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Secrets About Men Every Woman Should Know

Written by Barbara De Angelis

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SECRETS ABOUT MEN



EVERY WOMAN SHOULD KNOW



BARBARA DE ANGELIS

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Barbara De Angelis asserts the moral right to be identified
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By the same author:
Are You the One for Me?
The Hundred Most Asked Questions About Love, Sex and Relationships
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To Jeffrey, for teaching me that I don't have to chase after love anymore

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INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wished that men would come with instruction booklets? If you buy a toaster, or an answer machine, it's always accompanied by a nice little booklet that helps you understand the product, explains its features, and tells you how to avoid hurting yourself when you use it. Well what about men as women "use" men more than any other "appliances", yet we're expected to work out how they work all by ourselves.

Every day of our lives, you and I deal with men – our husbands or boyfriends, our bosses or employers, our fathers, our sons, our friends. We try to understand them, to take care of them, to love them – and to get them to love us back. When it works, we think men are fantastic, and we're sure we couldn't live without them. When it doesn't work, we think men are impossible, and that we'd be much better off never having to deal with them at all. If you're like me, I'm sure at some point in your life you've thrown your hands up in frustration and felt like saying, "Send this man back to the factory – he's defective! There must be a part missing, because he sure isn't functioning properly," or, "Maybe this model has been discontinued – I can't make him work right."

As a woman you have three choices as to how you are going to deal with the men in your lifetime:

Choice #1: You can get angry at the men in your life for driving you crazy and spend your time complaining about them. (This is fun for a few hours, but after a few years, it loses its attraction.)

Choice #2: You can give up men entirely and buy a nice fluffy dog. (This is cheaper, and less work, but not very fulfilling.)

Choice #3: You can decide to learn everything there is to know about understanding and getting along with men, so that you can have the wonderful relationships you deserve.

I've spent the last fifteen years working with tens of thousands of men and women, learning about what makes relationships succeed and what makes them fail. It's taken me a long time to understand men. It's been a difficult and often painful journey – I've made a lot of mistakes along the way in my own relationships with men.

I'm happy to say that not only have I survived, I've emerged from my struggle with a new understanding of men that has changed my life, and I want to share the things I've learned with you. I hope *Secrets About Men Every Woman Should Know* will be the instruction manual about men that you've been looking for. May it help you to create the loving relationship with a man that you've always dreamed of.

SECRETS ABOUT HOW WOMEN RELATE TO MEN

1
Men: The Final Frontier

May you live in changing times.
— Chinese curse

Imagine for a moment that you've been chosen to be part of an expedition to another planet. All that's known about the planet is that it is inhabited by beings whose physical appearance is similar to yours. After a long journey through space, you arrive at this faraway world. You step out of your spaceship and are greeted by pleasant-looking creatures who do indeed closely resemble your own species. Much to your amazement, they even appear to be speaking English.

Over the next few hours, you attempt to talk and interact with these beings. At first, you seem to be getting along well. But as more time passes, the tension between you and them begins to mount. Even though these aliens seem to understand the English language, they constantly misunderstand your attempts to communicate with them – you say one thing, and they hear another; you try to express curiosity, for instance, and they interpret it as criticism. As you observe these beings interacting with one another, the differences between you and them become even more apparent. Your own species has been trained to value cooperation and emotional sensitivity – these beings seem always to be in competition with each other. You've been taught

to share your feelings – they seem to work hard at hiding theirs. The more time you spend with these unusual creatures, the more frustrated you become.

Finally, you and your exploration team decide to depart from this strange and unsettling place. You're certain that these beings will be happy to see you go, since they didn't show much enthusiasm toward you during your visit. But to your great surprise, they become very sad when you announce that you are leaving, insist that they loved the time they spent with you, and beg you not to depart. In spite of their protests, you board your spaceship, more confused than ever. And as you settle back into your seat and feel the rocket engines lift the steel craft back into space, you think to yourself, *That was the strangest group of people I've ever met. They said one thing and felt another. They acted like they didn't care, but they did. They didn't seem to enjoy having us around, but were unhappy when we left. Well, they were interesting to visit, but I sure wouldn't want to live with them.*

Starting Your Adventure into the World of Men

Well, in case you haven't figured it out yet, the aliens have landed and are living among us – they're called "men." And when you consider the tremendous biological, psychological, and sociological differences between us, men might as well be from another planet. Stop and think for a minute about the odds of your getting along with someone who came from a very different background, was brought up with completely different values, and was taught to think, behave, and communicate in a totally different style from your own. Next to impossible, right? Yet every day of our lives, we attempt to challenge these odds by having relationships with men. The truth is, it's a miracle that we get along at all!

The differences between men and women have existed throughout the ages, as I explain in the remainder of this chapter. For thousands of years, women accepted these differences, adapted to them, and took on certain roles that were expected of us. But sometime around the beginning of the twentieth century a revolution took place, a revolution in the way women saw themselves and insisted on being seen by men. For the first time, women were demanding equality in all aspects of life, and in the process, were breaking out of those culturally stereotyped roles they and their mothers and their grandmothers and their great-grandmothers had complacently accepted. The later introduction of effective birth control methods and the flow of women into the work force gave women reproductive and economic freedom from dependance on men.

And so, a crisis in male–female relationships was born. Men were used to being in control, and expected women to behave submissively. Now women were saying, "No, I don't want to act that way anymore." The truth was that we still weren't sure of how we were supposed to act as "new women." We were confused, and our confusion made the men in our lives even more perplexed. It's as if we were still playing the same game, but all the old rules were thrown out, and we hadn't finished making up the new ones yet. One minute we wanted to be liberated; the next, we wanted to be taken care of. We went to work and learned to support ourselves, but we still expected a man to hold the door for us on the way into our office. We begged men to open up and show us their vulnerabilities, but found ourselves getting turned off when they started sounding weak. And while our own double standards bothered us, they drove men crazy.

As modern women, we are on the way to mastering our professional and financial lives. But when it comes to our relationships with men, we're more frustrated than ever, and sometimes it seems as if we haven't made any progress at all. As one very successful female business executive said to me recently, "I can

figure out how to make my company hundreds of thousands of dollars and how to buy my own condominium, but I still can't figure out how to have a good relationship with a man!" For this woman, as well as for many of us, men are the "final frontier," the one area that remains an untamed mystery in our lives.

Warning: This is *not* a "men are jerks" book! It isn't about blaming men, or making them wrong for how they behave

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INSTEAD, IT'S A COLLECTION OF VALUABLE INFORMATION THAT I'VE SHARED WITH THOUSANDS OF WOMEN, INFORMATION THAT HAS HELPED THEM UNDERSTAND WHY MEN ARE THE WAY THEY ARE, AND TAUGHT THEM NEW WAYS TO RELATE TO MEN.

Why Men Are the Way They Are

Have you ever wondered why men prefer to drive around lost for hours rather than stop and ask for directions?

Have you ever suspected that the men who try to control you are secretly afraid of the power you have over them?

Have you ever wondered why men have such a hard time letting you get really close to them?

Have you ever wondered why men get so upset when they are trying to concentrate on something and you try to get them to pay attention to you?

Have you ever asked yourself why a man will insist he isn't worried or upset when you absolutely know he is?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, you aren't alone. Every woman knows the frustration of looking at the man she loves and feeling like she cannot understand why he is the way he is. The first thing you need to know is:

Men aren't the way they are because they want to drive women crazy; they've been trained to be that way for thousands of years. And that training makes it very difficult for men to be intimate

Here, then, is some background information. Let's look at:

1. Why I Call Men "The Solitary Hunter" and "The Displaced Warrior"
2. Why Men Have Always Dominated Women
3. How Men Are Trained to Be Unfit for Love
4. How TV Teaches Us Stereotyped Sex Roles

Man: The Solitary Hunter

The time is thousands of years ago. The earth is an often violent, changing planet complete with volcanos, ice storms, floods, and harsh extremes of climate. Wild animals roam freely, far outnumbering the still-meager population of human beings, who live in small groupings whenever they can find shelter. The world is a primitive place, where survival of the fittest is the only reality.

Huddled inside a cave on a hillside, a family eats their one meal of the day – the last few scraps of meat from a wild deer killed by the male two days before. The meat is all that is left from that hunt. The male has tried unsuccessfully to find more food, but hunting is difficult in this weather. It's been snowing for a week, and most of the animals have left and gone south to warmer valleys. But as he watches his woman and their two small children greedily lick every morsel from their fingers, he knows what he must do – he must go out and hunt, and he must not come back until he has killed. If he fails, he and his family will die, and will be eaten themselves by the wolves he hears howling every night.

Suddenly, the male leaps toward the entrance to the cave, his body poised for attack – he thinks he hears a suspicious sound. Perhaps it is another, more powerful male, hoping to kill him and take his woman and the cave for his own. Or perhaps it is a wolf or a lion, ready to attack and satisfy its hunger. Or perhaps it is just the wind; he cannot be sure. He is never sure. That is why he will not sit with his back toward the cave opening, but always faces it so he can see an approaching threat. That is why, even when he sleeps, he does not rest totally – part of him is always listening for sounds of danger.

He squats near the fire again. His heart is pounding in his chest. He is afraid; he is always afraid. But as he looks at his woman and his children, he knows he must never show them his fear. Without his courage, they would lose all hope. Without him, they are as good as dead. No, he must be strong. He must remember who he is. He is a man. He is a hunter.

THE DISPLACED WARRIOR

The life of a man in modern society seems to bear no resemblance to the life lived by this primitive ancestor. And yet, up until not very long ago, man was still hunting and killing the food for his family; he had to be ready to defend them physically in times of war.

Twentieth-century man doesn't need to hunt or fight. The skills for which he has been trained and bred for centuries are no longer necessary. There are no battles; there is no enemy; there is no challenge. He is the "displaced warrior."

Is it any wonder, then, that women voice the following complaints about the men in their lives?

"He always seems so defensive – no matter what I say, he seems ready for a fight."

"He has such a hard time opening up and showing me his feelings – it's as if he always has to look so strong."

"I wish my husband would reach out to other men for friendship, but he can't seem to get close to men."

"Bob takes his work so seriously that it drives me crazy. I try to get him to lighten up about it, but he acts like it's a matter of life and death whether he gets a report done today or tomorrow."

"My boyfriend gets so angry when he feels he's being criticized or mistreated or challenged by someone – he interprets any kind of disagreement as an attack, and he attacks back with sarcasm and by acting like a bully."

"When my husband is upset about something, he just bottles it up inside. He becomes cold and distant, and it takes me days of nagging before he'll admit what's bothering him."

I'm sure you can see the remnants of the hunter-warrior mentality in the attitudes and behavior of these twentieth-century men. They are still being affected by forces within themselves that they may be totally unaware of. One theory is that human beings have a "genetic memory," some kind of consciousness passed down through the centuries that links an accountant living a quiet life in the suburbs with every relative he's ever had, all the way back to his primitive relatives of thousands of years ago.

It's as if men "remember" those primitive impulses to defend, to never show weakness, to always stay in control, and unconsciously act these out in their everyday lives

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Why Men Choose Certain Seats in Restaurants

Several years ago I had an experience that absolutely convinced me that genetic memory must exist. At the time I was in a