men: "Is that a sack of potatoes in your stomach or are you just happy to see me?" Like dogs, we'll stare and drool at someone's plate of food hoping the person will offer us some: (girl) "Stop begging at the table." (guy) "Yeah, bad boy." (girl) "I wasn't talking to the dog." What this points out is ***what every man ultimately wants in a woman is a small appetite and a willingness to give up the leftovers.*** That's why skinny women are attractive to men. Skinny should mean they don't eat much. If she's skinny *and* can eat a lot? That's one of the worst combos ever, especially if the guy is like me and has to work out to stay thin. An even worse possible woman for a guy is one who can eat more than him and who wants to eat *his* leftovers. Having someone want to eat my leftovers is a major reason for me not to be gay (that's not the biggest reason, but it doesn't help): (potential gay man) "Yeah, I'm attracted to guys, but I want someone who gives me the leftovers, so I'm going for a female ballerina who wants to lose a few pounds." A woman who eats your leftovers is only marginally worse than the second worse type of woman, which is a woman who gives her leftovers to the dog instead of her man: (guy) "Do you love the dog more than me?" (girl) "Why would you ask such an obvious question? I love the one who drools less the most." (guy) "I told you it's a medical condition."

Because men can be distracted, we need to be careful of three main things. First, we need to be careful not to be rude when we're supposed to listen. We may have the capacity to be easily distracted, but that doesn't give us permission to not try to be a good listener. Second, we need to fight the temptation to let our distraction like a hobby lead us to isolating ourselves and/or ignoring our loved ones. We

need to prioritize how we spend our time, which means balancing our thing with connecting with others. Third, guys need to be careful not to let their distractions set them up for failure. For instance, how many men have dated a woman they thought was beautiful, but then eventually discovered how blinded they were to her personality? I always laugh when cheesy guys say things like: (guy with lame voice) “She was beautiful on the outside and then I found out she was also beautiful on the inside.” Really? The truth is a lot of these men will eventually say, “She was beautiful on the outside and... that’s where it stopped, but I didn’t notice soon enough because the outside was so hot. Now she doesn’t even have that. Me dumb-dumb.”

Tip: Ladies, please know, as annoying as it is for you that we get distracted so easily, it’s way worse for us. Let me tell you why... ooh, dinner time.

Caught in the Moment

One of the reasons guys get into trouble is we get caught up in the moment: “It seemed like a good idea at the time,” (words of a genius). This can even lead us to saying, “Sure honey, whatever you want,” without hearing what was asked because we’re too focused on what we’re doing at that moment. This idea of being caught in the moment is connected to us having a narrow focus and being easily distracted. Being caught in the moment can even lead us to going further with a girl than we should; that, and the blood in our head leaves to visit another area giving another head our “brain” power. We get so caught in the moment we forget to consider repercussions and why it’s wrong. It’s not an excuse; it’s just an important fact to consider because it means ***men need to put in safeguards to protect ourselves from being dumb***. (wife) “So for your new secretary you can hire a really hot, young, single woman or an older, very nice woman? That’s a no brainer... unless you want to end up being a no-brainer.” ***We all need to protect ourselves from potential vulnerabilities, but especially men***. This is particularly important since we can easily become mentally impaired by hormones. I for one won’t let myself be alone with Katie Perry and Yvonne Strahovski because I don’t want to (pause to enjoy the thought) stare at them giggling with my mouth open salivating like a dog panting for steak. My safeguard to not go too far with another woman is being... me (it’s foolproof). As my wife says, “I’d only be worried if you couldn’t talk.”

Dogs have this same problem of being caught in the moment. For example, a few winters ago we went through a nasty cold spell where it was -25C (or -13F for my American friends). It was so cold out that when Charlie asked to go outside, when someone opened the door and he felt the cold, he turned around and ran away. Yet, later that day when he saw me, he was all excited to go for our routine walk. I had no interest in taking him because of the cold, but he barked and danced at the door until I caved. My girlfriend at the time? Nope; no frig'n way. She was too smart to go out on a night like that, but me? I was a sucker for making Charlie happy. When I opened the door, Charlie was so caught in the moment he didn't notice the wall of cold that welcomed him as he charged outside. Me? Oh, I noticed. To add to this experience, as soon as we got to the sidewalk I slipped on ice and fell flat out. It felt like a slow-motion fall, "Ohhhhhh nnnnnnoooooo!" Splat. Arms out, legs bending in ways they've never bent before. It was the kind of fall where if it was anyone else, I would've laughed hysterically. Fortunately, I was so cold I didn't feel all the cuts... until later, and oh, did I notice then. I also didn't notice the snow now in my shoes... again, until later. That was a fun moment. Wanting to be tough (or because I was too cold to care), I got up and started running with the still excited Charlie. He was so excited he didn't even notice my tumble. Nice, isn't he? But who am I to judge? I once laughed when my wife fell, and that's way worse... to her. I still think it was funny. We were lightly jogging to the car, and as she was on the other side by her door, she suddenly disappeared, poof, like a magician. Unlike Charlie, I noticed... and laughed hysterically... but that wasn't a good choice either. We both screwed up, but my laughing was worse, which makes me dumber than a dog (no argument from my wife on this point). The problem was I got caught in the moment; I was distracted from how I should've responded, which should've been, "Are you okay?" (and laughed in my head). The only exception is if she laughed first and then I could join her. I have been trained to know this is how it should be done, but I get caught in the moment, especially because someone getting hurt is hilarious.

At the exact halfway point of my walk with Charlie where both directions were the same distance from home, Charlie suddenly realized how cold it was and that the walk was a mistake – perfect timing. Charlie had been caught in the moment, but when he noticed the reality of his situation, he just stopped moving and then lifted a paw like he was hurt. It's a clever move. He wasn't hurt, but he acted like he was. I used to do that as a kid. I'd have a sore stomach, so I'd limp to get attention. Brilliant, I know. Not wanting to be in the cold, I quickly scooped him up, held him close like a football, and started to run home in my snow filled shoes... which were now water filled shoes. As Charlie got warm, however, he

wanted down again. It became his little game. He would walk until he was cold and then act hurt, so I'd carry him. Eventually, I stopped putting him back down and we just ran home together. The funny thing is you can't help but look ridiculous running with a dog in your arms because you don't want to bounce him too much. This means I was running with this strange shuffle like a guy who hasn't pooped in a long-time racing to the bathroom. To add to this, while I was running, I kept hearing a sound like icicles clanging. I quickly realized I heard icicles clanging because there *were* icicles clanging. When we first got outside, Charlie had tried marking his territory, so the fur around his area was now covered in tiny icicles. He had frozen, dangling pee (or "urine-cicles") and they clanged when he bounced in my arms. This was hilarious to me, and I started singing *Jingle Bells* between giggles. When I got back in the house, my wife was laughing at me. Apparently, she could see me running from the front window and I looked like an eighty-year-old football receiver running with a furry football in my arms because it was this half waddle, half run thing. She could also see me giggling like a madman. To add to this already comical scene, I was wearing all black with a black hood up over my head, which made me look like an elderly thief half waddling, half running away from the scene of a crime laughing, "Hee hee hee!"

In this situation, Charlie faced a repercussion for being caught in the moment, but I was able to help get him through it. I was also caught in the moment because I had no idea someone was watching me... and thoroughly enjoying it. Men, in general, will often find themselves in a similar position. We get caught in the moment and miss out on certain details, which is why women can be so helpful to us. They can often be better at not getting caught in the moment or distracted and staying on task... unless they have ADD like my wife, which means she gets even more caught in the moment and distracted than I do – it's fun.

A guy getting caught in the moment shouldn't be seen as a sign of weakness, but as a way for our partner to connect and be reminded that we need each other. Women help men not get caught in the moment, but men discover things like North America because we get focused on certain goals: (Christopher Columbus) "We're having another kid? Wow... so I'm going to go do some errands. Anybody need anything from a new land I plan on rediscovering? I may not find anything, but it's worth the trip to avoid diaper duty... I mean, to make money for the family."

Fortunately, the benefit of getting caught in the moment means we can suddenly complete a task out of nowhere. The job we complete could have sat unfinished

for years and our wives may have even given up complaining about it, but out of nowhere something will inspire us to just do it. This can be a way to procrastinate (my room was spotless during exam times when I was supposed to be studying) or something might just click in our heads: (guy) “I’m going to do this.” There isn’t any real explanation for it, but many guys will suddenly find themselves doing something we’ve been avoiding for ages, and afterwards we’ll wonder why we didn’t do it sooner.

Tips for Women: You can use this to your advantage. For instance, frustrated wives can ask their husband to do a really terrible job, but then arrange it so your man sees the actual job you want done in order to spark his interest in doing that one as a way to procrastinate doing the even worse job. Another option is to keep the unfinished job in a very noticeable spot, especially one that makes him have to climb over it, so he’ll hopefully get sick of seeing it and eventually just do it to get it out of the way. Brilliant I know. Another option is you can sometimes spark a guy’s interest by starting the job, especially if you’re doing it wrong. There’s a chance he’ll take it over to show how “smart” he is. Other times, saying you’ve hired a guy to come do the job may fuel his cheap side and/or ego to get moving. Regardless, ***the best way to get a job done isn’t to nag; it’s to get the guy caught in the moment.*** Ladies, you’re welcome for that gem.

Routine and Consistency

Dogs like routine. They like to follow a simple lifestyle. Charlie loved when I'd come over because this typically set the night into a routine: walk and then sit to watch a show. This routine was thrown off when we were redecorating my then girlfriend's mom's kitchen. My wife and I would still do the routine of walk Charlie and then watch a twenty-minute show, but I'd be there earlier than usual to work on the kitchen. My being there early confused him even if I took him for a walk before I started working. This break in routine made him exceedingly restless. He'd bark to go outside, and when he was outside, he'd bark to be let in. Inside, he'd bark to go out, and so on. His brain was confused (ironically proving he had a brain). Similarly, men like routine, especially as we get older. As much as we love fun and adventure, men ultimately want life to be less complicated. We want our lives to be like us – simple. This follows our desire to problem solve. We want life to be less complicated, and one of the best ways to do this is through routine. Routine is safe; it reduces conflict and thinking (that's an overrated activity), and the structure means breaking it once in awhile allows for a sense of adventure.

Have you ever heard a man ask, "Honey, where are my keys?" or "Honey, do you know where I put my wallet?" "Honey, do you know where I put... the thing I can't remember?" Men need routine (and a wife) because otherwise, we lose

things and get overwhelmed. We're not good with the details. Our brains tend to be better at seeing the big picture (and not how nice the napkins look).

One of the issues routines causes me is when I greet people I sometimes can't remember if I've asked, "How are you?" yet. I'll meet someone and start: (me) "Hey, how are you?" (other person) "Good, you?" (me) "Good, you?" (other person) "Good?" I'm so used to this greeting, "Good, you?" I don't pay attention to whether I've already asked "How are you?" If I met someone with a similar problem we could go on forever: (me) "Hey, how are you?" (other person) "Good, you?" (me) "Good, you?" (other person) "Good, you?" (me) "Good... you? Have I asked that already?" (other person) "I don't know... how are you?"

Unfortunately, routine can get men in serious trouble. For instance, in Morgan Spurlock's show, *30 Days*, in the episode on life in prison, he says that prison is like a revolving door. This is partially the result of this being part of the routine of life for some men: The man goes in prison, is let out, and then ends up going back in. As much as the men "hate" prison, it becomes part of their life's routine. They can even find comfort in the routine of prison life because it offers a sense of stability unlike the real world where there is too much mystery and freedom.

In the normal day-to-day, routine can also get men in trouble. I know a wife who was angry at her husband because, like any normal person, she would leave things on the bottom step in order for the first person going upstairs to take it. Unfortunately, her husband just stepped over it. Was he lazy, did he see it as "woman's work," or was he in the routine of stepping over it? He was normally a very good husband, but he had a bad routine. This was good news because she just needed to change the routine. To fix this I told her the next time he was going upstairs, she needed to stop him at the bottom of the stairs and tell him to look down. When she did this, he was surprised to notice something was there even though he was stepping over it. This simple move helped retrain him to think before going up the stairs. And how did I know this would work? My mom did it to me when I was a teenager. I learned from the best.

Men loving routine can be a gift to women... or a curse. For instance, a man ignoring his wife can easily become a routine: (guy) "There she goes, blah, blah, blah. Time to tune her out." Fortunately, knowing this desire for routine, bad habits like this can be changed from one routine to another. The tricky part is figuring out *how* to train it. I wish I could give a simpler, less convoluted answer than that, but there are simply too many variables for me to give a definitive

answer beyond the two of you need to discover how to get into a new routine using the training tips given in the earlier chapter.

One of the major reasons guys like routine so much is we love efficiency. Efficiency is logical (i.e. why waste time?) and it lets us do more of what we want – nothing. That being noted, I’m a workaholic, so efficiencies mean I can get more done (yes, I have a problem), but if I’m really efficient, I can have a nap (a glorious activity for middle-aged guys like me). Being efficient also connects to how talking too much is annoying for guys: “So I can listen to you ramble and possibly criticize me or talk about things I don’t care about and people who don’t matter to me ooorrrrrrr I can have an hour nap... hmm, choices.” When I was a teenager, I worked at a movie theater behind the snack bar. After I figured out a system, I was the fastest server they had (I was that cool). I was the opposite of almost every young server I see today who seem put out having to do their job: “You’re going to tip me even though I suck, right?” For me, serving people was a competition with the reward being more time to joke with the other staff after all the movies were let in. It was also my way of impressing the ladies I worked with (there might be a reason I remained single for the five years I worked there).

What’s interesting to me is while men want to be efficient, women want things done the “right” way. I put “right” in quotations because, one, it’s fun, “I” “recommend” “it”, and also because there generally isn’t a “right” way of doing things. For instance, early in my marriage I swept the floors on the main floor of my house, but after I put the mop away, I noticed I missed a small spot. Instead of getting the mop again, I put my feet together and shimmied across the floor like a penguin. I thought I was a genius because I saved the 10 seconds to get the mop, but when I looked up, I saw my wife staring at me with that wonderful wife look of disgust: “That’s not the right way to do it!” I didn’t know about this “right” way back then, which meant this look left me very confused: “But I’m a genius... at least that’s what my mommy told me.” Where I valued creativity for problem solving and efficiency, my wife was appalled I didn’t follow the proper procedures and now understood why my first girlfriend of five years left me for another woman (I’m that much man I scared her away from an entire gender).

Women are also not as worried about routine because of this. They want things done “right”. They don’t need a routine because they can actually think of the things that need getting done. Guys? Nope. We are easygoing enough not to care if something doesn’t get done; we’ll adjust. If it’s a routine, however, we don’t have to think and we’ll do it because that’s what we do; we were trained to do it.

How They Communicate

To quote Charlie when he saw me, “Bark, bark, bark, bark, bark...” I believe the English translation is “Hi, hi, hi, hi, hi...” but I could be mistaken. He might actually have been saying, “My owner’s proof that she’s the luckiest woman in the world is here! I wish I was the dog equivalent of awesome as him, but no one could come close to that because he’s so awesome!” I’m probably wrong... not about me being awesome, but that Charlie could have thought in full sentences. Personally, I think I’m being generous by saying Charlie was smart enough to say hi. The odds are, “Bark, bark, bark, bark” was really just translated as: “Noise, noise, noise, noise.” Dogs, in general, are not good verbal communicators. Besides wagging their tail, dogs do most of their communicating in grunts, groans, growls, yawns and sighs. Huhn, not good verbal communicators who use grunts, groans, growls, yawns, and sighs; I wonder what gender does that? I’m not saying men are like cavemen (I’m not denying it either), but many men in long term relationships tend to communicate in basic non-verbal ways. (older guy) “Words... (sigh) (grunt) (scratch).” Many men know talking can lead to saying something dumb and getting in trouble, which means they limit what they say: (wife) “What you say can and will be used against you.” (guy) “Awesome... Do you prefer grunting or groaning?” Other men have limited communication because they’re not given a chance to talk: (wife) “What do you want for dinner?” (husband) “Uh...” (wife) “Burgers? You always want burgers. Will you barbeque?” (husband) “Uh...” (wife) “Of course you will. You’ll complain, but you’ll do it

because you love your burgers barbequed. Did you want me to start the barbeque?” (husband) “Uh...” (wife) “Fine, I’ll do it. You sure are demanding tonight.”

Tip: If your man has a tendency to tune you out and you have something important to say, break the routine. Don’t just talk; try holding his hand or putting your hand on his shoulder before saying the important information because that will distinguish it as being different than the other times you speak. Another option is to put on a chicken suit and do the hula. The added bonus is that’d be very sexy. That’s not sarcastic at all.

Because dogs will share personal information through their physicality, the author of *Decoding your Dog* teaches owners to: “Listen with your eyes,”^{xvii}. For instance, if a dog is hot, he’ll pant. If he’s cold, he might lay on a heat register. If he’s about to go number two, he might do the circle dance. And, of course, there’s always the tail, which points out whether he’s happy, scared, energetic, or having a moment of playful brainlessness: (dog) “I’m going to get you this time tail!” The same goes with men. We don’t often wear our heart on our sleeve, but we’ll wear it on our face. Some men are good at having a poker face, but when it comes to our partners, it’s a lot harder to hide what we’re feeling. Anger is probably the easiest to recognize with the fire behind our eyes or having furrowed eyebrows. Sadness and hurt, on the other hand, usually mean we avoid eye contact and have raised eyebrows. Ladies, consider your guy like an actor in a silent movie (you could picture him as a mime, but that would make it too hard not to laugh at him). There’s a lot to be read from his face and body. ***We might not be communicating with words, but there’s still a lot of communicating going on.***

If you notice your man is upset, the best thing is not to hound him. ***One of the safest approaches is to simply ask, “You seem upset; did you want to tell me about it now or later?”*** The odds are he’ll just want some space to resolve the issues in his head, but giving a timeline is wise because a deadline encourages people to address the issue and not get distracted and/or suppress it.

Tip: Anger makes us stupid; therefore, it’s best to only gently encourage people to talk and not push them so hard they snap. If you bug someone long enough, they might talk, but if it’s coming out as an explosion, it’s more emotional garbage that he likely doesn’t mean: (guy) “Fine! You want me to talk? Blah, blah, yell, yell, scream, curse, yell some more.”

Men are naturally drawn to talking less and it can get worse because of the following:

- 1) Words can feel vulnerable while actions are more practical, which is why some men say things like, “I don’t need to say I love you. Look what I do for you.”
- 2) Men typically aren’t as self-reflective or introspective (unless you’re half female like me). We prefer to think about how to solve problems and not feelings because then we’d have to... feel (shudder).
- 3) Men are usually easygoing and don’t care as much about things like colour choices and what napkins are used. Women care more about the details, so they have more to say, which often includes compliments and complaints. Who’s more likely to leave a comment card filled out? Women... unless it’s a joke or to flirt with a server.
- 4) Complaining without being funny about it is whining, and whining is a big no-no for guys (it should be for everyone). Unfortunately, to avoid whining, guys sometimes forget to vent (i.e. get stuff off their chest) and they end up suppressing things, which never ends well... unless you’re a therapist and can make money off others doing it.
- 5) We compartmentalize our thoughts, which means we don’t have things swirling in our brains as much as women. This means there isn’t as much ready material to talk about, which means after a day of work, I need my wife to say something that cues a memory because I’ve shut down that part of my brain. If she just asks how my day was my response will be the classic: “Fine.” Even if I had something crazy happen in the day, I won’t remember it without a memory cue. This is why I often remember something hours later, and when I share it, my wife is left wondering why I didn’t share it sooner. It simply wasn’t available until there was a cue.
- 6) Guys tend to be careful about what we say because we don’t want to be set up to be corrected, criticized, or made to feel lower in the social hierarchy.
- 7) Some guys think the less you talk, the “tougher” you can appear – nope. You look rude and unapproachable.
- 8) To greet people, guys will often nod instead of saying hi because it looks tougher and reduces feeling stupid if the other person ignores us.

- 9) Talking takes energy and thinking, and who wants that?
- 10) Talking can lead to unnecessary fights and/or be held against us later.
- 11) Some men are slow to know how to respond, so they feel safer not responding at all rather than look slow.

On more than one occasion I've shared my thoughts with someone, only to have them thrown in my face later. For instance, when I was twenty-one, I told my youth pastor that I struggled with my relationship with my dad, which is a pretty typical issue for young men figuring themselves out and creating a sense of independence from their parents. Five years later, almost a year after my dad had passed away, which was after several years of being at peace with him (I had grown past my natural teenage boy rebellious phase), this youth pastor, a so-called representative of God, used what I told him against me. This was incredibly hurtful and taught me why there's the cliché: "Once bitten, twice shy." ***The jerks we meet today make it difficult to share our heart with others tomorrow.***

Several years later, I learned that sharing any opinion has its risks. My girlfriend and I were visiting a popular church (I'm not bragging), and near the beginning of the service, in front of eight hundred people, the pastor said a simple congregational prayer and in the middle of it, he started to cry with actual tears he had to wipe away. It was a two-minute prayer where he wasn't praying about anything intense or anything personal and he started to cry. He didn't have something in his eye that made it water. He didn't get punched in the nose while he was praying (that would've been hilarious: (guy who punched pastor) "I wanted to see if he'd turn the other cheek.") It also didn't look like he was cutting onions (that would also be hilarious: (pastor) "Thank you LORD for this snack I'm about to have that will keep people away from me after the service.") I should also point out that during his sermon and other longer prayers, no tears – weird. After the service, this was the conversation this girl and I had: (me) "It was weird seeing the pastor cry." (her) "No it wasn't." (me) "Okay, sure, for you I guess it wasn't weird, but as a man it's weird to see another man cry like that, especially for no reason." (her) "No it's not." (me) "I don't think you understand what I'm saying. For me, a guy, it's weird seeing another guy cry." (her) "No it's not." It was so hard for me to stay calm. Part of me was thinking, "I think I know men pretty well because I am one." The other part of me was thinking, "At least give me a reason for disagreeing." In my head I was mad, but the surface was still looking calm as I added, "For men in general, it's not normal to cry in public." (her) "No it's not."

In my head I was thinking, “Maybe somehow you do know men better than me; you’ve dated more dudes than I have, but I’m pretty sure I know me better than you know me.” I was also thinking (this is the extent of my ability to multitask): “No it’s not’ isn’t an argument!” I was starting to boil, so I tried a different approach to clarify my point, “Are you a woman?” (her) “Am I a guy?” She really didn’t want to agree with me on anything: (me laughing) “I hope not.” (her) “I’m just saying.” (me) “You’re just saying what?” (her) “I’m just saying.” (me) “What are you saying? You didn’t say anything.” This useless conversation carried on for a few more minutes until I finally blurted, “If that pastor cried in front of a group of guys, whether there were two guys or twenty, we would be teasing the crap out of him after. Unless he’s at a funeral or it’s a special occasion and he’s sharing a deep moment, a man shouldn’t cry in front of others. It’s not normal.” Guess what her response was. If you said “No, it’s not,” you guessed it. And did my head explode? You guessed it. Fortunately, my head exploding meant it was easier for me to stop talking, but I continued the argument in my exploded mind fragments where I could win it: (me in my exploded mind fragments) “Trust me; I’m right.” (her in my head) “Wow, you are right. You’re so brilliant. I’m sorry for being confrontational. Want to make out?” I never figured out what was going on in that situation whether she misinterpreted me, if she was angry at me for something else, or if she just wanted to be quarrelsome. All I know is it made me not want to talk to her for the rest of the night and made me rethink sharing any other thoughts in the future. Fortunately, this wasn’t normal communicating for her. If it was, I would’ve resorted to communicating like an old man, in grunts and groans. You can’t argue against that: (guy) “Grunt, grunt.” (woman) “I think you mean ‘grunt, grunt, grunt.’” (guy) “Groan.” (woman) “You mean ‘grroooannn’ right? Because that would be more appropriate in this situation.” (guy) “Gah!!!” (woman) “No, silly; you mean, ‘Ggggaaaah!”

Tip: If a guy doesn’t feel safe to talk, he’s going to shutdown. If you attack him for shutting down, he’s going to get distant. If safety isn’t restored, this physical and emotional distance is going to increase.

I should point out that I could understand the pastor crying if he had just watched that Christmas Canadian Tire commercial I mentioned earlier, but there was no apparent reason. Emotionally, guys tend to be at their most vulnerable when they’re on the verge of being dumped or they’ve been dumped – he wasn’t. When it looked like my girlfriend of five years was going to leave me, I was constantly bawling my eyes out... when I was alone driving to and from work. Good thing my car seats were felt and absorbent-like tissue. Yes, my seats were my tissues

because my socks could only hold so much snot and tears. I'm a guy; I'm too tough to have Kleenex in my car. That's like admitting defeat. Currently, I might end up tearing up when stress is overwhelming and my body needs the release (who could've guessed three small girls and a disastrous renovation project could be stressful?), but this is always by myself because I *can't* cry in front of others. If you're thinking, "Chad must mean he *won't* cry in front of others." Nope, I can't. My body won't let me. It's like urinating (that sounds more sophisticated than "going pee-pees"); I need privacy. If I'm in a public bathroom and there's someone at a stall beside me or a line behind me, the only thing that's going to happen for me is embarrassment because nothing is coming out. Even if I really, really have to go... nothing. After a few awkward minutes of nothing I say, "Oh such great relief," (because who doesn't say that after going?), fake shake, do up my pants and leave the urinal area without making eye contact mumbling, "That felt sooooo good," while looking to see if there's a free stall.

The problem is I get performance anxiety. I guess that means I'd be pretty lousy in an orgy... not that I have to worry about that ever being an option. Actually, what would really make me bad in an orgy is the fact that I hate public displays of affection (PDA). I have a hard time kissing in front of people; this is going to be a whole lot worse. Not only do I hate participating in PDA (gross), I also hate seeing others doing PDA (grosser), which is not helping matters: (me) "Excuse me, but get a room... Oh wait, sorry. I forgot where I was. Does anyone have Lysol wipes? The germs are freaking me out!" Orgies sound terrible. It'd be like recess all over again where kids pick their teams: (team 1) "You take him." (team 2) "No, you take him." (me) "I'll just sit here quietly wishing my life involved better choices." I don't like taking off my shirt at the beach because I'm too embarrassed: (me) "I better jump in the water fast. I can only suck in my stomach for so long." My fear of taking off my clothes means I'd be the only one at the orgy with my shirt still on: (me) "I have to keep my shirt on because candles emit a surprisingly high amount of UV rays and I burn easily." If I don't like being topless, I'm definitely not taking off my pants in front of strangers: (unsupportive friend) "Don't worry people will be too busy staring at your gut to notice your shame." I guess the best test to know if you're orgy material is if you like being naked in a gym changeroom surrounded by other naked people: (old naked guy) "If you enjoy hanging out in here all day like I do, you will love Friday night (wink that makes me feel awkward)." I can't help but think it'd be like a club where there are twenty dudes to one girl: (confused guy) "Am I next? Do I like wait in a line or do I just cut in? I don't know how this works... or why I'm here." I'm bad at meeting people with my clothes on. This would be way worse: (me) "You look

like you love cookies as much as I do... I mean, I have baby powder to reduce chaffing if you want to borrow some for your fat thighs.”

Why am I mentioning this idea? Good question... well, this helps point out that sometimes it's best that a guy doesn't speak because we have stupid thoughts like this that make others feel uncomfortable. My apologies... but point proven.

Sometimes it's best for a guy to keep his thoughts to himself. This leads to a bonus reason for why men talk less:

Bonus: Guys sometimes have stupid thoughts and it's best they keep them to themselves... although they can be very amusing to us.

Tip: If your man isn't talking as much as you want, be grateful he isn't saying stupid things like this: “But ‘orgy’ is such a fun word to say.”

One of the best tools a woman can use to help conversations with a guy is to change the question. Asking, “How was your day?” or “How are you?” aren't very engaging questions. Asking something like “What was the best thing about your day?” or “What was the best thing you learned today?” prevent him from saying the standard answers, which I'm guessing involve the word “fine.” Guys love this answer: (girl) “How was your day?” (guy thinking this is the greatest day of his life) “Fine.” (another girl with a different guy) “How was your day?” (guy thinking this is the worst day of his life) “Fine.” Fine is the go-to answer. It's easy and it prevents having to be self reflective (bonus). It also reduces the potential for follow up questions or being scolded for having an emotion the woman doesn't like (more bonus). Plus, it makes us feel innocent if our partner gets angry at us for saying we're fine: (guy) “My wife is so crazy, she gets angry when I say I'm fine.” (other guy) “My wife is so crazy, she gets angry when she says she's fine and I don't double check to see if she's actually fine.”

Tip: These communication points are also helpful for dealing with closed off teenagers... if you even want to bother talking to them. If you think grownup men are dumb, teenage boys... whoa. Combining their sense of invincibility, teenage arrogance, and trying to be less overtly aggressive, they're a high risk for passive aggressive behavior.

If someone says they're fine, one option is to ask them to define it. Doing my internship, I had a peer complain that when she asked guy clients how they were, they always said, “I'm fine.” Being a person who was in therapy, she didn't understand how they could say that, but in that moment, they were “fine.” The

problem was she was used to female clients who couldn't wait to have someone willing to listen to them. For most guys, if we're breathing, on some level, we're fine. My suggestion for her was to have him define it. Since she was in a therapy role, she could use a scale of zero to ten where zero is "I'm dying" and ten is "I just won the lottery" to measure how fine he was. She could also ask, "Was there a moment this week that was less 'fine' than others?" In less formal settings she could follow a "fine" by asking: "Are you fine-good, fine-fine or fine-bad?" Personally, I like to start with something positive: "What was the highlight of your week?" and then as he starts sharing, he'll more likely be ready to share any frustrations. Another option is to try to get him sharing about something he likes to talk about such as sports or movies, something completely unrelated to feelings. This all falls under what I call social foreplay. Of course, this isn't fool proof (or "guy" proof, which is really the same thing), but ***guys need safety to share personal things whereas girls often share personal things to create safety.*** A guy needs a little warmup before going deeper (unless he's angry). It's like sex in reverse. Women need safety to have sex while men will use sex to feel safe. This is why many men will open up after sex. It's like God's joke on humanity: Girls connect by talking, which means they'd rather talk on a deeper level before sex while guys prefer to be connected before talking, which means they'd likely rather have sex before talking on a deeper level. This is also why guys prefer doing projects with other guys instead of going for coffee with them because the project gives them a connecting point.

Tip: There are three main ways to get a guy talking about personal things: Get him angry, get him drunk, or do something together like throw a Frisbee around and see if he eventually opens up. One of these ways is something I'd recommend. Guess which one.

Important Fact: If you ask a guy, "What are you thinking," and he says, "Nothing," there's a 90% chance that's true; he's thinking about absolutely nothing... and it feels fantastic. It's like a mini holiday. Most women can't understand this because their brains are constantly working and never turn off. Guys? Oh, we can turn it off, and it's fantastic.

My mom is brilliant; ***instead of asking a question, she will often use an observation.*** This is actually a chaplain's trick to engage someone who is inundated by questions from people like doctors. Examples include: "Someone's in a good mood," "Someone's had a long day," "Someone's been working hard," "Someone looks like they need a nap." "Someone needs me to state an

observation in hopes they'll feel understood and safe." By making an observational statement, the other person is forced to either agree or disagree, and it might even get that person wanting to explain their answer. It's great for the guy because the other person gives him something to work with, which reduces his need to think (always a gift).

Guy's are typically guarded with their feelings (or clueless to them), but there are exceptions. For instance, a lot of guys are a mush for their moms except maybe in the teen years when the guy only wants to be vulnerable with the girl he likes. Otherwise, guys typically prefer to talk about facts and funny stories because respect is more important than a "deeper" connection, especially when a "deeper" connection just leads to drama. I still have a group of friends from elementary school I see once every couple years. We know pretty much nothing about each other's current lives, and it's fine. If one of us is in trouble, however, we're ready to help, but otherwise we're just getting together to joke and make fun of stuff.

Tip: If you want a guy to talk, ask him for advice or his opinion on something.

Another Tip: The odds are the guy you're talking to isn't as emotionally stunted as he appears; he just needs help to feel safe enough to share. He needs to know you respect him and this won't change if you don't like his answer. At the same time, babying a guy rarely helps him feel respected... unless he's sick. Then he'll be all in: "Baby me."

And Another Tip: Engineers are... unique. My brother-in-law is an engineer and because he can fix anything, it helps him be incredibly easygoing. Because nothing bothers him, he has nothing to vent about, which can limit conversations to just positive things (weird, I know). As a therapist, this doesn't make any sense, but it can be very refreshing.

Another reason guys don't like to share a lot when asked things like "How was your day?" is more to do with the fact they don't want to talk in *that* moment. Sometimes a guy not sharing isn't because he doesn't want to or he's not good at it; it's simply because it's the wrong timing. It's not uncommon for guys to complain about walking into their house after a long day and being barraged with words as soon as they walk in the door. They want to share, but they just need a few minutes first to let their brains catch up.

Tip: Like all skills, talking is something that takes practice. Sometimes it doesn't matter what you do, the guy will have limited communication skills until he's practiced and developed this ability.

One author advises dog owners to: "Avoid making repetitive commands. Dogs are not deaf or stupid."^{xviii} This is an important rule for talking to men as well. Sometimes repeating yourself will only bring out the guy's "screw you" side because it is typically interpreted as condescending: (mean wife) "I have to repeat myself because you're too dumb to remember." (dumb guy) "I had to be dumb to ask you out. Other guys were too smart."

Sometimes women will complain that they need to repeat themselves, and the truth is they do. This leads to the catch: ***Men hate being told over and over to do something, but we often need reminders.*** Talk about a catch twenty-two. I'm a guy and I think this is dumb. If a reminder is needed, and there's a good chance at some point there will, the reminder needs to be done without it feeling condescending. My mom was the master at this. She knew when I was distracted or forgetting something, so she'd simply say a little reminder: (mom) "Do you think you'll get to (thing she asked me to do) in an hour or so?" See how she asks while making it sound like I haven't forgotten? It's brilliant because I'd feel both respected yet guilty for having forgotten, so I'd drop what I was doing and do it. If it was a reminder about an event we were going to she'd ask, "When do you want to leave to avoid traffic?" See how respectful that is? She could've said, "Here's your reminder because I know you're incompetent," but she didn't. I once dated a girl who would say, "You should know this because I already told you." My response: "Why are you being so mean? Why can't you be more like my mom?... I mean forget that last part. That's not fair of me to say, especially when I knew you weren't as good as her when we first started dating... and forget that part, too."

Men need reminders for four main reasons: First, we get distracted and forget. When I barbeque, I have to put on a timer while I'm waiting for the food to cook because it's easy for me to get so into something else that I forget to check the food cooking. This is important because most people don't like their burgers blackened and dry like clumpy sand. Second, sometimes guys forget because we don't care. Sometimes a woman needs to remind her man because it's what *she* wanted while he didn't care: (wife) "If you loved me, you'd love what I love." (husband) "You're funny." (wife) "What do you mean?" (husband) "Do you love what I love?" (wife) "This is different. I'm important." Third, men forget what's

said because we're not detail oriented: (guy) "Tom's getting divorced." (girl) "When did that happen?" (guy) "Uh, before now." Lastly, sometimes guys forget because... we just forget. I had a friend tell me six times over several years that she was allergic to water... I know, water! She'll breakout in a rash whenever she showers. The sixth time she said this and I responded like I'd never heard it before. She gently pointed out that she had already told me this five other times. I quickly apologized, and the embarrassment of that moment helped me remember it. It was nothing personal; I just forgot, and fortunately it was something we can joke about now... if she ever talked to me again.

Sometimes men don't follow through because it was never heard in the first place. You may have been speaking, but that doesn't mean the guy was listening because... well, guys can tune people out, especially their partner. Ladies, if your guy says, "Uh huhn," or "Yeah," repeatedly in a monotone voice, there's a good chance he's pulling a me. If he's reading or watching something, he's likely saying those things as a subconscious response. The odds are he doesn't even realize he's doing it. In a strange way he's proving he cares, but he's distracted. You either need to come back when he's done or try to break him of the distraction by doing something like touching his shoulder. You can throw in something very catching, but this is risky: "I met a Playboy Bunny who's offered to give me free lessons in making out... and you need to pick up eggs and milk on your way home from work tomorrow." Remember, men get focused on one thing at a time, so sometimes that's not going to be you. There's a reason sports commentators repeat the same stats over and over again because they know we're not really listening. From my experience, women love talking, so a guy needing his woman to repeat herself is like his gift to her because it gives her a reason to talk more. (Don't worry; my wife will hit me later for writing that.)

Tip for Guys: Women want to feel heard. When listening to a woman, don't focus on trying to solve her problem. Instead, focus on helping her feel understood. A great tool for this is to say something like: "That's too bad." If you're a guy, try it right now: "That's too bad." Now try it without sounding sarcastic. Many times a woman just wants her man to show he cares and understands what she's trying to tell him. For instance: (girl) "I had such a hard day." (guy) "That's too bad." Your response shouldn't be, "It could be worse," or "Oh crap, she's talking; this story is going to be an hour." And if you use "That's too bad," please make sure that statement fits the conversation: (girl) "I bought a new dress!" (guy) "That's too bad." (girl) "Were you listening?" (guy) "Why are you still talking? The book I read said you'd shut up

if I said “That’s too bad.” Other variations include, “That must be frustrating,” “I’d be upset, too,” “That person is being unfair,” and “Want to make out?” I think this last one will be your wife’s favorite option.

The Worst Unwritten Communication Rule

When it comes to communication between men and women, there’s one major double standard that often leaves guys in trouble and completely confused: ***Guys have to be careful what they say to girls, but girls can say whatever they want to a guy.*** A girl can tell a guy what he’s wearing is ugly and what he likes or is doing is stupid. She can even tell him that he’s getting fat. Women have full honesty privileges with a man, and she doesn’t even have to be nice about it. Men? Oh, we can’t be honest. Honesty is relationship suicide for a guy. If a guy was to be honest about his partner, even in a nice way, his partner and all her friends would wage war against him: (dimwitted guy being honest) “Um, honey, maybe we should go for a walk instead of sitting on the couch eating chips.” (girl) “Are you calling me fat?” (girl’s friend) “He called you fat? He’s lucky to have you. You’re way prettier than him.” (girl’s other friend) “I told you he was stupid... not to forget he’s also ugly.” (guy) “I can hear you.” (girl’s other friend) “Good. You can’t do much about being ugly, but maybe you can work on the stupid part.” This conversation isn’t based on a true story, and it’s meant to be an exaggeration, but it’s not unbelievable. Ultimately, the goal of a healthy relationship is for both people to feel safe to share. ***The nice thing is the safer you are as a listener, the safer you should end up feeling with your partner because they should be reciprocating what you’re doing.*** In therapy I’ve found if one partner doesn’t feel safe, the other one also doesn’t. Similarly, if one partner feels safe, the other does as well.

Tip for the Ladies: If you say you want your man to share more, you better be ready for him to share something you don’t like and be ready to accept it graciously. I’ve seen many guys share something in therapy and then be attacked by his partner for it. If you want a guy to share more, you can’t be picky about what he shares. People need to realize ***shooting something down keeps it from flying later.***

The Alpha Male

Years ago, guys used to respectfully approach a young lady at a dance and politely ask, “May I have this dance?” Now it seems like guys have taken lessons from dogs who like to hump peoples’ legs. There used to be a toy called Humphrey the Humping Dog who would move his backend like a plunger in a toilet, and that’s how a lot of guys “ask” girls to dance. At clubs it seems normal for a guy to go up behind a girl and start doing the “plunger in the toilet” dance, and he’ll continue unless he’s otherwise forced to move on to his next victim. This brazen move doesn’t make him an alpha male; this makes him a turd. This behavior makes him like a puppy who needs some serious training (and unlike a puppy, probably a couple good whacks). An alpha is ultimately “the man” and when I say “the man” I mean *the man*. Did that definition help? Being “the man” is a lot like being Vito Corleone from the movie, *The Godfather* (I couldn’t get past the first 15 minutes, which arguably makes me less of a man). I’m not saying guys should cut off a horse’s head and put it in someone’s bed to prove a point, but this character exudes a power that many men can’t help but want. He’s someone people look up to and seek help from because he’s so powerful. The modern-day equivalent would be Vin Diesel’s character, Dominic Toretto in the *Fast and the Furious* series, but he doesn’t have a cat, so he’s not as impressive. Both the Godfather and Toretto characters are respected and treated with a sense of awe and wonder. They’re men with the ability to solve problems and get things done, which leads to others coming to them for help. They’re so revered that no

one close questions their decisions (at least to their face). Men hate being questioned (nudge-nudge). We want to be the top dog, respected and unquestioned (not that anyone should go unquestioned). We want to be the ultimate problem solver, or to at least be connected to the guy who is. Just like dogs, men work in a hierarchy. The author of *Breaking Bad Habits in Dogs* writes, “The bottom line with dogs is that you lead or are led. Dogs work on a black-and-white system of leadership...” Because of this, “Most dogs will strive to establish their ranking status.”^{xix} This brings out competitiveness and striving to look better. This is a great tool for survival as striving to be the top dog will encourage and motivate dogs to be stronger and smarter. The same goes with men. This desire to be the top dog pushes us to better ourselves and push our personal limits. Of course, sometimes we try to better ourselves in the wrong ways, but with some training, our energy can be put to better use.

Tip: Being the alpha means people come to us for help to fix things, which gives us what we want: to feel respect and important. A wise alpha, however, will find the balance of helping others and keeping his family happy. A lot of leaders, especially pastors, have struggled with neglecting their families in their pursuit of helping others and to feel purpose. The family needs to come first because they should be the priority. Plus, a happy family gives strength and support for a man to better help others.

Unfortunately, some guys get confused. Being an alpha male is *not* about being a jerk (i.e. a show off or someone who puts others down). Unfortunately, some men are dumber than dumb and think that being rude proves they’re somehow superior. On my car I used to have the slogan: “Learning to love dumb people” (it was a good reminder for me when I met rude people). I would get a lot of passersby smiling and poking their friends to get them to look. On this one occasion, however, it was a couple days before Christmas (one of the best times of year), the weather was beautiful, and I was feeling good. After pulling into a store parking lot and getting parked, I got out of my car as I noticed a guy in a minivan looking at my car and start to smile. I figured I made another person’s day until he said, (remember he’s sitting in a minivan, a grey minivan, a very boring, nondescript, grey minivan) “What’s with the sticker? It’s as stupid as hell.” So this was not the happy moment I was expecting. Trying to use my own motto and love him despite the obvious dumbness, I simply replied, “I’m a marriage therapist, so it’s a way to advertise.” His response was as surprising as his first comment, “Really? I could use a marriage therapist.” What I wanted to say was, “I can believe it because your social skills suck,” but I went with, “Check out the

website for details,” and walked away. His arrogance and guarded demeanor suggested he would never actually go to therapy, so I wasn’t worried about pushing it. My guess is this guy tried hard to be the “cool” kid in high school... you know, before he was driving a boring, nondescript, grey minivan, but he was still yet to learn that being the alpha doesn’t involve being rude to others (do it behind the person’s back like I’m doing). In this encounter, he wasn’t being an alpha; he was being condescending and judgemental. A real alpha doesn’t need to prove himself. He’s already aware he’s the top dog. ***Little dogs yap. The alpha is quiet until he absolutely needs to speak and when he does, what’s said is powerful and reaffirms his dominance.***

This desire to be an alpha is a major reason a lot of men end up being drawn to leadership positions. Being in leadership helps us feel significance, respect, and a sense of purpose. Being an alpha includes many of the things a male heart longs for and can lead to a man reaching his true potential. It can also be his undoing as power can lead to pride. Pride is like the wind picking up right before a major storm hits. The wind acts like a warning that the sky is about to dump a load of water. This gives people and animals a chance to find shelter and prepare to have a major mess to clean up after. For instance, I’ve seen therapists and pastors who let pride set in and their arrogance led to failed marriages and congregations being torn apart. Thus, it is important for an alpha male to realize that being the leader is a great responsibility and this is a position that needs to be respected as it can lead to beautiful growth or it can lead to great destruction.

According to the author of *Decoding Your Dog*, there is a myth about dominance:

The dominance myth proposes that undesirable behavior occurs because a dog wants to be dominant for the pack leader... The biggest [problem] is that many dogs show body language that is clearly fearful, anxious, or submissive during their supposed attempts to take over. **A “leader dog” is confident, cool, and collected.** In fact, the leader of a pack is usually the dog who shows the *least* amount of aggression, not the most... **Most owner-directed aggression actually stems from anxiety, *not* the desire to dominate.** (bold added)^{xx}

As this author points out, dogs strive to establish their rank with other dogs and not with their owners. It’s about being confident and cool like the Godfather in the face of trials. This quotation also notes that if a dog shows any aggression to the owner, it’s not a sign of wanting dominance over them; something else is going on. Similarly, if a guy is being aggressive, there’s a good chance fear or hurt are at

play. Understanding this is important because the author goes on to claim: “The dangerous consequence of the dominance myth is that owners try to physically dominate their dog in an attempt to change the dog’s behavior. This solution is likely to cause the exact opposite of the result they want.”^{xxi} Similarly with men, this means women yelling and using jab comments at her man will exacerbate the problem. If she wants him to be assertive and stand up for himself, yelling things like “Make a decision!” and “Be a man!” are more likely to crush his manhood and make him defensive than build it up. If a woman wants her man to be at his best, she will want to encourage him and point out his strengths in order to help him be strong and not a weak little boy who needs his mommy... although, I hear women can find that sexy (if they’re weird).

When a guy is acting out of sorts, here are three options you can consider:

- 1) ***Give a Time to Address It:*** “I’m going to come back in an hour in order to ask what’s bothering you because I can tell something is off.”
- 2) ***Make a Guess:*** “I’m guessing there’s something bugging you. Is it (guess in one sentence)?”
- 3) ***Give a Two to Three Options Question (like a multiple-choice test):*** The options make it easier to answer: “Is something bugging you at work, home, or with friends?” Avoid open-ended questions because those can be overwhelming and lead to “I don’t know,” or more defensiveness, especially if the person can’t think of a good answer.

If men can’t be the alpha dog, they will settle for being accepted by someone who is. This is essentially power by association like the henchmen who work for the Godfather. If they can’t be the alpha, they at least want to be on the winning team. More importantly, being accepted by the alpha dog means you’re not the best, but you’re still good enough. This can allow them the chance to enjoy being higher up in the overall hierarchy because they’re associated to the top dog and maybe even one day they’ll follow in his footsteps to be the next alpha. Seeking to be accepted by an alpha dog is also connected to the fact that ***real men want to have someone they respect who can guide them to greatness.*** This can be someone who’s dead but lived a great life or it can be someone the guy knows. This is a male connection that no woman can offer. This longing to be accepted by an alpha begins with a child’s desire to be accepted by his father. The truth is ***most young men fail to feel like a grownup until they can somehow feel approval from the male figure that was most prominent in their lives growing up.*** Guys will also seek approval from other men they see as father

figures, mentors, or successful as a way to feel grownup and good enough. For instance, when I started as a therapist, I began working as an intern for a high-end company. The president, who was also a leading therapist of the company, was someone I really admired. He was both a successful business man and a good person. It made a huge difference for me as a budding therapist to have him take the time to connect with me as it gave me a sense of validity and confidence. It helped me, the newbie, feel like I was good enough, which gave me the confidence I needed to be better at my job. Since he was my boss, I already had a healthy respect for him (aka a reason to suck up), but because he was a good man, I also had a strong admiration and desire to be more like him. He was the alpha dog, and I was happy to let him be because he earned that spot; not because he had a cat on his lap while he handed out death sentences to his enemies like the Godfather (death threats aren't typically part of his job description), but because he had the knowledge and experience that could help me grow.

This desire to be approved by the alpha is the same reason why movies like *Robots* and *How to Train Your Dragon* are so powerful for a lot of guys (if a guy is man enough to watch cartoons). At the end of both of these movies, the father, the alpha, says to his son that he's proud of him. This act is like the acceptance into manhood. Unfortunately, many men grow up never feeling this acceptance. As important as this is, very few fathers ever make the effort to help the sons feel like they have achieved manhood. This is largely because the fathers are still trying to prove themselves as a man. Ironically, by offering acceptance to young men, the fathers would feel more like an alpha themselves. ***There is power in being the one to compliment and affirm others. As we help others, we help ourselves.***

Tip: Every man can be an alpha male in someone's eyes. For instance, a teenager can be an alpha male to someone younger than them. Sometimes this dynamic happens without the older person even realizing it, which is something to keep in mind because we never know who is watching us and being influenced.

Following this idea of wanting to be the alpha or connected to one, ***every guy wants to feel like a man, and if it's possible, he wants to feel like the man.*** This is a major reason why an unhappy wife is such a problem. Being *the* man means being a good provider and protector, and a good provider and protector would logically have a happy wife. Unfortunately, the reality is a woman being happy is much more difficult than that because a woman wants to make everyone happy (an impossible feat). It's also not the husband's job to make his wife

happy; *happiness is ultimately the individual's responsibility. All we can do is make it easier for them to be happy.*

Wanting to feel like *the* man is why nagging, complaining incessantly, and/or using putdowns are counterproductive. This is why some guys will eventually say “Screw you,” to her in their actions because he can only feel like poop for so long. ***If a guy wants to be the man, however, he needs to step up and do what he can to change the negative pattern*** even if it means couple’s counselling. The funny thing is to be *the* man he’s going to have to start with healthy communication (at least I find that funny): (guy) “To be the man I can’t bury my head? I have to communicate? Oh, fiddle faddle.” My apologies for using f-words, but I’m feeling particularly dangerous right now.

This sense of wanting to feel like *the* man is connected to why female virginity is often prized by men. A guy can want a woman with less experience in bed because it suggests that he’s so much man she can’t say no: (girl) “You’re the only one good enough for me... minus Zac Efron... and anyone else I’ll never meet who’s way cooler and more gorgeous than you.” No *real* man will say to a girl, “I’ll date you, but not until you sleep with at least ten scuzzy dudes. I really believe in sharing.” He also won’t say, “If you haven’t slept with a bunch of other dudes, how will you know how bad I am?” No, a guy wants to be the best you’ve ever had, and for a lot of guys, the less competition in this area the better. On the other hand, some men like the idea of their partner having a lot of experience because they think she’ll be better in bed – gross: (girl) “Let me show you what my ex loved... give me your ear. I call this ‘the tongue swooshing around like a toilet bowl brush doing a deep clean’.” This kind of twisted thinking might be some weird way to want to prove how good he is or he likes collecting STIs: (guy getting another STI) “I got Bingo!” I kind of get this idea because I once kissed a girl who had kissed a lot of other guys, so when she said I was by far the best, I felt pretty darn good about myself. I also wasn’t surprised. I played trombone in high school, so I knew had to use my lips (that’s right ladies; I used to be in the band; you can wipe the drool away now if you want). I’m sure you’re thinking this girl could’ve been lying or sarcastic, and the truth is I’ll never really know, but does it matter? When I’m quoting her, I’ll say, “She said out of the hundreds of guys she’s kissed, I’m by far the best kisser.” Although, I guess I should be careful to quote her properly. She hasn’t kissed hundreds of guys... it’s more like thousands, and I’m still the best because I’m that good. I say hundreds, so I sound humbler.

Men want to feel like *the* man because ***the enemy to manhood is weakness.*** This is one of the main reasons many men won't see a doctor when they're sick or ask for directions when they get lost. Both of these can feel like a sign of weakness and admitting they need help can make them feel like there's something wrong with them. This fear of weakness is why guys hate seeing girls at the gym be stronger than them: (guy obviously not me) "Wow, you make me look puny and pathetic; that's everything I've dreamed of!" This is the same mindset that leads men to not want to be with a woman who's funnier, makes more money, or is waaaaayyy smarter (a little smarter is expected). It can make them feel small. ***The great irony of our modern age is women are told to be driven and independent, yet, those who are, usually struggle to find a guy who can keep up.*** It's like a group of sluggish girls devised a plan to get the girls naturally more talented than them from being attractive to guys as partners: (lazy girl to naturally talented girl) "Go girl power. You should be as independent and driven as possible to make me look more attractive... I mean *you* more attractive." If the goal was to make some girls go overboard and become perfectionists who scare guys away because they look too superior to insecure guys, goal achieved.

Logically, because of the male hierarchy, men are drawn to be the best at something. This is important as a way to find our place in the hierarchy and to find acceptance from other men. It's actually a wonderful set up that motivates a lot of guys to do bigger things. The other very important reason to be good at something is to impress women. If we can't impress them, why would they want to date us? We need to have something to inspire women to want us. It's why guitar players play, comedians comed, and trombonerists trombone. I was in the band in high school because I thought that was how you look cool. I was not a smart adolescent, but I did discover a way to be the alpha male: Be the only one.

The Exception

The only time a *real* man can get away with not worrying about ranking and how great we are is when we're sick. Just as dogs will occasionally whine, so will men. We're not always able to be stoic or "fine," and for some reason a cold can be the greatest challenge to an otherwise strong man. For instance, after my dad ripped through his right hand on a table saw, he jammed the gushing fingers into his mouth and drove fifteen minutes home. Because he drove stick, he had to reach across with his left hand to shift gears while steering with his knee. He did this

without whining or hesitation. He was tough... and a little foolish. Why didn't he drive to the hospital? It was the same distance. Instead, he went home to see my mom: (Dad) "Look what I did!" or more likely, (fingers in mouth) "Lob lah bat did!" I guess grossing out my mom was high on his priority list. This was the same man who would get a cold and be sprawled out in his bed all day coughing, and whining. I wasn't sure if the sniffing was from cold snot or crying snot: (Dad) "I'm sick!" Like many men, no matter how rough and tough my dad was, if he had a cold, he became a whiney mess of mucus and phlegm. Is that weakness? No, it's just a holiday from his normal strength. Does he have to be a wuss about it? No, but everyone needs a break every now and then from being stoic and manly. I'm rarely stoic and manly, so I don't need breaks.

The Five Categories of Girls in a Guy's Mind

This idea that men fall into a hierarchy adds depth to the already challenging dating process. Guys want to rank higher in order to appeal to girls while at the same time, who the guy dates will have an effect on his ranking. Who a guy goes for gives a good idea of how they see themselves and what image they're trying to present. Here are the five basic ways a guy will see a girl:

The Prize Girl: This is a hot girl who turns heads. If a guy can get her, he has bragging rights... for a few minutes anyway. When she chooses a guy, she will make him feel like *the* man because it means he was good enough to get her. Even better, it'll make other guys jealous. Unfortunately, it's as if this level of beauty repels integrity, character, personality, and loyalty. These girls tend to be very volatile and quick to leave if things are tough, especially since they have a line of guys wanting them. It may feel good for a guy to appeal to a girl like this, but that feeling will quickly vanish as her true character (or lack thereof) starts to surface and her inability to be fun or have fun come to light.

The Relief Girl: This is the girl whose main appeal is more to do with her personality and ability to commit. She can still be very attractive physically, but she has more depth than just her body like the Prize Girl. Think girl-next-door versus cheerleader, Betty versus Veronica, Sandra Bullock versus a snotty runway model. These girls are particularly appealing when you've dated a Prize Girl and realize how shallow she is. Ultimately, a true Relief Girl will bring out the best in her partner because of her kindness and loving nature.

The Prize Girl in Disguise: Unfortunately, there are a number of women who look like Relief Girls (or you'd assume they were because they're attractively limited), but they're actually Prize Girls in Disguise as they still lack character and integrity. Looks can be deceiving, and sometimes the nastiest looking girls can also have the nastiest personalities. Talk about a lose-lose. These girls are particularly soul crushing for a guy because if a less-than-ideal looking girl treats him like dirt, he must suck.

The Slave Girl: Some guys will simply look for a girl who will bow down to them and never question their authority. This leads to a very unhealthy relationship where the guy is like a parent or master.

The Mommy: Some guys are drawn to women who will be like their mom. No, this isn't a Freudian thing: (guy) "You look like my mom – yummy! Can you sit on a floral couch and wear her clothes?" What I mean here is these girls will be like a parent or master who takes care of the guy. It's like the guy feels weak and wants an alpha female as his partner in order to protect and provide for him, which is a very broken dynamic.

The Alpha and Porn

Porn...there's an awkward conversation. I'm a guy with a limited social filter, so let's get into it. The first thing I should point out is whatever your stance on porn and the ensuing activity is it is a second-rate form of sex. The best form of sex is between a husband and wife. Sex is a gift from God because it has multiple benefits. For one, it acts like a gage for how good the relationship is. If both people in the relationship are satisfied with their sex life, they're likely in a good spot. If it feels like there's too much sex (yes, that happens) or too little (familiar?) then this is an easy way to know something in the relationship needs to be addressed. Too little sex often happens when one or both of the partners are allowing other things to take priority over their relationship or stress is building up. Meanwhile, too much sex is usually a sign that someone is hiding something. ***Sex is also a reminder that a relationship is continual work.*** It's like a plant; you have to continually remember to water it and give it sunshine or it'll die. Sex may be fun (or it should be), but in long-term relationships, it still takes work. Second, sex is meant to unite a couple together and to be a source of healing. For instance, in affair recovery, sex becomes a very important part of the healing journey. Ironically, the thing that caused the pain is also part of the foundation for healing.

The second thing I'll point out about porn is watching it connects to a guy's desire to feel like *the* man. This may sound strange, but the main way a guy feels like the top dog is by making a woman happy. This is where porn fits in because it gives the guy the illusion of making a woman happy. If you want to make a pornographic film that tanks (a strange goal) here's what you do: Make it with a very bored woman. You could have one of the most beautiful woman in the world, say Hermione Granger, surrounded by the second and third hottest woman in the world, Hermione Granger at age 30 and 40 (I like me a sexy nerd), and if they looked bored, it would still suck. If she's yawning, complaining about your weight, talking on the phone as a distraction to put up with you touching her, or whispering, "Are you done yet?" that would suck. No guy is going to watch that (unless it's a joke) because this triggers a deep-rooted fear of not being good enough. When we watch a show, we have mirror neurons that help us put ourselves into what we watch, which is why people cry in sad movies or get scared in horror movies. It's not "just" a movie. Similarly, watching porn causes the guy to insert himself (no pun intended) into the scene. This is why you won't find porn videos with guys who are severely obese, have tiny kibbles and bits, or no confidence.

Please know, I'm not saying women should start screaming crazy lies of happiness during sex because faking will lead to the guy not trusting his partner. A healthy sex life should include a woman who expresses her excitement even if it's in the subtler things like a certain look, touch, or reward. I'm also not suggesting men should watch porn. I will, however, claim that using porn is like playing with dynamite. There's a lot of risk to looking at it, but then, of course, there's the debate of what's "art" and what's pornographic? Yes, I can make things more complicated than others, but I avoid black and white thinking because there are always variables.

From my experience, there are seven main reasons men watch porn (or women read erotic novels):

- 1) ***Replacement:*** Some men replace their partner with porn, which is obviously very damaging to the relationship. This idea is different for those who are single because there isn't a specific person they're replacing. The risk, however, is replacing the hormonal drive single men are supposed to have to make themselves better in order to win a woman over. It can also lead to creating bad habits if the man isn't careful.

- 2) ***Punishment:*** Going one step further, this passive aggressive move is rooted in spite and is a “screw you” to the partner. This is not something a *real* man would do because revenge is incredibly unhealthy.
- 3) ***A Coping Mechanism:*** Like drinking, some people look to porn as a way to numb their pain. It’s not a healthy coping mechanism (obviously), but it could be worse.
- 4) ***A Top Up:*** Some people have higher sex drives than their partner, and after making sure the partner’s needs are met, this person will privately top off their drive.
- 5) ***A Quick, Cheap Thrill:*** This area becomes a growing choice for guys who get older and are feeling worn out from work and taking care of the kids. A lot of modern fathers give up playing sports and seeing friends because they’re too busy helping their kids and they just want to feel a quick thrill in order to feel something beyond physical and emotional exhaustion. It’s not an excuse, but it’s good to see it’s not about the partner; it’s about them.
- 6) ***To See a Happy Woman:*** Sometimes a man wants to see a woman who’s happy and/or horny, and if you can’t see that in real life...
- 7) ***To Get in the Mood (or make sure it still works):*** Sometimes a guy can use a little help to get into the mood for his partner making it more medicinal in nature.

Whatever the reason, people need to be careful with using porn because it’s often playing with fire and can cause a lot of hurt if the user is caught... but that’s a whole other issue.

Tip: When breaking any action that causes guilt like watching porn, instead of beating ourselves up after, we’re better off praising God – we should do the very thing we feel too ashamed to do. Division from God is one of the devil’s main goals, which is why the second sin in the Garden of Eden was hiding from God. Another goal of the devil’s is to cause division between loved ones, which is why he likes to lead men to confessing to their partner they watch porn because it can have devastating results. ***We should never try to reduce our guilt by dumping it on our partner.*** Find a good mentor or therapist and spare your partner the unnecessary hurt. Your problem doesn’t have to be

your spouse's. After all, an accountability partner should be someone who will take things less personally in order to be more supportive and less scary to tell if you have a bad moment.

The Need to Provide

When I was a kid, my dog, Amber, would leave dead animals on our front porch like a gift. She left everything from mice, birds, frogs, and snakes... or bits of them anyway. I think she kept part of them for herself – selfish. Apparently, this is normal behavior for dogs. It may not be the gift you want, but still, it’s the thought that counts, right? You can be angry, “How can you not know me?” or be thankful to be remembered: “He loves me. He just needs some more training.” ***Ideally a gift does two things: It shows you were remembered and you’re understood.*** Dogs might only be showing you’re remembered, but there’s still a desire to make the owner happy by being a provider. The same goes with men. We want to provide in a way that makes our woman happy because that, in turn, makes us happy.

This idea of how men want to provide is a major reason some guys are threatened when a girl makes more money than them. This was beautifully presented in the show *Rules of Engagement*, (I love that show). The husband, Jeff, is upset that his wife is making good money because this threatens his ability to provide for her, thereby making him feel superfluous (a word I use to sound smart). His wife, Audrey, however, tells him that there are different ways a guy can be a provider. Men may want to be the financial provider, but we can also provide physically (e.g. body heat), emotionally (e.g. a listening ear), spiritually (e.g. encourage going to church or getting into nature), handyman-ly (or whatever that word should be), or

even be her sexual pleasure-er (a word that's less than pleasure-ering). Love shouldn't be based on what money we can give because money is not a foundation for a relationship; it just adds to it.

The Need to Protect

As a country dog in the 80s, one of Amber's favorite activities was chasing cars (you could do anything back then, and it was awesome). After chasing them down the street she'd return home all cocky: "That's right; I just scared another one away." There was a pride there because she was able to protect the house. Charlie, my wife's former oversized tongue Shih Tzus, barked wildly whenever someone approached the house... at least if he was awake. If he was sleeping, a burglar wearing tap shoes could open the door with sticks of dynamite and still be fine. He was a very heavy sleeper. That being written, he was still a better protector than a cat: (cat hearing an intruder) "Should I hide under the bed or just ignore him and keep sleeping?" For many dogs, barking is where the protection stops; they're not that aggressive, especially since, in many cases, a dog is only a few treats away from being best friends. For some dogs, you don't even need treats, just a smile and then the dog's house protection involves a lot of licking of the stranger. This definitely isn't the best scare tactic... unless the person is deathly allergic to dog saliva, but what are the odds? (burglar allergic to dog saliva) "Oh no, he got me! Why did I rob the house with a friendly dog in it? I'm melting, melting... the paramedics are going to be very confused when they see me as a puddle." Of course, a dog licking you as a greeting isn't very scary, but a human licking you would be terrifying (although not as terrifying if the person being licked enjoyed it: "You're my new best friend").

Dogs can also be protectors against other animals. I was recently talking to someone who used to live in Zimbabwe. She told me that one day her and her family returned home to find a black mamba, the most feared snake in Africa, curled up in their living room. If you're going to have a squatter in your house, a smelly drunk man would be a much safer option. Fortunately, in a flash, the family dog attacked and killed the snake - impressive. I'm guessing the dog wasn't a Yorkie or Chihuahua, but either way, he saved their lives... or at least he saved an expensive bill for bringing in someone else to kill it for them. As someone who's cheap, this truly was an awesome dog... unless you were the snake.

This idea of protection can lead a dog to appearing vicious or temperamental. I learned this firsthand back before cell phones were a thing and I was working for a landscaping company. The owner's house was next door to the office where we met up in the morning. He had two big German Shepherds who frequently roamed the company site. They were friendly dogs who always appreciated the attention I gave them. One day I had to find the owner, which meant I stepped into his backyard. The owner wasn't there, but the one dog was. Since I was used to a friendly greeting from that dog I said in a friendly voice, "Hello there," and as I spoke, the dog came running at me. Thinking he wanted to be petted, I put my hands out... that was a misread. I quickly realized that as the dog lunged at me with his lips curled and teeth ready. For a second I thought he wanted to play... nope. He chumped on my forearm and didn't let go until I started leave the yard. As the blood dripped down my arm, I left the yard in shock with what just happened. Not caring about seeing the owner anymore, I grabbed some paper towels and left for the jobsite where I was to meet some other workers. Fortunately, it was by my doctor's office, so I swung by for some disinfectant. The funny thing is the owner was at the jobsite when I got there and he scolded me for taking so long to arrive... and that's when I showed the bandages on my arm that I needed because his dog attacked me. I probably shouldn't have enjoyed his apology as much as I did, but it was pretty awesome to have my boss be angry with me one second only to flip to be very sorry and sucking up. It's borderline petty on my part, but as an insecure nineteen-year-old, it felt pretty great to have a taste of being the alpha for a moment. The other funny thing about this situation was the next day the same dog came up to me like nothing had happened wanting to be shown affection. I was naturally a little more hesitant, but he was fine. From this, I quickly learned that dogs are protectors first and friends second. I also learned that dogs have a bad memory: (dog) "We had a fight yesterday?" It was like how guys can fight on a field and then go out for a beer together after:

(guy) “I can’t remember. Do I pay because I’m bleeding more or do you pay because you caused it?”

Dogs have a protective instinct and so do men. In fact, I’ve found there’s an underlying need for men to have something to protect. In many cases, ***men will seek out people or things they can guard because it gives us purpose and value when there’s something for us to protect.*** It makes us feel manly as it helps us feel like we’re an alpha. Being trusted to fix, solve, or guard something can feel empowering (unless the person is annoying). This is why a lot of men like it when the girl isn’t tougher or stronger than he is (or bossy). A lot of guys don’t even want to be smaller in height than the woman because it can feel like he’s lost the protector position. Throw in the fact the guy makes less money and you’ve found a possible identity crisis in the making (or at least a target for teasing by his buddies). Ladies, if you want to help your man, help him feel like he’s the protector of the family and that he doesn’t need you to protect him. ***Encourage him to fight his own battles; don’t fight them for him.*** If your man seems down, you can even make up a way for him to look manly like have him open a jar you say you can’t open or have him fix something simple. Each little triumph can help him regain some manhood.

Chapter 19:

Competitive

Have you ever heard dogs barking at night? For some reason one will start barking and then others will join. In my mind they do this because they're competing: (first dog) "I'm the loudest dog around!" (second dog) "No, I'm the loudest!" (first dog) "Yeah, well I'm better at keeping people awake than you!" (second dog) "No, I'm the loudest!" (first dog) "Is that all you can say?" (second dog) "No... I'm the loudest!" (first dog) "No, you're the dumbest!" (third dog) "You two have the same fight every night. You're both the dumbest!" (second dog) "No, I'm the loudest." (third dog) "Okay, I was wrong; the second dog is the dumbest."

Dogs are drawn to competition. Charlie loved tug of war. Why? I have no idea. I would mop the floor with him... literally. He'd hold onto a toy and I'd drag him around wiping the floor. Occasionally I'd lift him straight up in the air and he'd dangle like a fish on a hook. Once in awhile I'd let him win, but it was more out of laziness and not wanting to play. Regardless of who won, he quickly tried to get another round going. Maybe his goal was to correct his serious under bite (being inbred was not kind to him), but he loved tug-of-war because it involved competition. Men follow this same mentality. We can make a competition out of anything. Eating contests were not created by women. When we were teenagers, my brother and I used to walk home after helping our neighbor with a few farm chores in the winter, and we'd throw snowballs to see who could hit the specified

target whether street signs or phone poles. Get a group of guys together and at some point, you're likely going to hear: "I bet you can't..." or "What will you give me if..." It could be eating until you puke at a buffet (at least you get your money's worth), eating a bowl of hot salsa (a friend did that... and regretted it), or fitting your fist in your mouth (the game of geniuses). No one ever wins this because even if you can do it someone hits your elbow so you choke on your hand. In the documentary, *Mansome*, Morgan Spurlock shows there's an international beard growing competition. How is that an international competition? (winner) "Less women find me attractive than you; I win!" Beards are essentially long pubic hairs on your face – delightful.

I think the dumbest competition I've seen was in my early years volunteering in a youth group. This group of teenage boys started a game called ball-ball where the object of the game was to throw a ball at the opponent's... balls (now this is the true game of geniuses). If you sacked your opponent with the ball, you got a point. If the receiver moved you got to punch him. Eventually this game was too gentle, so it started to include metal water bottles, rocks, and pineapples. Yup, pineapples. It was pretty stupid. Did I stop it? Someone's going to get hurt... so of course not. That's the fun part for the rest of us too smart to play. This is a life lesson opportunity: Let them realize how dumb they are on their own (and laugh at them in the process). The sad thing is I think this game developed as a way to impress the girls. I did say guys are dumb right? (girl) "Wow, you took that pineapple to the groin so well. It's so attractive to think you might have nothing down there... or up top. It's like a matching set."

If you want to see men at their competitive worst, you don't need to go to an arena or stadium; you just need to go to a club (shudder). When I was single, I used to hate going to a club because it would reinforce how single and desperate I felt. Having a girlfriend didn't make it better because being at a club, it's like your partner is fair game: (club guy) "It is my duty to sexually harass every woman here to help her feel included." To be honest, I don't know what normal guy likes clubs. Guys only go to see women (or because our partners tell us we're going with them). Women can like clubs because it's about dancing and having fun... and taunting guys who can't get them (you ladies know it's true). In the past, when a girlfriend said, "Let's go to a club," I'd be thinking, "Do you hate me?" (announcer) "Do you hate small spaces and lots of people?" (random guy) "Yeah." (announcer) "Then you should go to a club!" (random guy confused) "But those are small places with lots of people. Why would anyone want to go there?" (announcer) "Because you're whipped!" (random guy) "Oh yeah."

When a guy is dating or married, clubs can be bad for his health if his partner is the jealous type: (girlfriend) “Are you looking at her?” (guy) “Who? The smoking hot brunette wearing the tiny black skirt, has a tiny mole on her inner left thigh, and the shaving nick on her ankle? No, I was looking at the wall beside her.” Fortunately, I never had to worry about this because the girl I was with there was too busy judging the other girls to notice me (a popular activity for a lot of girls at clubs). That and I was the only person there wearing earplugs and typically in a corner reading a book – true (and sad) fact. My girlfriend was never worried about other girls being interested in me – shocker.

For competition, I prefer sports. The problem is a man’s competitive nature far outlives his ability to actually participate in real sports, which is one of the reasons as men age, the new “sport” becomes lawn care: (old guy) “Look how green that grass is, and not a single weed!” (young guy) “Your life is sad.” (old guy) “I know.” But either way, *competition gives a sense of purpose and motivation*. Men need a good challenge to give them more of a zest for life.

This competitive nature is one of the reasons men love big stuff. We love everything big: big trucks, big slabs of meat, big TVs, or anything else that makes us look like a champion. We essentially want to be able to say “Mine’s bigger than yours,” although, with some technology we now want to say, “Mine’s smaller than yours.” (girl passing by) “I wouldn’t be admitting that.”

One of the things that get a lot of men excited is a big fire. When I was young, my dad was really good at getting a fire started. He didn’t need any of the fancy teepee or stick interlocking setups some campers use. Give him a few pieces of newspaper and a match, done... oh, and lots of oil and gasoline; petrol is a man’s fire starter. We lived in the country in the 80s, which meant every spring and fall my dad would burn brush... he had a permit, don’t worry. He would start the fire with a whoosh. He didn’t say whoosh; that was the sound of the gas starting the fire. Looking back, this desire for a mini explosion was a combination of dumb, easily pleased, and liking big things, and he’s not alone in this. A lot of guys love big fires. It’s like all their worries go up in smoke. I’ve even had guys show me the giant fire they made and brag about how they were jumping through it (you know, because they’re geniuses). Men just like big things. Aren’t you surprised I haven’t mentioned bra size? Oh wait, I just did. Mmm, bra size... for women, not men. A guy needing a bra is not brag worthy: (misguided guy) “Mine are so much bigger than yours... it’s just hard to tell when my gut’s even bigger.”

One of the competitions for big I don't get is the muscle giants at the gym. There is no benefit to their size beyond bragging how they have limited agility. If they were in a war, "I'm big and tough... and an easy target." The only benefit to their size in war is for other people because they make a great shield. Even if it was a simple hand-to-hand fight, a smaller guy is more likely to win because he's able to, you know, move. I guess another benefit of these giants is they're really good at blocking the wind and a great source of shade in the sun. Although I doubt that's their motivation: (big dude) "When I grow up, I want to be an umbrella. I used to want to be a pylon, but this is so much prettier." Whatever the benefit, I prefer being able to do basic things like turn my neck or scratch my back: (muscle bound giant) "I don't need someone to scratch my back for me. I just lift a parked car and use it like a back scratcher. It's very practical."

Guys seem to have an inherent sense of competition, and it's fueled by a very influential source... girls. Girls fuel many things for guys, which is connected to the next section.

Desire to be Wanted

Dogs want to be loved. When I had been too distracted to properly greet Charlie, I could see the hurt in his body language as he walked away rejected. Even though he was “just” a dog, he was quite sensitive to rejection. Guys have this same problem. We want to be wanted, and we’re sensitive to rejection. To go one step further, guys have a desire to be wanted in a sexual way. ***We want to have the power women have over us.*** I’ve heard girls say they don’t have power over men. Riiiiiggghhhhhhttttt. Because guys are known for getting out of traffic tickets by flirting with the cop: (guy flirting) “Are you sure you want to write that ticket to little ol’me?” (cop) “Yes, and here’s another one for being gross.” Guys want the power women have. We want to be able to take off our shirt and have a girl get excited like we would for her. We want to bend over and have a girl admire our butt and not just point out that our pants are drooping and we need to trim the hair billowing out our butt crack like it’s a graveyard for dead spiders (too graphic?). We want that to be a turn on... not necessarily the butt hair part, but the bending over. If I haven’t seen my wife in awhile or if I’ve done something good, there’s nothing better than for her to just want me then and there. Even if she can’t because we’re in church, her saying she wants to rip off my clothes in a PG yet animalistic manner would be pretty awesome... at least I think it would be. It’s never happened. And how many other committed women say things like that? I have no idea, but I do know there’s a greater chance the woman is going to lean over and whisper something like

“There’s something in your teeth,” or “I just came up with a list of jobs for you when we get home.” ***This desire for women to want us sexually declines as men get older and/or have kids.*** As a dad, naps are my favorite thing now, but when we were younger, there was something great about having a sexual draw for women like we have for them. That being said, it should be noted that guys, like women, ***need a balance of being chased and being able to chase.*** If you do all the chasing or conversely, if your partner does, then both of you are going to get fed up and/or bored.

Tip: Guys can’t typically seduce a woman with their chests or butt cracks (for obvious reasons), but we can still wow her with the perfectly timed thoughtful gesture... and a giant bank account. Girls can like certain big things, too.

Tip to the Tip: Size matters, but bigger isn’t necessarily better. For example, the biggest gut is not a winner even though a lot of guys seem to spend a lot of time working on theirs: (buddy being encouraging) “Come on, man. Just one more pound of wings. Think of how good you’ll look. Do it for your kids!”

A Tip for Guys: Gentlemen, if you want your lady to want your body, try to keep it looking as good as you can. Or, if you hate being healthy, at least be hygienic. Keep it clean. If things start to heat up on a date and you can’t sneak in a quick shower, make sure you’re still clean in the right areas. Think of areas where you sweat or where you want her mouth to be and clean it. For instance, if you want her to kiss your mouth and not just blow kisses at you through a window, have fresh breath. Even if you have to excuse yourself for a moment: leave, clean, and return. In general, your mouth being clean and fresh is important. As Comedian Dan Cummins jokes, how clean you keep your mouth represents what you don’t see:

The worst hygiene choice is when someone chooses not to brush their teeth. That says so much about you. If you don’t take care of what people can clearly see, what in [heaven’s] name are you doing to things they can’t? Why not just wear a t-shirt that says, “If you think my teeth are gross, you should see my balls. Like a moldy sack of taters somebody forgot in the mud.” That jokes called “Good Luck Getting that Visual Out of Your Head.” I haven’t slept right since I saw that man... don’t read into it.

In the words of Forrest Gump, “That’s all I have to say about that.” And again, great impersonation.

Chapter 21:

Buddies

Besides having a desire to impress a woman, a guy has a desire to impress his buddies (at least when he's young and still has buddies). Impressing our buddies means acceptance and respect. The risk of this is sometimes guys are susceptible to allowing their buddies to lead them to make poor choices. Buddies can be so important to us that they can easily overpower our logic. For instance, the most illogical fashion choice is ear spacers: (person with spacers) "I love elephants, so the bigger my ears look the sexier I become." The second is low pants, especially when they make the guy waddle. How is that cool? (guy waddling) "I'm tough like a cute little penguin." (second guy waddling) "I'm like a nine-month pregnant woman. That's manly." In general, it seems the lower the pants, the lower the academic achievement. If having low pants is so dumb, why do guys do it? It's for their buddies. We want to impress them, which can sometimes even be at the expense of the girl we like... and logic (guy waddling) "My pants are low, so no one can tell when I poop myself. That's just good logic right there!"

Our buddies have a strong influence on us, especially when it comes to choosing a partner. Their opinion matters... which isn't always a good thing. The hope is to find a girl our buddies won't try to fight us over, but still admire her enough to make us look good in their eyes. If the friends don't like the girl, a guy should

heed this warning because they might be seeing something he's too blind to see, but he also needs to know when his friends are wrong as seen in *Boston Legal*.

Denny Krane: She's not good for you.

Allan Short: Why not?

Denny Krane: She just isn't... a woman knows these things.

Allan Short: Denny, you're not a woman.

Denny Krane: Whatever.

Guys start dumb and then Mother Nature throws in hormones, which makes us all the dumber. The hope is our friends and family will help us filter through this, but sometimes the dumbness is too strong.

Tip: If no one else likes the girl, there's a good chance hormones are making you blind to her being a terrible person... or all of your family and friends are dumb, but that's a whole other problem.

As men get older, we're supposed to move from focusing on impressing our buddies to impressing a girl. It's part of growing up. This isn't to say our buddies aren't important anymore, they definitely are, but they should become more of a fun get together rather than a priority. Of course, even if that's the case, guys can revert to their younger days whether for a moment or for a period of time, especially if they are longing to feel like more of a man because they don't feel like that with their partner. This feeling may be influenced by the partner or it might just be the guy going through something. ***This is typically the problem for older men who have their career and family in place as they wonder what the next big challenge is for them.*** The other option is he's a turd. I once met a guy who felt his wife and family made him boring. He became resentful and instead of being a responsible partner, he went out three to four nights a week drinking with his single (or soon to be single) buddies. Whether her influence caused him to be boring or not, he chose to be married, which means he needed to find the happy medium between boring slave and irresponsible doody-head (I was looking for an immature name for immature behavior, and I think I nailed it). ***A real man will take the life he has created, and improve it. A coward runs away.***

Some guys get so excited about having a woman in their life they focus too much on her and ditch their friends. This is just as dumb and it would behoove the woman to encourage her man to maintain his male relationships (at least the good ones), or he's going to end up clingy and/or annoying. Having buddies is also

important for keeping our manhood levels up because otherwise we can go soft. Guys remind us to be tough and not whine so much. As Morgan Freeman says in *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, “You whine like a mule, but you are still alive.” Buddies are also valuable because they can help us connect to our adventurous side, which in turn reduces anxiety and helps us feel alive. They help with projects when we need a hand. They’re there to joke and laugh about our partner and/or her family as a way to vent; they’re more likely to want to watch the same kind of movies we like (I went with my buddies to see *Dumb and Dumber Too* since my wife doesn’t like quality movies). They can also be a great source of motivation for physical exercise. Besides teasing us for things like getting chubby, they can be our reason for actually going to the gym. For instance, before kids, every Saturday morning I met two friends to work out together and then it became jogging with one of them because running is cheaper (yes, I’m that cheap) and the one guy was too busy with his family (like a loser). If I didn’t have the friend connection, it would be harder to be motivated to go out and instead, join the group of guys competing for the biggest gut.

This confusion surrounding making our partner happy versus our friends is demonstrated in this scene from *The Big Bang Theory*:

Amy: Are you going to let him speak to me like that?

Sheldon: Well, you’re my girlfriend, and I don’t want you to be upset. Then again, Wil Weaton is my friend, and I don’t want him to be upset. This is a sticky wicket. (To Wil) What do you think?

When a guy is in a relationship, he needs to consider both his partner and his friends and find the right balance of time spent with each party. The more serious the romantic relationship, the more his partner needs to feel like the priority, but she should never be the only priority as every guy needs other guys in their life, too. This is as much for his benefit as it is for hers.

What Kind of Friend are You, a Bro, a Hoe or a Bra?

Following the example of the classic unclassy phrase, “Bros before hoes,” let’s divide friends into three categories: bro’s, hoes, and bras. A bro is a friend who isn’t that close; we’ll hang out in a group or play sports together, but we don’t have a personal connection. A hoe is anyone, male or female, who uses us. No matter how fun or cool the person is, if they’re simply in the relationship to use us, this

person is a hoe. This relationship is less about connecting and more about them getting. Hoes should be avoided... in both this and the actual sense. Finally, a bra is someone who (you guessed it) supports you (brilliant, I know). A bra is that friend who will stand by you until the end. Even if you make a mistake or hurt him in some way, your friendship will recover because you are true friends. Of course, we need to be willing to do the same for them because if it's not mutual, then *we* are the hoe. This isn't an insult; it's a reality. If one person is more invested in the relationship than the other, this means one of you is a bra while the other is a hoe. One of the best things about going through hard times is that this will teach you who your true bras are and who are just bros or hoes. If you don't have any bras, it's time you start to make some new friends... or you need to start being more supportive and not just be a bro or hoe yourself. Sometimes we don't have close friends because *we're* not close friend material. If we don't have a bra, we should first take a look at ourselves and ask what we need to do differently because that's not a good sign.

Tips to be a Bra

- 1) ***Reply to messages:*** It's sad this is something I need to point out, but I've had a number of guy friends who were terrible at this and I eventually gave up on them.
- 2) ***Raincheck:*** If you have to say no to an invitation, ask about doing something else at a later time, so it's not simply a rejection and that person will be encouraged to ask again in the future.
- 3) ***Message or call:*** Guys aren't typically as into messaging or calling, but it's good to check in with friends we haven't seen in awhile even if it's to send a joke in order to stay connected.
- 4) ***Arrange regular visit times:*** Since guys are about routine (routine makes it easier not to think), the best way to see friends is to have a scheduled activity like sports, poker, or church. For instance, I have a group of friends I see every major holiday for a game's night.
- 5) ***Random activity:*** Sometimes we need to have a reason to get together like to watch a special sports event or to go to a concert.
- 6) ***Do a favor:*** Saying, "Let me know if there's something I can do," is useless. Give a couple options or just show up to help.
- 7) ***Ask for a favor:*** Helping others is a great way to feel good about ourselves, so asking for a favor from others can be a way to help someone else feel good.

- 8) ***Ask permission:*** For instance, ask your friend how long you have to wait before you can ask out his ex-wife (I hope you know this is a joke: (dumb friend) “You’re getting divorced? That’s fantastic! I’ve wanted to ask her out since your wedding day. Did you want to beat me up now or later?”).

Chapter 22:

The Gross Side

Dogs will lick themselves in public, they'll roll around in garbage in between snacking on it, and they'll frequently put their head in a person's crotch. Dogs can be gross. When I was kid, I remember Amber would let out a really icky dog toot and then proudly trot out of the room while the rest of us started to gag. I could've sworn she was giggling to herself. She was gross and seemed to love being that way. One of the funniest gross things to me (to my wife it was just gross) was Charlie would vigorously rub his face on the rug for a few minutes and when he stopped, he'd lick the spot he used as his face scratcher. I'm not sure if he was rubbing old food off his face or if he was trying to get out his eye crusties, but he made a snack out of it, which was hilariously gross. I equate it to someone popping a pimple and then licking the pus... a comment that's so gross most women wouldn't even think let alone share, but I'm a guy, so I mentioned it while giggling to myself thinking about how it's grossing people out.

(Note from female editor) "You are disgusting."

(Response from me) "Thank you."

Like dogs, guys have a gross side. Many times we're not trying to be gross; we're just being ourselves. When Charlie's rubbing his face, he's not trying to be gross; he's just doing his thing. The same can happen to guys. For instance, the year

before my wife and I got married, we were at my place. It was a beautiful fall day, so we decided to go for an unplanned run. This meant she needed to borrow a sweater, so she went into my closet and grabbed a shirt. After the run she asked, “Did you smell that?” (me) “What?” (her) “There was this smell. It was everywhere we went. I couldn’t escape it. It smelt like... like... BO.” (me laughing hysterically) “That’s because you’re wearing my BO shirt.” (her confused because she’s a girl and not gross) “What’s a BO shirt” (me laughing) “It’s a shirt that no matter how many times you wash it, it smells like BO.” (her angry) “Why do you still have it?” (me) “Why wouldn’t I?” I think this discussion further proves the earlier idea that guys are loyal (that shirt is part of me... literally; it has my smell) and dumb (how’s this a problem?) It baffled her because she throws smelly clothes out, and it baffled me because I never thought that was an option. If you’re wondering, that shirt soon magically disappeared along with a few others. I believe the conversation ended with me thinking I was hilarious and her saying, “You stink... and so does your BO.”

Many times a guy gets in trouble for being gross because there’s a differing opinion. To the guy, it’s perfectly natural, but to someone else (aka a woman), it’s disgusting. For instance, I have a container of floss I keep in my car in case I need it or I’m stuck in traffic and want to take advantage of some free time to make my dentist happy because otherwise who has time to floss every day? Sorry, let me rephrase that: What *normal* person has time to floss every day? Yes, I know you’re supposed to, but still, every day? Every month, yes; every week, maybe, but every day? My wife is a hygienist and she hates that joke... but not as much as what happened to her. Every once in awhile things will get stuck in my teeth and instead of doing a full floss, I’ll just clean out the spot like it’s a toothpick. Now, here’s the gross part: Instead of tearing off the used floss, I’ll just use the end of it and leave it for the next time. To me, this is smart because I’m cheap (yes, I’m that cheap) and I don’t like waste (yes, I hate waste that much). My wife... well, she thinks I’m an idiot because it’s gross. Here’s the thing: It’s my floss and I’m the only one using it. How is that gross? If I shared my floss, yeah, that’d be gross, but I’m not. Logically, this just makes sense. Just because she used it without me knowing doesn’t mean she should be upset. Okay, maybe she has a right to be upset, but what about me? Who uses another person’s floss without asking? More importantly, who trusts floss hanging out of the container? It’s like using public toilet paper. You never use the end. You rip it off and throw it away so you can get a fresh patch. Rule of thumb: Don’t trust excess floss hanging out of a container.

(Another note from the female editor) “You really are disgusting.”

(Response from me) “Or am I genius?”

Other times a guy is gross because it gives him joy. This is why two of our favorite words to hear are: “Ew, gross.” It’s like we’ve accomplished something wonderful. I’m not saying it’s smart, but there’s something exciting about being able to say, “Smell this.” If a girl says, “Smell this,” she has something like a new perfume, or a candle that smells nice. If a guy says, “Smell this,” he wants you to smell something that will make you go, “Ew, gross,” and then he’ll giggle to himself because he’s so happy with himself.

I should point out that I’ve been very well trained and any flaws in my behavior are not a reflection of my mom’s training (she told me to write that). I was trained to have good manners... or at least the capacity to have good manners, but every once in awhile there’s nothing better than being gross. When I was a teenager, my cat liked to sleep under the covers with me at night. I think she liked the warmth. Of course, every once in awhile I would bum trumpet. She didn’t like *that* warmth. But let’s be honest, that’s hilarious to a teenage boy. In general, tooting is hilarious to guys. Tooting when someone or something that breathes is trapped under a blanket? Best thing ever. No exaggeration. That’s *the* best thing... at least when I was teenage boy (and now when I’m allowed to be honest). When it happened, I couldn’t stop giggling. It’s been years, but now that I’m writing about it, I’m giggling again because I Dutch-oven-ed my cat. If you don’t know, a Dutch-oven is when you put the covers over someone’s head (like your wife) and then flagrantly fluff (and then she beats you). It’s definitely not a romantic gesture... at least it shouldn’t be; that’d be a weird fetish: “That smell makes me feel so alive!” I’m not sure why it’s called a Dutch-oven; does Dutch food smell like poop air? Ah, the important questions in life: Is there a God? What is enlightenment? Does Dutch food smell like rotten eggs? This one night in particular was such a bad smell that the cat ran away to the soundtrack of my laughter: “Did you smell that? Ha ha ha.” Yes, being a man takes different forms. This is one of them. But as the song goes, the cat came back the very next day and it was a particularly cold night, so I had the covers over my head. In the darkness, I looked at my cat and I’m pretty sure she was smiling; giggling almost. Suddenly, I smelt it. I didn’t “dealt” it, so there was only one option for who did. My cat had her revenge. She Dutch-oven-ed me, which I have to admit, is pretty darn funny... post choking.

Sometimes guys aren’t gross for fun, but rather for payback. I have a family friend whose teenage daughter was using the bathroom when he wanted to be in it. After

she refused to pass his toothbrush out to him like he asked (she was being rude), he decided the only option was to go to the other bathroom and use her toothbrush. Why would her toothbrush be in the other bathroom you wonder? Good question. The answer: It wasn't; it was in the bathroom with her. The dad, however, didn't know this and he found a toothbrush in the other bathroom he thought was hers. Using someone's toothbrush is gross, which means this was a sweet form of revenge... or so he thought. After finishing up, he went back to the bathroom and triumphantly announced what he had done – silence. He then waited for her to start screaming her objections, but they never came. The silence was suddenly broken by a different noise – laughter. She was laughing hysterically. This, of course, upset the dad who wanted to hear, “Ew, gross.” She eventually gained enough control to say that she had her toothbrush with her. He was confused. When he described the toothbrush he had used, she again burst into laughter. It turned out he had used the dog's toothbrush. Sometimes, a guy just can't win, but at least he had a great story after. A story that made many others say “Ew, gross,” which is still a win.

I think it's fair to say there is a double standard when it comes to being gross. It's funny for a guy to be gross, but not for a woman. A guy can spit, shoot snot rockets, and scratch inappropriate places at inappropriate times, and on some level, it's okay (or at least not shocking). Women? Nope. Even the guys who do that will likely protest women doing it because it's not “ladylike”. Some guys don't shave during the playoffs because it's considered bad luck. Can a woman do this? (girl) “I can't shave; it's bad luck.” (guy) “It's bad luck *not* to shave if you want to cuddle.” I have, however, discovered that girls also have a gross side, but they typically keep it to their gender like a secret. When women are gross, they find a whole new level of gross. My wife can say things with her friends I would never even think of, but something that's a fraction of her grossness will get me in trouble. The best example of girls being gross happened many years ago when I was supply teaching a grade nine class that was twenty-three girls and two guys. I made a joke about how this must be a teen guy's dream class. The two boys both looked at me like their souls had been removed... and they had. Within ten minutes of the period, I knew why. The conversation became about cycles, and I don't mean bicycles, which I wouldn't have minded. When I asked the girls to stop talking about it they just got grosser. I looked at the two guys for help and they had headphones on and smiling to themselves like “Now you know our pain!” These girls brought a level of grossness I had never before encountered even in the filthiest of hockey changerooms. That's not gross-fun like tooting. They were gross-nasty. Sure, there's a double standard here, but until I can get out

of speeding tickets because of my cleavage (or any part of my body), I won't feel bad.

One of the reasons guys like being gross is it gives us a sense of power. We may not be able to make women go, "Mmm, you're hot," but we can make them go, "Ew, you're gross." Do we purposely think, "I'm gross, so I'll have power over her"? No, but it does make us feel good in the moment. It's like holding a gun. We don't pick it up and shoot it thinking, "This will make me feel powerful," but that's one of the main reasons it's so fun, and boy, is it fun (I swear I'm not American).

Personal Space

The next point may cause some debate, but I find dogs are generally not as cuddly as housecats. There are exceptions, but I find dogs enjoy being petted like to say “good boy” or rubbed like a massage, which is why dogs generally prefer a harder rubbing than a light touch. Guys are the same. If you want to make your man melt, give him a good head rub or rub his neck while he’s driving (heaven). Of course, this would only be heaven if the right person did it, and by the right person, I mean the right women. We don’t want one of our buddies rubbing us while we drive: (buddy rubbing driver’s neck) “I feel so safe when you’re driving.” (driver) “Um, we can’t be friends anymore.” Beyond certain touching, most guys like their space (physically and emotionally). If we’re with our buddies at the movie theatre, we’ll likely have an empty seat between us, or if we can’t, we’ll try to lean away from each other to create the illusion of space. If we’re in the bathroom and the one urinal is being used, there is a protocol to follow: Back off: (guy whispering in the ear of a guy at the urinal) “Your presentation today was soooo good just like your flow is now.” If there are two urinals without a divider and the one is being used already, the guy to enter the situation is supposed to pretend to check himself in the mirror or find another way to delay going to the empty urinal until the other guy has finished. If there are three urinals both guys can go at the same time if they leave a buffer urinal between them. There are exceptions to this rule like if you want to joke and make him feel awkward. Funny is like a trump card to rules.

I should point out that I've met dogs that are waaayyy too kissy, and well, they're weird. Their owners will constantly have to say, "Get down!" and they don't mean dance: "Ice, ice, baby..." This behavior makes others feel uncomfortable although not nearly as uncomfortable as a man who is too touchy. These overly touchy guys exist, but they're typically told to stop being so handsy. What I find funny is the guys who love cuddling are more likely to end up with the most hands off women. That's hilarious to me... because I'm a terrible person.

According to *Decoding Your Dog*, dogs don't like to be hugged and they don't like to be petted until they know you better, which sometimes means you need to let them sniff your hand first. Similarly, guys like to have their space and not feel trapped, which often means guys typically prefer limited cuddling and touching unless he likes you. Exceptions include when he's single, lonely, horny, and/or the woman is really, really hot, and then everything's fair game... and I mean everything. Touching can sometimes repel guys because it can be considered a sign of weakness or vulnerability we don't *want* to share or *aren't ready* to share. When I first started dating my wife, I thought cuddling was okay, but I didn't crave it. That's not something I should've said to her: (her angry) "You need to love it as much as I do!" That was a stupid fight. That's another thing I shouldn't have said. Fortunately, I learned to enjoy cuddling more, and more importantly, to shut up. For me, cuddling was an acquired taste, and like dogs, it wasn't something I was into until I knew my partner better and I was willing to share my space.

When we were dating, I learned to enjoy cuddling, but I will never enjoy it as much as my wife did. She loooooovvvveedddd cuddling, but she's a very touchy person. She's always the first to offer a hug to greet people, which is great because her hugs have a power to cheer people up. My hugs have a power to get people to say, "Why are you hugging me?" My wife's ability to make people feel accepted is a wonderful gift that I admire. Women are generally more touch driven than men and my partner is a gold medal winner at it. This is connected to women having a larger deep limbic system (that's the extent of me trying to sound smart). My wife's need for touch "comes out when she shops: (wife shopping) "I'm going to touch this and this, and this, and everything!" How much my wife loves touch was very apparent one night when we first started dating. When I got to her house she called up from the basement, "We're down here!" When I went downstairs, she was sitting on the couch with her mom. That's normal to share a couch with someone; there's a lot of space there. Even if you and your friend are 500 pounds each, you'll fit comfortably on a couch. A love seat? Maybe not. You'd likely be so tight your rolls would have to meld with each other like fingers locking together

in a reverse mitosis sort of mash up (I think that's the first time I've used the word mitosis since high school biology; that made all of the hours I spent studying and stressing about biology worth it). When I walked around to the front of the couch, my wife only had one foot on the floor, which is fine. My wife's mom also only had one foot on the floor, which is fine and kind of cute since that meant the two of them were sitting the same way mirroring each other. But then I realized I was wrong; this wasn't cute at all. They only had one foot on the ground because they were exchanging foot rubs. I was thrown off because I had never seen anything like this before. My mind raced. Is this okay? Am I allowed to see this or is it like seeing your partner go urine? Should I be jealous? Is it sanitary? I'll be honest, despite all of these thoughts going through my mind, my main thought was, "Why can't you be doing this with a hot friend? Live the fantasy a little." But no; it was with her mom. Now, she's a wonderful woman I really respect... but a total fantasy killer. And there they sat rubbing each other's feet in their fading pajamas and clashing bathrobes. My wife got her love of the touchy from her mom, but is this a little too touchy? I hug my mom hello and goodbye, but it's a hug; not a hhhhuuugggg.

To be clear, I'm not turned off by feet, but I'm also not turned on by them either: (me) "Mmm, toes; like mini fingers that are basically useless except for cracking to gross people out." To me, feet are like boogers. I know you have them and they have a purpose, but I don't want to touch them or have them touching me. Fortunately, I quickly learned to appreciate that my wife did this with her mom and now I encourage it. I don't like rubbing feet, so this spares me a very uncomfortable job. Rubbing feet... that's a bad gross.

I know there is nothing really wrong with what my wife was doing (at least I tell myself that), but it was something I've never seen before. She's not crazy for doing that (she's crazy for a few other things), and at the same time, I'm not crazy for never partaking in body rubbing with my own family (I'm crazy for saying *she's* crazy). It's just different. There are, however, reasons why one person is more prone to cuddling or not as demonstrated in the following chart. This is not an exhaustive list, but it gives a good start to understanding why some people are not as into cuddling as others. Neither one is more right or wrong than the other; they're just different.

The Non Cuddler	The Cuddler
I don't want to get made fun of or judged for cuddling	I don't want to get made fun of or be judged for <i>not</i> having someone to cuddle
My parents didn't do it, so it's strange to me	My parents did it, so it's normal OR my parents never did it, and now I crave it
I resented the kids in school who were all over each other because I was single and lonely	I was the touchy person in high school, so it's what I know (and I like to make others jealous) OR I never got this in high school, and now I crave it
I'm always warm, and your body heat just makes me sweat and feel uncomfortable	I'm cold and want to feel your warmth
I don't want to feel owned	I want others to know we're a couple
If you need to be close with someone, there must be something wrong with you	Happy couples are touchy couples; something's wrong with the relationship if you're not touching
I don't want to look needy or whipped	I want to feel special
I care about you, but I like my space	I care about you, so I want to feel close
Being close makes me feel smothered	Being close makes me feel safe
It's scary because it makes me feel vulnerable	I want to express the love I have for you and to feel that you trust me enough to be close
It makes me feel awkward	It makes me feel worthy
I have better taste	I married you, so yes, you do

Tip: This is a great demonstration of how there can be different perspectives and neither one is wrong; they're just different.

I should point out that even the most untouchy man can become a super cuddler when hormones are involved. Hormones will make guys do anything we wouldn't normally do like cuddle in public – whoa. Guys in committed relationships usually aren't as satisfied with just snuggles with our partner unless we're worn out and have no energy. Otherwise, cuddling can be a tease. If we end up simply being like a blanket for our partner, talk about disappointing. There are some guys who would love to be a blanket and I call them single. Cuddling makes the guy hope for more like petting a dog. Eventually he's going to be on his back with his leg in the air in order to get you to rub his belly (or something further south; I never really know with dogs). My rule is if you greet others by sniffing their crotches, don't trust their sense of personal boundaries: (dog) "I like to lick down there, so help yourself." (That joke even grossed me out.)

Whatever your preference for cuddling and whatever your reasoning, a partnership considers both people's needs; *it's not just about you. As a couple, you both need to figure out what you want, communicate this, and try to satisfy each other's wants as best as possible.* I may not love cuddling, but since my partner does, I need to make sure I'm meeting that need. She may love cuddling, but since I don't, she needs to allow me times where my need for space is met. Over time, we have been lucky to both start better appreciating the other person's preference. She helped me to like cuddling more while I made sure we never caused others to feel uncomfortable from us being too touchy around them (aka we still have friends).

Tip: Relationships are good at getting us out of our comfort zone, which gives us fun stories to share, something to joke about, and with some luck, we will find something we enjoy doing.

Another Tip: After having kids my wife's interest in cuddling me dropped because they were her main focus, but this will likely change as they get older. That's when cuddling with me will mean more to her... or she'll want a dog... maybe both.

Another, Another Tip: After marriage my interest in cuddling my wife dropped, but I find great satisfaction in holding my young daughters. Holding my daughters, however, is more about strength and being their protector. Cuddling my wife? Feels lame (writes the guy who loves Broadway).

A Man is at His Best When...

A *real* man is respectful, considerate of others, and has integrity. He loves to joke and have fun, but knows when to work and be responsible (aka maturity). If you're with someone who isn't acting like a *real* man (aka he sucks), there are four main possible reasons:

- 1) You don't have a good guy (aka you have a dud)
- 2) You have a good guy, but expect too much and/or have a very negative perspective
- 3) You have a good guy, but he needs a little training and encouragement
- 4) You have a good guy, but he's broken and needs help

I like to be positive about men, but some can't be described as anything but a dud. What baffles me is how some of the biggest duds I've met are able to get a decent woman to marry them. A dud is the worst person a woman can date because... well, he's a dud. ***A dud has no desire to grow or think of anyone but himself.*** Whether the guy is too arrogant to admit he has weak areas or he's so broken he doesn't want to bother trying to fix himself, these guys should be avoided (obviously). A good indicator someone is a dud is by looking at their family and friends. My aunt married a guy who didn't have very nice friends and his family didn't talk to him. Guess what he was? He was a dud who could fake being nice long enough to get her to marry him. Unfortunately, she should've paid more attention to the red flags. Most people can be nice for a moment, but ***how we***

treat those we live with and how we handle trials gives a good indication of our true character.

What really sucks is sometimes a good guy can turn into a dud. My grandma married a good Christian man who suddenly became a dud. He continued being a hard worker his whole life, but a couple years after getting married and having kids he was severely betrayed by his own dad and sister, which caused him to snap. His dad was a farmer and had three small properties he was supposed to give to his three kids, but while his sister took care of their elderly dad, she convinced him to change the will to give her two properties and leave my grandpa with nothing – that’s intense. My grandpa’s brother let my grandpa and his family live in a house on his property for a few years (a house that didn’t have indoor plumbing), but eventually asked my grandpa and his family with three young boys to leave in order for his own son to live there with his wife – another hit. Instead of seeking a way to heal, my grandpa followed the typical choice of men struggling emotionally – drinking. Meanwhile, my grandma had become a teacher of a one room schoolhouse (yes, my family is that old), and never challenged his life choice. My therapist brain can’t help but wonder if she could’ve done something to encourage him to get back to his better self. My grandma should have loved him (and herself) enough to try to protect him from himself, but unfortunately back in the 1940s and 50s things were very different. Instead of pushing for change, they followed the family pattern I’m tempted to continue today – a desire to hide from a problem rather than dealing with it. Unfortunately, ***burying our head always causes us to get kicked in the butt.*** Eventually my grandpa’s drinking led to a health scare that woke him up and returned him back to being more like his original good self. Unfortunately, several years later, his previous lifestyle caught up with him and led to him dying in his early 50s. This means not dealing with his hurt ultimately killed him.

I believe all people are made with a good heart; one that wants to love and be loved, but sometimes selfishness and misunderstanding screws us up.

My grandpa’s sister and dad must have been able to justify what they did, but they were ultimately terrible people. In a more recent situation, I heard one woman say, “People are mean, so I need to be mean first.” Unlike my family pattern of hiding that mostly hurts the hider, this mentality hurts others. Fortunately, there is always hope for change (and to avoid people like this).

The following list will help guys be a *real* man. All seven of these aren’t mandatory, but they all work together to help cultivate self-esteem and self-worth.

If a man is missing any of these, it is to his benefit (and those around him) to find a way to fill what's lacking. If you're struggling with a male partner, son, dad, or boss, you may want to consider which of these points is missing and encourage it to be put in place. This isn't a magical list that promises to heal all of a man's problems, but they can make a huge impact on how overall happy a guy is and how much he enjoys life. Another option is to check out my book, *52 Lessons to be a Better Person: The perfect gift for someone else* because it shares advice on being more emotionally healthy.

Tip: Whatever you think about Donald Trump, he's been incredible at finding new challenges for himself and not giving up on life and just watching TV all day or being sucked into a world of drinking and despair. Although I'm sure there are many people who wish he had. (a comment based on facts and not meant to connect me to any side.)

Tip to Me: Dick Van Dyke and William Shatner both recommend never retiring. Instead, you want to find new challenges and activities to do. Both of those men would've been better examples than to bring up someone who creates controversy... although it's kind of funny to know I might have ruined someone's mood: "The author wrote about He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named. I thought I liked him, but now... he's the Dick without the Van Dyke."

1. **He has someone to look up to:** Men benefit from having someone who inspires them to be a better person and gives them an idea of how they can grow. This can be a role model of what to do OR a role model of what *not* to do. Sometimes the latter, give the best lessons. This person can also be a real person, living or dead, or even a fictional character. For instance, I used to want to be more like Buddy the Elf from the movie *Elf*. I found him inspirational because he was so loving and kind. I didn't have a motivational bracelet with a saying like "Elf 3:16," "Elf strong," or "WWBD" (What Would Buddy Do?), which looks like the name of a radio station: (announcer) "WWBD: the Elf; the best way to spread Christmas cheer for all the world to hear." Even though I first saw the movie in my twenties and I was a dedicated Christian, I preferred Buddy as my role model because, frankly, Jesus is too intimidating: (me) "I'm supposed to be like Jesus? But He's... Jesus! I think that's setting the bar way too high for me. Did Jesus have a pet gerbil I can use as a role model? That's more my speed." In my mind, Jesus was the Son of God and I'm the son of a teacher. I had good dental coverage, but I can't heal the blind. My family

had a pool, but I could never walk across it (unless it was frozen). My dad could help me with my homework, but if I died, he couldn't raise me from the dead. Jesus had no problem telling people they were hypocrites or prideful while I yell at other drivers... in my car... with the windows up... and with a big smile on my face, so it doesn't look like I'm upset. I'm not manly enough to try to be like Jesus. A grown man in an elf costume? Yup. I can handle that... although I'll avoid wearing tights.

Ideally, one of the people we are inspired by is our dad. In our teen years when we're likely trying to find a sense of independence from him (girls typically do this with their mom a few years earlier, around 12-14), a non parent like an uncle, coach, or teacher becomes helpful. When I was a teenager, my youth pastor would go to movies with me (I worked there and got free passes), which really added to my sense of value because I thought he was cool and he chose to spend time with me (I clearly didn't know what cool was). Ultimately, this person you look up to is someone who can give advice and guidance (preferably healthy guidance); someone who can put his hand on your shoulder and tell you things will be okay or encourage you to try again. This real-life connection can make a world of difference, especially for young men. Thus, it becomes all the more important for each generation to look behind them and consider sharing your life experiences to pass on the wisdom. If you're fifteen, you can help someone who is ten. If you're ten, you can help someone who is five. If you're five, you can help someone who is three. If you're three, you can do your best to be potty trained.

2. ***He has someone to inspire:*** A man will have better self-esteem and self-worth when there is someone who looks up to him as an alpha. It can simply be because he's older or, preferably, because he has a skill or a trait like kindness that makes him stand out. No matter how young the male is, it's valuable for him to be involved in caring for someone younger. One of the best things that happened to my personal growth was being chosen to help run a weekly program for a grade six class when I was nineteen. At first, I thought it was a stupid idea because I hated kids; at least, I thought I did. I was actually just scared, but hate and fear can sometimes get confused. This program was supposed to help the kids, but the person who was most affected was me. The kids made me see myself in a whole new way. Because I was older but still young enough to be relevant, the students automatically thought I was cool (little did they know how uncool I was to

my peers), and this brought out a more loving and confident side in me.

Being seen as cool helped me be cool(er). I felt accepted and I was no longer trying to prove myself. It was a life changer.

Overall, people can feel empowered when they are put into leadership. Having this little bit of responsibility and admiration can make even the most troubled young person behave better. I saw this in my youth group. If I could put the so-called bad kid in a position over younger kids and away from his peers he was trying to impress, he was a whole new person. Unfortunately, many people keep the misbehaving kids away from positions like this, which inhibits their ability to be more responsible and be anything but trouble.

Personally, I think the best program that could be instituted in prison is for inmates to be made responsible for something (e.g. animal or plants) or someone (e.g. juvenile offenders). It could be empowering for the older inmates to be in a spot of responsibility. This is the same premise as losing weight is often easiest when we coach a fatter person trying to lose weight. We are empowered by having someone to help, and as we hear ourselves give good advice, we're more likely to follow it.

3. ***There's competition:*** Competition is important because it inspires men to try their best. It's why rival teams play their hardest against each other and why the playoffs are often the best games to watch. Competition is essentially a way to kick a guy in the metaphoric pants and get him moving. The key to having a business that's stagnant and wastes a lot of time and resources is to have a lack of competition (yes, I just defined most government agencies). Without competition people are allowed to do their job as mediocre as they want as long as they do enough to keep their position. Years ago, when I worked on an assembly line in a steel factory, there was no sense of competition; there was just a sense of pointlessness. It sucked the life out of the guys working there. Without competition there wasn't any drive to grow or to work hard. The one exception was when female students were hired for the summer and then many of the older guys competed to impress them (there's nothing sexier than a man the same age as your dad hitting on you). As a therapist, I have seen a number of men who worked assembly line jobs who cheated with a co-worker because the relationship originally rejuvenated their drive, but it was short lived and very damaging to their overall lives. Unfortunately, they were going loopy from boredom and flirting rejuvenated their sense of purpose. This reinforces

the importance of men needing something outside of work to give them the drive they need to get through mundane jobs besides women. They need something to look forward to doing like a game night, sporting event, or a planned sex night.

4. ***He has someone who cares and encourages him:*** As tough as a man can appear, he still needs someone (typically a woman) who is cheering him on; someone who connects to his need of praise, appreciation, and training by positive encouragement. The best person for this starts with the mom and should eventually transfer to the person he marries. That being said, a guy benefits from having another woman in his life who is safe for him to turn to in case the home front becomes “Squabble-land” or the wife is emotionally worn out from work, running a house, and/or dealing with the kids. I’m incredibly lucky because not only have I married a supportive wife, I have both my mom and sister I can turn to when needed, and they’re good at keeping me in check for my wife. Notice how the two women I can turn to are related to me? A man’s emotional support should never be anyone that is more than a zero risk for attraction because sharing emotions can build a sexual connection unless there’s a greater reason for the guy not to be attracted. Being related is a great reason (in most parts of the country anyway). h

It is important to note that after a wife has kids, her attention goes to the kids (shocker) and this can lead the guy to feeling forgotten (bigger shocker). This is the time when having a good mom in his life becomes very helpful. ***Women should follow the example of my wife – do your best to be close with your mother-in-law because she can help you have a better husband.*** Sure, the babysitting is a great bonus, but another woman who can help your man feel loved can help keep him from going loopy and/or leaving you.

5. ***He has a way to use his skills:*** Feeling useful gives men purpose. Being able to use our skills increases self-worth and encourages us to do more things, thereby further developing our skills and increasing self-worth. It’s a very positive cycle. ***A guy may think he just wants to sit on a couch and watch TV all day or retire early and lay on a beach for the rest of his life, but it’s only through doing something of worth that he’ll feel like he’s something of worth.*** This is a major reason why mechanical and construction jobs are so popular for guys. They provide very tangible results and fuel this sense of accomplishment. For a lot of men, especially

those with depression, anxiety, anger, or addiction, the best thing for them is to have a skill they can use to complete a task no matter how small and to use this as a springboard to achieve further accomplishments. Working on something he can handle should give his confidence a boost and hopefully get him out of his head and stop the over-thinking. ***If a guy has low confidence, he should remember his past accomplishments in order to encourage himself to pursue smaller accomplishments in the present and bigger ones in the future.*** He needs to feel value. If he has to do a larger task that is overwhelming, it's often helpful to break it down into smaller more manageable tasks that he can feel good about completing, which will in turn help encourage him to finish the overall project. For instance, instead of just thinking, "Fix the leaky tap," break it down to simpler, easy to accomplish tasks: watch three short how-to videos about fixing taps, buy the necessary parts and tools, ask someone at the parts store advice for fixing the leak, work on the tap, and clean up. The little accomplishments will help him be encouraged and keep going. I had to do that in order to write this book. I had to break it down to research and brainstorm ideas, organize and separate usable ideas, divide ideas into chapters, write chapters, edit, and reedit, and reedit, and reedit, and... you get the point. ***By keeping things as simple as possible, you will feel better with each step you do rather than feeling overwhelmed by the much larger task.*** This is very helpful, especially for people who like to-do lists. The simpler things are, the more you will get to scratch off the list, which helps feel like you're accomplishing something thereby adding to self-worth. I'm doing that right now as I check off, "Write point five... check. Go me! Taking my own advice. Thanks, me, for doing what me wanted."

6. ***He has someone to protect:*** Being in a protector position brings out our courage and gives us more meaning. Having someone to protect takes our minds off ourselves and helps us see a bigger picture. ***Life is never as enjoyable or fulfilling if all we think about is ourselves.*** Sometimes it's beneficial for a guy to have someone to protect beyond his spouse, which is where children, siblings, older parents, pets, and people he mentors come in; they can be helpful for giving him value. If a guy is not in a good place, whether he's acting out or depressed, it's helpful to see if there's someone or something he can protect because this responsibility can give him purpose and direction.

7. ***He has someone special he can make happy:*** I think you'll understand this one by now since I've claimed that men want to make a woman happy enough to have you saying, "Okay, I get it! Men want to make a woman happy. Stop repeating that over and over. You're like a nagging woman, but without the sexy woman parts."

Side Note: I'm currently a married man with three young girls and trying to do a complete a major renovation that couldn't have gone worse. This list is helpful, but realistically, I'm in survival mode, which means I'm going to be in a rough spot no matter what I do. It's also important to note there's nothing my wife can do to make it better. I'm just in a bad spot, but hopefully it'll get better when the project is done.

Bonus: A time and place to relax and process: As much as men need to accomplish things and help others, we need to take a break. I put this as a bonus because this is something all people need. It's a major reason God made the Sabbath, which is a day to rest. Of course, in our culture of sitting all week, our Sabbath should include exercise and family outings since the Sabbath is meant for us to do what we don't do in the week. Taking a Sabbath is so important it's number four in the Ten Commandments. It's even brought up before stealing and murder.

Bonus to the Bonus: Bra time: Guys need bra time... not "bra" as in "bra," but as in "bra." Does that make sense? I'm a guy so I'm not the best with details. Earlier I mentioned that people in our lives can be bros, hoes or bras. Part of the escape time for guys I described above should include some "bra time" where the guy can be with a solid male connection. Bra time is safe time. It's when there is no judgement, nagging, or correction. It's when guys are free to laugh and be dumb. It's a time where everything is easy, there's no stress, and possibly some healthy competition and teasing. If you want a happy guy, make sure he gets healthy bra time. What this should look like will depend on the people involved and the situation. What I do know is too little bra time drives a guy to be more irritable and guarded. It can also make him feel and act like he's useless. At the same time, I've seen some guys with way too much bra time, which leads to laziness and stupidity while the wife feels abandoned. Both situations damage the relationship. ***Thus, a healthy amount of bra time, neither too little nor too much, needs to be implemented for a healthy man.*** Of course, as a dad of three little girls, my option for bra time is pretty limited, but it's still good to fit it in where possible.

Bonus to the Bonus to the Bonus: Guys need bra time. Yes, I mean “bra” as in “bra” and not “bra.” I’m sure this makes sense. Guys need sexy time, but sex isn’t on this list of things guys need because a healthy relationship will include a proper amount of sex for both people. Having sex doesn’t mean the guy will be at his best and not having sex doesn’t mean he’ll be at his worst. A healthy sex life with a loving spouse, however, can do wonders for a grown man feeling loved by his partner. Where a woman typically needs to feel safe to have sex (drinking can create a false sense of safety and lead women to foolish choices), men feel safe after good sex – terrible sex leaves you feeling terrible because it doesn’t feel like love. It feels like obligation, looks like Starfishing, and sounds like “Are you done yet?” This is why going too long without sex is so bad for a relationship – neither person feels safe. Of course, this leads to the problem of who initiates when neither feels safe. The simple answer: Scheduled sex times. This can be a set day being when you have sex like Friday night or scheduled on the fly by asking something like “Do you want to aim for tomorrow night or in two nights?”

That being noted, a guy can still be a *real* man without ever having sex. In fact, a single guy being pent up can be a source of energy that inspires him to work harder to impress women. Thus, a guy should never try to use this as a reason to get laid: (inappropriate guy) “If you want me to be a *real* man you need to have sex with me. Otherwise, everything I do wrong is your fault.” (naive girl) “Really? I didn’t know that.” (inappropriate guy showing some intelligence) “Yeah, I read it in this incredible book by the greatest author of all time, and I’m not misquoting him at all in order to manipulate you.” (naive girl) “I should read that book.” (inappropriate guy panicking) “Probably not because then you’ll realize I’m not a real man and lying to you.” (naive girl) “That’s okay. I don’t want a real man. That’s why I stopped being one myself.” (inappropriate guy) “What?”

Conclusion

Welcome to the conclusion. This is the part of the book I don't say anything new, but simply wrap up what you've read. It's the reward for reading the book... or the spot you go to when you don't want to read the whole thing. It's also the spot you go to when you need enough information to make it sound like you read the whole book in order to write a paper for school, reference something for work, or make the person who bought it for you think you actually read it.

Let me begin by saying you are wonderful. (That's a reference to the introduction of the book where I said you were wonderful for picking up the book.) If you got this far then you are truly wonderful... unless you read the book because you hated it and enjoyed how it made you angry... that'd be weird; you might want to get that checked out. Choosing to read a book because you hate it is a terrible reason, bbbbut, I'll take it. As it's been said, "There's no such thing as bad publicity..." unless you're Harvey Weinstein... or Michael Jackson... or Catholic priests... okay, so maybe some publicity is terrible. On the plus side, this list also gives good examples of guys who aren't *real* men. As I've said, some guys are just turds (and some of those turds should become eunuchs).

In this book you learned that men are like dogs and that dogs are like men. Both are true. It'd be weird if it wasn't true: men are like dogs, but dogs aren't like men... what? How does that work? You also learned a few things like... everything listed in the Table of Contents. Really, what more do you need? Guys like to be factual and quick to the point. The Table of Contents for this book tells you all the different ways men and dogs are similar, and even the pages to find more information on each of those topics. You're welcome.

If you're hoping for something more decisive, here's a summary of everything you read in one sentence (one really long run-on sentence):

Men ultimately want to feel like *the* man, which is one of the reasons we want to make a woman happy, but things can distract us from this goal whether buddies, our "screw you" side, our loyalty to the wrong thing, or our selfish interests – we are human – which isn't an excuse for bad behavior, but it can help it to be easier for others to be patient with us and to have a better idea of how to improve the current relationship

because guys can be dumb, but we're rarely vindictive... being vindictive is too much work.

I warned you it was a really long run-on sentence, and it definitely lived up to that title. Okay, I've rambled long enough... well, almost enough. Let's wrap this up in a way that will make my mom proud:

May the teaching of this book bring you a better understanding of why guys act the way they do in order to better appreciate their differences from women, to improve your ability to be patient with them, and to know how to better interact with them. And may your life be blessed as you bless those around you.

The End

Conclusion Pt 2

You did it! You've finished the book. Good for you. Finishing anything can be a challenge (except a Kit Kat bar; they're delicious). Finishing a book is particularly impressive. That is an accomplishment because that means you took the time to actually sit (whoa). Not only that, you sat down and stayed awake long enough to read (double whoa). You should be proud of yourself. I'm proud of you... and no that wasn't sarcasm. I can be serious. It's just a challenge... and it kind of hurts my brain. But that's worth it because I want you to know how much I appreciate you reading this book.

I am now done. I hope you're cheering... not because you're thinking, "Thank goodness it's over," but because cheering is what you do at the end of something good like a performance or movie. I hope you're brave enough to cheer out loud. Stand up, clap your hands and whoop and holler. Don't be afraid. This is your moment. If you start cheering, people may join you or feel like they're missing out on something, which they did – this book. I could be the first writer to receive a standing ovation. It's not for my ego. I'll never know you did it anyway... unless you want to record it and send it to me (that'd be cool). More importantly, I want you to give this book a standing ovation because it will empower you; it will make you feel great about yourself... especially if you enjoy people looking at you funny.

The End to the End

Blessing

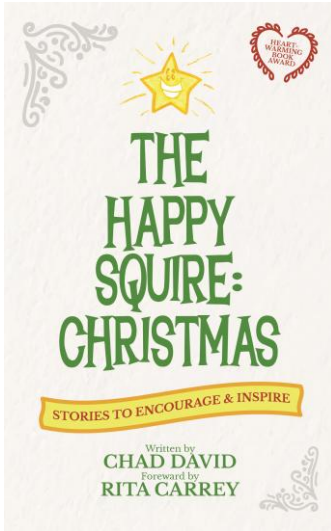
May this book help you get closer to the life and relationship for which you've been hoping.



Other Books by Chad

(Found on Amazon or www.ChadDavid.ca)

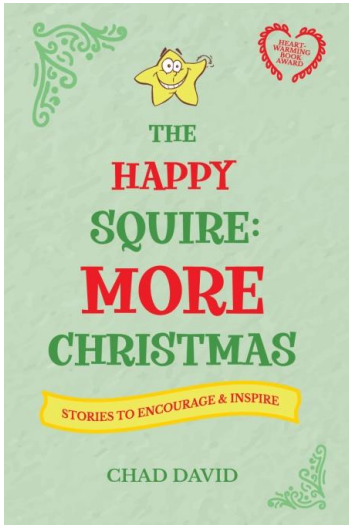
2020



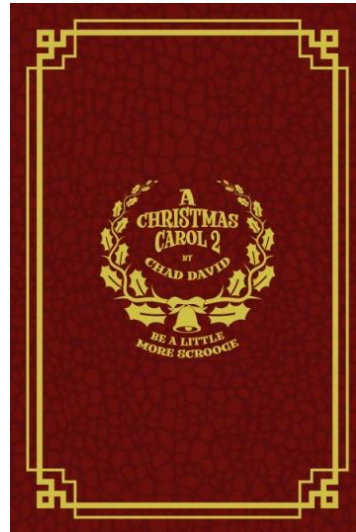
2021



2022

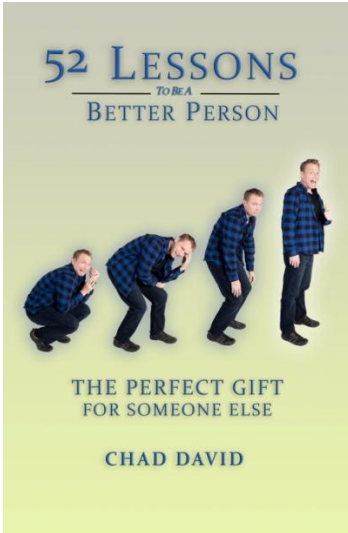


2022



2023

2024



2012



End Notes

1. *Art of Spirituality*, Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham, 1992, p60.
2. *Breaking Bad Habits in Dogs: Learn to Gain Your Dog's Obedience and Trust by Understanding How It Thinks and Behaves*. Tennant, Colin, 2003; p16.
3. *American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. Decoding Your Dog: The Ultimate Experts Explain Common Dog Behaviors and Reveal How to Prevent Or Change Unwanted Ones*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014; p14.
4. *The Bro Code*, Stinson, Barney, with Matt Kuhn, 2008, p21.
5. *Breaking Bad Habits in Dogs: Learn to Gain Your Dog's Obedience and Trust by Understanding How It Thinks and Behaves*; p20.
6. *Cats Behaving Badly: Why Cats Do the Naughty Things They Do*, Celia Haddon New York : Thomas Dunne Books, 2012 (first ed.); p 27.
7. *American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. Decoding Your Dog: The Ultimate Experts Explain Common Dog Behaviors and Reveal How to Prevent Or Change Unwanted Ones*, p38.
8. ^{viii} *Breaking Bad Habits in Dogs*
9. *American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. Decoding Your Dog: The Ultimate Experts Explain Common Dog Behaviors and Reveal How to Prevent Or Change Unwanted Ones*; p50.
10. *American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. Decoding Your Dog: The Ultimate Experts Explain Common Dog Behaviors and Reveal How to Prevent Or Change Unwanted Ones*; p141.
11. *Breaking Bad Habits in Dogs: Learn to Gain Your Dog's Obedience and Trust by Understanding How It Thinks and Behaves*; p20.
12. *American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. Decoding Your Dog: The Ultimate Experts Explain Common Dog Behaviors and Reveal How to Prevent Or Change Unwanted Ones*; p57.
13. *American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. Decoding Your Dog: The Ultimate Experts Explain Common Dog Behaviors and Reveal How to Prevent Or Change Unwanted Ones*; p115.

-
14. *American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. Decoding Your Dog: The Ultimate Experts Explain Common Dog Behaviors and Reveal How to Prevent or Change Unwanted Ones; p58.*
 15. ^{xv} (Cats behaving badly, 187)
 16. *Breaking Bad Habits in Dogs: Learn to Gain Your Dog's Obedience and Trust by Understanding How It Thinks and Behaves; p20.*
 17. *American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. Decoding Your Dog: The Ultimate Experts Explain Common Dog Behaviors and Reveal How to Prevent Or Change Unwanted Ones; p8.*
 18. *Breaking Bad Habits in Dogs: Learn to Gain Your Dog's Obedience and Trust by Understanding How It Thinks and Behaves; p20.*
 19. *Breaking Bad Habits in Dogs: Learn to Gain Your Dog's Obedience and Trust by Understanding How It Thinks and Behaves; p18.*
 20. *American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. Decoding Your Dog: The Ultimate Experts Explain Common Dog Behaviors and Reveal How to Prevent Or Change Unwanted Ones; p3.*
 21. *American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. Decoding Your Dog: The Ultimate Experts Explain Common Dog Behaviors and Reveal How to Prevent Or Change Unwanted Ones; p3.*