

every night, and make sure our favorite cabinet to show us that you're paying at- . But what we really need from you when those three things. You give me that when I go back out there and fight this war for a woman isn't doing those three things for aise you he'll get somebody who will. We out these things—not for ninety days, we e what I'm saying, but ask any man about hether they're true, and that man will tell le thing: it's true. Support. Loyalty. The ply these three things, you'll have on your will do anything you need and want him to nd simple.

“WE NEED TO TALK,”
AND OTHER WORDS THAT MAKE
MEN RUN FOR COVER

We need to talk.”
For a man, few words are as menacing as those four—especially when a woman is the one saying them and he's on the receiving end. Those four words can mean only two things to men: either we did something wrong or, worse, you really literally just want to talk. Now, we understand that we're not the essence of perfection and there are going to be times when you're mad at us and need to let us know it; we get that, though we don't necessarily want to have to concentrate on an hourlong angry lecture about how we screwed up. But even more? No man wants to sit around gabbing with you like we're

one of your girlfriends. Ever. It's just not in our DNA to lounge around, sip coffee, and dab at our eyes with tissue as if we're in an AA meeting or on some psychologist's couch trying to get things off our chest. When men are talking, and especially when they're listening, it's with purpose.

We don't vent.

We just want to fix whatever situation is upsetting the balance.

We understand that this frustrates you time and time again, because sometimes you want to talk to share and get someone else's take on a situation—you know, put a listening ear on it. But seriously? That's what your girlfriends are for. You lay out your problem and she'll commiserate with you—give you all kinds of “yeah, girls” and “I know that's right,” and nod and agree and tell you stories about how the same thing happened to her. She'll even go on to give you concrete examples of every other time something like this has happened to other women throughout the history of the world, and, hours later, you all will get up from the couch, having solved nothing but feeling so much better. Consider Exhibit A:

You: “I walked into work today and before I could get to my desk, I saw Tanya walking over to the coffee machine and wouldn't you know that heiffa had on the same shirt as me?”

Your girlfriend: “You better stop it. Which one?”

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You: "The blue one—you know, the one with the
orange flower print? I got it from that store across
town? On sale?"

Your girlfriend: "You mean the one you found on the
\$29.99 rack in the back? The same day I found those
shoes at the store just down the street?"

You: "That's the one! I wore that shirt to work a few
weeks ago and she complimented me on it and next
thing I know, she ran to the store and bought my
shirt and is wearing it to work! Can you believe it?
Do you know how that made me feel?"

Your girlfriend: "Aw, hell to the nah. Are you serious?
That's horrible. She's got some nerve . . ."

For sure, this conversation could go on for hours, morphing
into all kinds of side conversations that have absolutely nothing
to do with the issue at hand: that some woman was wearing the
same blouse as you on the same day in the same office.

With a man, exactly ten seconds into the conversation, he'd
arrive at The Fix. I present to you, Exhibit B:

You: "I walked into work today and before I could get
to my desk, I saw Tanya walking over to the coffee

machine and wouldn't you know that heiffa had on the same shirt as me?"

Your man: "Really? Don't wear it anymore."

End of conversation. It's that simple for us. In this particular instance, and many more examples such as this, we can't get more worked up than that. How you felt at work while you had to sit there with this other woman on the other side of the room with the same blouse on is irrelevant to us. As far as we're concerned, the problem has already been fixed—you came home. You're not looking at the woman in the identical blouse anymore. And if you don't wear that particular blouse to the office again, you won't have to deal with that particular problem again. In our mind, problem solved—no more talking.

All of this is to say that we men aren't in the talking business; we're in the fix-it business. From the moment we come out of the womb, we're taught to protect, profess, and provide. Communicating, nurturing, listening to problems, and trying to understand them without any obligation to fix them is simply not what boys are raised to do. We don't let them cry, we don't ask them how they feel about anything, we don't encourage them to express themselves in any meaningful way beyond showing how "manly" they are. Let a little boy fall off his bike and scrape his knee—see how fast everyone tells him to get up and shake it off and stop all that doggone crying. "Be a man,"



SPORTS FISH VS. KEEPERS

How Men Distinguish Between the Marrying Types and the Playthings

Anyone who really knows me knows about my passion for fishing. I've always loved the tranquil moments that come with the sport—sitting on the bank or the deck of a boat, out on the open water. There is no greater peace. But I also crave the sudden explosion of adrenaline that comes when I feel a fish on the other end of my line; you can't imagine the thrill that comes when I have to use every bit of my might and mind to see if I can keep this fish hooked, reel it in, and get it in the boat.

And then comes the hard part—deciding whether to keep the fish or throw it back. So in addition to fishing, hooking them, and reeling them in, I get another rush when I'm forced to look at them, see how they feel, and evaluate whether they make it on my stringer. And trust me: a fish has to be really special to make it onto my stringer. Otherwise, it gets tossed back into the water, so I can fish some more.

A man fishes for two reasons: he's either sport fishing or fishing to eat, which means he's either going to try to catch the biggest fish he can, take a picture of it, admire it with his buddies and toss it back to sea, or he's going to take that fish home, scale it, fillet it, toss it in some cornmeal, fry it up, and put it on his plate. This, I think, is a great analogy for how men seek out women.

See, men are, by nature, hunters, and women have been put in the position of being the prey. Think about it: it used to be that a man "picked" a wife, a man "asked" a woman to dinner, a man had to get "permission" from a woman's father to have her hand in marriage, and even, in some cases, to date her. We pursued—in fact, we've been taught all our lives that it was not only a good thing to chase women, but natural. Women have bought into this for years, too; how many times have you or one of your girls said, "I like it when a man pursues me," or "I need him to romance me and give me flowers and make me feel like I'm wanted"? Flowers, jewelry, phone calls, dates, sweet talk—these are all the weapons in our hunting arsenal when we're coming for you.

ness the hard part—deciding whether to keep it or let it go. So in addition to fishing, hooking and reeling them in, I get another rush when I'm forced to see how they feel, and evaluate whether they're worth the stringer. And trust me: a fish has to be really hooked onto my stringer. Otherwise, it gets tossed back, so I can fish some more.

For two reasons: he's either sport fishing or fishing for a trophy. If he's going to try to catch the biggest fish, he's going to take that fish home, scale it, fillet it, season it with cornmeal, fry it up, and put it on his plate. This is an analogy for how men seek out women.

By nature, hunters, and women have been put in the position of being the prey. Think about it: it used to be that a man "asked" a woman to dinner, he asked for "permission" from a woman's father to have her in marriage, and even, in some cases, to date her. We've been taught all our lives that it was not natural for men to chase women, but natural for women to be chased. Women have been doing this for years, too; how many times have you or your mother said, "I like it when a man pursues me," or "I want a man to chase me and give me flowers and make me feel special"? Flowers, jewelry, phone calls, dates, sweet nothings—all the weapons in our hunting arsenal when it comes to getting you.

But the question always remains: once we hook you, what will we do with you? Taking a cue from my love of fishing, my philosophy is that men will treat women like one of these two things: a sports fish or a keeper. How we meet, how the conversation goes, how the relationship develops, and the demands you make on a man will all determine whether you'll be treated like a sports fish—a throwback—or a keeper, the kind of woman a man can envision settling down with. And the way we separate the two is very simple, as I explain next.

A SPORTS FISH . . .

Doesn't have any rules, requirements, respect for herself, or guidelines, and we men can pick up her scent a mile away. She's the party girl who takes a sip of her Long Island iced tea or a shot of her Patrón, then announces to her suitor that she just wants to "date and see how it goes," and she's the conservatively dressed woman at the office who is a master at networking, but clueless about how to approach men. She has no plans for any ongoing relationships, is not expecting anything in particular from a man, and sets absolutely not nary one condition or restriction on anyone standing before her—she makes it very clear that she's just along for whatever is getting ready to happen. For sure, as soon as she lets a man know through words and action

STEVE HARVEY

that he can treat her just any old kind of way, he will do just that. Men will stand in line to sign up for that, believe me.

A KEEPER . . .

Never gives in easily, and the standards/requirements start the moment you open your mouth. See, she understands her power and wields it like a samurai sword. She commands—not demands—respect, just by the way she carries herself. You can walk up to her and give her your best game, and while she may be impressed by what you say, that's no guarantee that she's going to let the conversation go any further, much less give you her phone number and agree to give you some of her valuable time. Men automatically know from the moment she opens her mouth that if they want her, they'll have to get in line with her standards and requirements, or keep it moving because she's done with the games and isn't interested in playing. But she will also send all the signals that she is capable of being loyal to a man and taking good care of him, appreciative of what he's bringing to the relationship, and ready for love—true, long-lasting love.