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The Metrosexual Man vs. The Cowboy– What Do Women Want?

By Toni Coleman, LCSW

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He always looks perfectly put together. He can be in a t–shirt and jeans or heading out to a black–tie event. His hair never has a bad day. His nails are clean and buffed. His clothes are perfectly pressed and exquisitely coordinated. He smells like flowers and spice. Is he gay? No, he's the new metrosexual man.

As many of you know by now, the term "metrosexual" was coined by a journalist (and gay man) named Mark Simpson, to describe a new kind of urban male who is straight, but in touch with his feminine side and not afraid to show it. Essentially, metrosexuals are guys who take on behaviors and show an interest in things that have traditionally belonged in the female domain.

You may have a metrosexual brother, male friend or boyfriend (ex). These are the guys you can shop till you drop with. They can discuss fashion, will notice your great new shoes, buy their grooming products from the same places you do and have no qualms about having a manicure, pedicure or facial. You can actually TALK to these guys about something other than sports, cars and other traditionally male interests. These are the guys you can take to the opera, symphony and ballet. The perfect man, right? Depends on whom you talk to.

Let's step back a minute and look at the where and how of the existence of the metrosexual man. Simply put, he is a by–product of feminism and the changing roles and related expectations of women. As women have moved into (previously) male dominated environments and roles, it has caused a shift in the male–female balance. Women are now active participants in industry, politics and the professions– to name a few. However, as they have left their old jobs as homemakers and full–time domestic caregivers, they left a lot of empty space to be filled. Childcare providers and the domestic cleaning industry could provide some of this. The problem was all the "other" stuff women had always done.

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Men were therefore called upon to contribute more to the raising of children, housework, cooking, shopping, etc. Their sons were being exposed a new role model, a dad who took on jobs and chores that had traditionally belonged to mom. Young boys themselves were also being tapped to do housework and help with siblings, exposing them to a new way of being a male in our society. Women had become more independent and financially and professionally successful. Men had become more domestic and had to soften their style as they moved into more traditionally feminine roles.

A new social order had evolved that worked for everyone, right? Not necessarily. We never take on something new without giving something up. So, what has been discarded? Clearly defined social roles and the expectations that come with them– for starters. Suddenly there was a new blueprint for how men and women should relate– especially in the world of dating. However, it was unclear and depending upon whom you asked, you would get a different answer. Usher in the confusion and frustration surrounding dating in the new millennium.

Women ask questions such as:

- * who asks who out
- * who calls who
- * who pays
- * who makes decisions about where to go, etc.
- * What are the expectations at the end of the date
- * how soon should we become intimate

Women comment on:

- * his lack of initiative in calling or asking her out
- * his expectation that they will go dutch
- * how he never offers to pick her up
- * his overall lack of assertiveness
- * his saying he will call, but not following through
- * his too polished style which lacks a certain spark of masculinity
- * his taking longer to get ready than she does
- * his crudeness or over aggressive style
- * his expectation that they will have sex

Men ask questions such as:

- * what do women want
- * why should a guy have to ask a girl out
- * why should the guy always pay
- * why do women say they want sensitivity, etc., but see guys like that as wimps
- * why do women give out such mixed signals in general
- * why do women seem to reject nice guys and go for jerks
- * why can't a woman be the aggressor

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Men comment on:

- * women acting spoiled
- * women wanting their independence, etc. but not wanting equal responsibility and weight
- * women expecting a lot from men, but offering little in return
- * women not knowing what they want
- * women playing games
- * women's attraction to "bad boys"

Both women and men verbalize that they are ok with the current roles that have evolved for them in our society, yet I hear both talk wistfully about how it was in previous generations. Back then; everyone KNEW what was expected from him or her. Life was predictable. Dating was much simpler and "safer". Men were men and women were raised to be wives and homemakers.

We have gained something and we have lost something. One thing for sure, we can never have it both ways.

What's the answer? It is never simple. However, it does involve better communication in general between men and women. Singles need to clarify for themselves (first), what kind of partner they seek

and what their expectations from a relationship really are. Once a person is clear about what they must have and what they can't live with, they need to go out and HONESTLY seek that. Knowing what you want is good. If you turn off someone by your frankness, he/she was not the someone for you.

So, begin with a self–assessment. Then go out and pursue interests and environments, which maximize your chances of meeting compatible singles. And remember, there is no perfect person. He may be overly fussy with his hair, take longer in the bathroom than most women, be less ambitious in his work life than you are and put your cooking to shame. However, if he's sensitive to YOUR needs, easy to talk to and fun to be with, great with kids and very supportive of your goals, he may be the guy of your dreams.

Toni Coleman is a relationship coach in McLean, Virginia. She works with singles who want to create lasting, healthy relationships. Toni has over 20 years of post–masters experience in relationship counseling and coaching with singles and couples. She has also written numerous email classes for singles on all aspects of meeting, dating and relating. She is the author of the email newsletter, The Art of Intimacy, which goes out to thousands of subscribers monthly.

The Independent Woman and the Metrosexual Man

By Advice Diva

A lot of people are starting to wonder why dating in the big city has suddenly become such a perplexing and complicated experience. And when, exactly, did this happen? The dating scene has always been a little troublesome for some people and could even feel like more of a chore than what should be a fun time. But lately the single jungle of Houston and other large cities are changing and

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evolving into more complex designs of mass confusion. We seem to be moving faster and faster into complete chaos rather than assimilating into the well preserved roles that our mothers and fathers laid out for us.

Gender roles are changing and this is the basic concept that is generally holding many of us back from entering successful relationships. More and more people are remaining single for longer periods of time. Part of this is because we are finding it difficult to accept and understand the new gender roles of our mates, even if we, ourselves, are holding to those new standards.

The roles of women have gone through the most dramatic changes. They have changed more in the last two generations than in the last two millennia. Due to mass media, urbanization and politics, women have achieved equality to men in education and the workplace and everywhere else you look. And thanks to the sexual revolution, we have freed our minds. Women are now able to support themselves and raise their own children without the help of a man, thus escaping the traditional role of "mother" and "wife". Our new found independence is something we fear giving back. The independent woman does not want to be controlled or told what to do. She will never again be the docile little lamb once sought after for marrying purposes.

This change in the lives of women in large cities has led to a second major change, this one in men. Men have moved from being the gruff, rugged males to becoming "metrosexual" (a term coined by gay journalist Mark Simpson). Men have started to take over some of the duties that women had always controlled. There are women working alongside these men in the office. And thanks to sexually homogenous advertising, the metrosexual has been created. This new male breed has matching ensembles for every occasion, never has a bad hair day, loves manicures and smells like roses. He has no problem shopping, attending the opera and buying new shoes. The metrosexual is completely in touch with his feminine side but there is just one thing: he is straight.

Suddenly, the roles that we are used to having our mates fill are no longer being filled. The metrosexual is now asking why he has to pay for every date, open doors and pick a woman up at her door since the women are now so independent and financially equal. Yet these men still secretly yearn for that woman who will do the housework and raise the children just like mom did. The independent woman has become too afraid to give back that independence she worked so hard for only to begin relying more on a man than herself. Why should she when the danger still lies of being tossed aside one day? Yet, in her heart, she also desires the manly man who will sweep her off of her feet and take away all of her problems, just like her daddy once did.

We have now entered what appears to be a never ending cycle that can only be broken by trust. The

once praised nuclear family with the hard working father and stay at home mother is slowly dissipating. From now on, men and women will be taking on more equal roles in relationships and families. The question is: when will we become comfortable enough to let it happen?

For questions and comments contact The Advice Diva at

Please visit

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for more articles by the Diva

The Advice Diva has written three self–help guides on relationships and dating which can be found at [www.natural-aging.com](#). She also hosts an online advice column which is completely free of charge.

The Diva does not claim to be an expert in any field. However, she has the ability to understand relationships through past experience and her incredible insight. Aside from her website, the Diva also publishes monthly articles in two magazines and several notable websites.

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Freelance Writer

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