

MEN – “BRING HOME THE BACON...JUST A DIFFERENT BRAND!”

If you ask the average man, “What does it mean to be a good man in the context of a relationship with your wife or the lady in your life,” what would he say? The answer you would most likely hear is, “to be a good financial provider” or to “bring home the bacon”. Herein lies the challenge:

What does a professional, successful woman who desires male companionship do when she earns more “bacon” than her man? What does an “ole school” man do when he’s been raised and socialized to understand his role as the primary one to bring home the bacon?

When a man knows that his lady earns more than him and she is relatively independent and capable of managing her life, he struggles to see where he is needed. He has been conditioned to think his mission is to rescue the damsel in distress. But what if the damsel does not require financial rescue? If these questions do not get resolved it unfortunately produces many lonely women and fearful men.

As men we would do well to expand our view of our role. I agree that part of being a man is being a good provider. But providing financially is only a fraction of a man’s role, it is not the sole part. A major part of being a man is taking healthy initiative. Boys are selfish and are takers. Men give and serve. It is critical for us as men to understand what it means to bring home the emotional, spiritual and relational bacon. I realize this is a different kind of bacon, but it is important for us to learn these skills for success in relationships with women. So many men define ourselves as being a good financial provider that we are shocked and angry when our lady expresses any disappointment with us. We believe she is not grateful. We think, “look at all I am doing...I am a good man...there are many women out here who would gladly welcome a good man like me...I got a decent job, I pay bills, I am not on the down low, I take her out, I buy her nice things, what more does want?” She wants a different brand of bacon! Most women I’ve counseled have commented on how they really appreciate what their man seeks to do for them financially and materialistically but these things do not make her heart sing. It is like water skiing, skimming the surface of her heart. But a man’s emotional provision and companionship are like scuba diving going to the deep places within her heart.

What he needs to know is that he is very much still needed and wanted for the other critical elements of a relationship. “Tasty bacon” is providing friendship and kindness. It takes a secure man to know that he brings more to the table than the number of zero’s on his paycheck. Many women long to share their life experiences with that special man and they identify with the line from the movie *Mahogany*, “success means nothing if you have no one to share it with”.

As a friend of mine said, “too many people are consumers and not philanthropists in relationships.” The best relationships are the ones where people are willing to give to each other according to their emotional and relational taste buds. In order for a man to be a philanthropist in a relationship he must be emotionally and spiritually healthy. It takes

a healthy “me” to form a strong “we”. Once he is committed to the journey of being healthy, getting honest about his own stuff, he can begin to raise some significant questions: how does a man bring home delicious emotional, spiritual and relational “bacon”? What does it smell like? How does he fry it up?

First, a man must have a radical change of thinking from just providing for a woman to sharing with her. If he is not careful, he can fall prey to a parental type of mindset towards a woman. He may struggle to view her as his equal. A father provides for his daughter, a man shares with his woman. She is an adult woman not your little girl. Second, it is important for a man to learn what it means to make love to her with his clothes on. Love for her begins in the kitchen not the bedroom. What is her love language? Does she like inspiring words, gifts of kindness, physical affection or acts of service? Third, pursue her heart. I do not know of a woman who does not want her man to find her captivating. A woman can smell when a man is in pursuit of her heart. You pursue her heart when you make time to hear her dreams and honor her feelings. Fourth, be willing to share your heart with her. Practice a regular ten-minute connector where you talk with her about the most rewarding part of your day and the most challenging part of your day. Fifth, esteem her highly, over your buddies, before your momma and kids (if you are married). Sixth, pray and read the Bible with her on a frequent basis. Research shows that couples that pray and read the Bible together have greater sexual pleasure and are less likely to divorce. I have a feeling some men are going to become very spiritual.

By the way women, you can help a man want to bring home a different brand of bacon by cheering him and expressing appreciation for his emotional, relational and spiritual investments. Make comments like these: “Thank you for the time you spend with me”...”your companionship means so much to me”...”I admire how hard you work” or “I respect the way you carry yourself.” Brag about him in front of others and watch his chest stick out. This enables him to feel needed, like he’s contributing meaningfully to your life. Ladies, you definitely will not keep him around by reminding him of how much you earn and that you can make it without him. This is rubbing salt in a potential wound. Both a man and woman can benefit greatly by seeing themselves as teammates and taking a heavy dose of humility. Selfishness and arrogance are relationship show stoppers.

Money is necessary and things are nice but what a man invests emotionally and spiritually in a relationship are imperishable.

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