



What We Love

Caryn Hacker-Buechel looks at the characteristics "Men We Love" have in common.

There were absolutely "No Toy Guns Allowed" in our home when my son, now 26, was very young. No orange plastic toy revolvers that spit soft foam bullets. No silver cap guns that smelled of sulfur after the pseudo-blast. No metal pistol that fit so snug in his small hand to have him become accustomed. "No Toy Guns Allowed!"

I was a young, flourishing child and family psychotherapist and strongly believed the nurture vs. nature theory, that by not introducing any aggressive toys one could curb what women often see as an offensive male characteristic.

Then it happened. My wonderful child began to turn everything into some firearm form. This included toy blocks, breakfast cereal and, at times, his own anatomy. I was horrified, yet philosophical. Dr. John Gray was right. From the very beginning some things about women and men are just different. Yet, those differences are oddly the very aspects that cause us to like, love and balance each other. Vive la différence... just take a moment to understand it.

The original men and women of the "cave culture" had clear delineation in their roles. The men hunted for the

day's meal and the women cooked and cared for children and their bedrock-style housing. We continue to live a variation of the initial job descriptions that have become hard-wired expectations regarding gender. I am certain that women, even back in the days of homo-erectus, sat around the campfire at day's end and chatted to each other that their mate only "ugged" in their direction...and, at times, they thought it was cute.

With the increase of divorce during the past two decades, women were placed in the position of often



portraying both roles within a household. In an understandable move, women attempted to assist their sons in developing traits that they believed would help them be successful in a long-term relationship with a future wife. These traits were often gentle in nature and included the unintentional admonishment of many things “male.” This assistance, while well-meaning, caused confusion and discomfort for both. While we have learned that the genders cannot be blended, there are certain characteristics which are cherished by Gray’s Venusian women (which is all of us) and offer keys to the development of healthy and secure attachments, originated by Dr. Bowlby and more recently shared by Drs. Cline and Faye’s Love and Logic series.

The following is this female author’s modern compilation of wonderful traits in men we love:

1. HIGH-QUALITY COMMUNICATION

Women treasure the spoken/written word. Women love a man who can speak succinctly, keep relatively to the topic and interrupt only occasionally. Communication is the cornerstone to progress.

2. GOOD LISTENING SKILLS

Equally important to the ability to speak, personally and publicly, is the ability to listen with interest. Women love to be validated through two-way conversation.

3. RESPECTABLE EYE CONTACT AND TOUCH

Looking into someone’s eyes demonstrates interest. “Men we love” understand the importance of this characteristic without becoming intense or distracting. The same holds true for the ability to utilize appropriate touch in all forms.

4. NATURAL EMPATHY

Women understand the importance of experiencing feelings, but not being overwhelmed by, or fearful of, them. We love men who can be respectful of affect in the recognition of someone else’s feelings, as well as their own. This characteristic allows for assistance and encouragement within family, whether original or blended, business or community. This is an important characteristic, for without it, we are all separated beings existing in a vacuum. Women understand that we are interconnected and love a man who can appreciate that point.

5. INTELLIGENT RISK-TAKING

Ultimately women still love the cave-man with the relatively high I.Q. and the courage to develop it. The guy with the spark of fire and the ability to light the future will turn our collective heads, while we continue to be attracted to the look of a man in a well-fitted business suit, military uniform or polyester football pants.

These traits in various combination and intensity offer a fabulous recipe for the creation of appreciation, respect, recognition and admiration. The men honored in this month’s “Men We Love” feature articles demonstrate the far-reaching contributions that men who embody these characteristics offer our community. Women have learned so much from our male counterparts; it’s nice to recognize the pendulum’s return.

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