



Earth Mother Is Dead

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Far from being the oppressive brute of feminist lore, the human male has often doted over his female counterpart, especially in romantic relationships. The image of her as “earth mother” has come crashing down, however, as the nurturing mother figure of fantasy life has disappeared. Unlike women, who have liberated themselves, the male is enervated by his dependence on the feminine and the loss of woman as his best friend and mother figure. The idealized image of woman may be making a return as more women makes themselves into sex objects and return to a more passive way of relating to men. The hazards of the male’s idealization of earth mother are examined.

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Introduction (2013)

“Earth Mother Is Dead” is the chapter on the male-female relationship in my book *The Hazards of Being Male*. I discussed the emerging post-feminist woman. I also spoke to the yearning in both women and men for a relationship between them that would be fulfilling and safe, satisfying and enjoyable and characterized by mutual support, a lack of objectification and the disappearance of mutual exploitation. The male would no longer have to be the success-object endlessly needing to prove himself as the provider and protector while the female would no longer be viewed as a sex object and nurturing mother-figure who needed to be the male’s “best and only friend”, thus making it possible for him not to confront his deep isolation and lack of personal connections and intimacy.

Since *The Hazards of Being Male* was published the gender dream of a level playing field without the dynamic of a controlling, responsibility and guilt driven male and an accommodating, dependent, angry and diminished female in pain, has partially been achieved. Women have come to own their power in major ways while the men who choose to can let go of the bottomless need to prove themselves as invulnerable, fearless and ever productive beings. But there are many signs of regressive outcroppings. That is, women today as much as ever, seem to strive to transform themselves into beautiful sex objects while most men pursue success and power and masculine perfection as obsessively as ever. Instead of the male-female bond having become strengthened and a source of mutual joy and support the connection between men and women has seemingly become more fragile, explosive and saturated with distrust and great caution. Finding, building and maintaining the man-woman relationship today often seems like an overwhelming, even impossible challenge characterized by skittish individuals flitting from partner to partner and finally giving up on finding and creating an enduring relationship.

In some ways, the history of the male-female relationship has been a tragedy of major proportions characterized by a deluded male unable to perceive and relate to the female as she is, and women pursuing a romantic fantasy and closeness with a male that continually eludes, frustrates and finally enrages her. The number of older men and women living alone today has skyrocketed. Too many relationships that begin with great hope, love and commitment seem to descend quickly into bottomless blaming, mutual aversion and raging encounters. Crazy-making relationship behaviors characterize both genders with men and women giving each other contradictory, exhausting and “either way you lose” messages.

At this point where it will all end is unclear. The worst case scenario is that women will give up on relating intimately to men altogether and become impregnated, if they desire to be mothers, with donated sperm while men retreat into increasingly disconnected, abstracted, workaholic and autistic like relating and fixation on technological objects, while using video games, computer porn and drugs for gratification.

Earth Mother is dead! The hazards of the man-woman relationship have shifted but an underbelly is emerging that is potentially frightening to those who have been raised to believe that authentic love between the genders is possible to achieve.

Earth Mother Is Dead (2009)

Gary found his “earth mother” while he was still a graduate student working on his degree in hospital administration. She was already an R.N. working in the pediatric ward of the same private hospital in which he was doing his field training. “I fell in love with her when I saw how gentle she was with those kids in the ward. I was also turned on by the way she could take all those orders from the doctors and the head nurse, who happened to be a guy, without getting rebellious—if you know what I mean.”

In Gary’s mind, Nancy was one of the last of the feminine “good” women who really knew what it meant to be a woman. He made a big play for her and within three months they were living together.

She turned out to be everything he originally thought she was. While he was busy with school and had little income, she gladly helped pay some of the bills. She cooked and cleaned and even supported some of his expensive hobbies like drag racing and motorcycles. Auto parts were expensive and she was glad to buy them when he was broke. He felt powerful and secretly gloated that when he was driving with her on the freeway and would suddenly get horny, he could get her to perform fellatio. He was sure that she would never do it for any other guy. He knew she didn’t like it but was doing it because she loved him.

He had the best of all possible worlds in her—a great homemaker and an eager sex partner and a woman who was also totally loyal and faithful.

“What more could I want?” he’d ask himself.

Eight months later she became pregnant and he married her. Gary was still barely making any money and had six months until graduation, Nancy worked until two weeks before she was due to give birth. They had a baby boy.

Two years later they had their second child. She continued working at the hospital, taking off only a month after giving birth. At home she worked harder than ever—even cleaning the garage where he kept his motorcycle and racing car.

Six years into the marriage Nancy met a young doctor on her ward—a loner, somewhat of a non-conformist—who was into meditation and the occult. They began seeing each other secretly until Nancy accidentally left a note at home with her lover’s name and telephone number on it. Gary found it and confronted her. She admitted to him that she was in love with another man. Gary became enraged and violent and Nancy ran out of the house.

When Nancy’s boyfriend found out that she had told her husband about their relationship he became threatened and angry and he dropped her. Feeling confused, unsure of herself, and frightened, she went back to her husband; this time she was more servile than before and Gary became more autocratic than ever. He was able to take her back by rationalizing that she only had the affair because she had been under great stress and didn’t really know what she was doing. However, he

was going to show her that she had made the mistake of her life by fooling around. Now he really felt entitled to push her around. Back at home, Nancy developed some serious symptoms. She wouldn't eat and she was slowly beginning to waste away and had to be admitted into a hospital in order to be fed intravenously. Then when she finally was eating again and came back home she refused to do any housework at all and began to ignore the children.

She stayed on her job as a nurse and secretly went to see her lawyer and a psychotherapist. A short time later she ordered her husband out of the house. He was shocked and couldn't believe what was happening. She had turned cold, bitter, and hateful toward him.

Still, Gary tried to hold on to his earth mother illusion of her. He continued to tell himself that she was psychiatrically ill and soon would "come back to her senses." Two months went by and still she hadn't. Instead she became more resistant, more independent.

At that point, Gary started to fall apart. He would come over to the house to see the kids and suddenly explode and get violent with her. She finally had to get a restraining order to prevent him from coming over at all. In retaliation he hired a detective to find evidence that would prove her an unfit mother. When that went nowhere he became depressed and anxiety-ridden.

He managed to convince her to go to a psychotherapist with him. When the therapist asked him why he still pursued her when she was clearly not interested in him anymore he said with bravado, "She's still the best piece of ass I've ever had. No one else could love her like I did, and she knows it. She'll be coming back."

Interestingly enough, Nancy had previously revealed to the therapist that throughout the marriage she had never enjoyed sex with Gary, had faked her responses all of the time, and had never had a single orgasm.

After two months of therapy sessions, Gary gave up trying to win her back. At that point he started to improve. He saw his children on weekends and became a better father. He actually began to enjoy them, something he had never done during the marriage, because he was always so busy competing with them for Nancy's attention. Nancy became deeply involved with another man, but this time Gary accepted it and also began to date.

The phenomenon of the passive, submissive wife who suddenly and inexplicably turns around and leaves her shocked husband has become very common. Humiliating themselves by going to extremes to win back a woman who had rejected them, many successful, seemingly strong, self-contained, "independent" men have been brought to their knees. Men who appeared to have everything became seriously depressed and suicidal, experienced night terrors, and became physically abusive toward the errant spouse or her boyfriend. They undertook incredibly childish and degrading manipulations in an attempt to win back "their" woman.

A forty-nine-year-old patient who was separated from his wife was willingly supporting her and their child while she lived with the boyfriend she had run away with. By being a "nice guy" he hoped that she would return eventually. Where he once had been total master in the relationship he

now had become total slave. She told him when he could be with their child, when they could get together, and how he would have to change for her to even consider resuming the relationship with him.

It is also common for men who have been abandoned by their earth mother to continue to believe that she wouldn't dream of going to bed with another man. "I know her like a book," is what they so often say. Invariably, however, it turns out they are deluding themselves.

This abandonment by earth mother is often sudden and unexpected. It gives ample evidence of how little these men knew about their wives' or girl friends' inner feelings, believing all along that everything, including the sex, was great.

In an article published in *The New York Times* titled "I Am One Man, Hurt," the husband, a writer and public relations executive, wrote about his experience of abandonment by his wife. "I thought we were a perfectly happy family until my wife told me, without any advance warning, that she didn't love me anymore and wanted a divorce. Not a matter of infidelity or alcoholism or beating or arguments or desertion, but that it didn't mean anything to her anymore and she wanted out."¹

A young man interviewed by one of my research assistants described it this way: "It happened with virtually no warning. I came home one day and she was gone. Then I got this letter from her saying, 'There's no point in talking about it. I've made up my mind.' I didn't know if it was something I said or did or did not say or do. She felt that I should know exactly why she left. But I was oblivious to all of it. She never gave me a chance to change anything. She never even pointed out any problems. It's taken me four years to free myself from the hold—the influence she had on me. I still haven't gotten over her completely."

In all of these instances the male in the relationship collapsed— as if his energy source, his reason for living had been taken away from him. And each of these men went through a period of saying, "Without her, life is not worth living."

These examples are not extraordinary or even unique. Nor were the men involved sick or atypical personalities. The phenomenon of the collapse of the male when he is suddenly abandoned by his earth mother, his supposedly "totally devoted, submissive" woman is becoming increasingly common.

The phenomenon recently was partially documented in a book that explored trends in contemporary male-female relationships. One such trend clearly emerged from the author's research "...The long suffering female is largely a thing of the past. Statistics show that it is often she, and at some stages in the marriage, more often she, who institutes proceedings for divorce."²

According to a widespread cultural myth, the female is the more dependent one in the man-woman relationship. The male is said to be emotionally shallow and unable to maintain a deeply intimate emotional relationship with a woman. Clinical experience, however, suggests that this "shallowness" is simply a self-protective device used by the male to avoid revealing his vulnerability. That is, the male resists closeness and dependency on the female because once the unconscious de-

fense is penetrated by a woman he becomes profoundly attached to the point of deep and almost total dependency. Particularly in first marriages, many males unconsciously seek a relationship of primitive dependency such as they had with their mothers, and like the baby from whom the breast is unexpectedly removed, they rage and despair when this source of comfort is withdrawn.

Recent studies on mental illness, suicide, and death seem to corroborate the theory of profound male dependency on the female and his vulnerability without her. Researchers, analyzing numerous studies on the divorced and widowed, concluded: "...When we compare single men with single women, divorced men with divorced women, and widowed men with widowed women, in each case it is the men who are much more likely to be residents of mental hospitals."³

Data from the National Vital Statistics System indicates that the divorced male has an annual death rate that is more than three times as high as the divorced female.⁴ In one study, researchers found that death, particularly from coronary artery disease, occurred in a group of widowers at 40 per cent above their expected death rates during the six months following the deaths of their wives.⁵ A recent study on suicide revealed that in some areas of America, bachelors have a suicide rate which is more than four times as high as spinsters.⁶ Still another study indicated that men who had recently lost their mothers were significantly more prone to committing suicide than non-bereaved males.⁷ And recent research on remarriage indicated that the divorced male tends to remarry sooner after his first divorce than the divorced female.⁸

So, it goes right down the line. The evidence strongly suggests that the man who loses his female attachment, be he divorced or widowed, and the single man who had no female attachment, are all significantly more vulnerable to mental illness, suicide, and death than the woman in a similar situation.

I have a personal pet theory, which ties in with this data, about why women in our culture live so much longer than men. I believe that unconsciously the male is afraid that he can't survive without the woman. Outside of his strong attachment to his woman, he is often an isolated, alienated being. He has few close male friends. He has suppressed his interest in other women and has been a passive, noninvolved father to his children. All his needs are invested in her. However, after a woman loses her man, she still has close relationships to nourish her, other women, and her children. Being less dependent on the male, she can make it with or without another man.

The male is deeply dependent on the female from conception on. The roots and explanations for this lie in early social and emotional conditioning. As an embryo and fetus he is placenta dependent. At birth he is breast-dependent, and throughout his early boyhood he is profoundly dependent on his mother as his primary human relationship. She is the one who holds, rocks, cleans, comforts, and clothes him. She sets his limits, teaches him right from wrong, reinforces him with praise and controls him with punishment. The female child has also been dependent on her mother, a female figure, but has no comparable deep-rooted dependency on the male for her psychic nourishment.

Despite the bravado and noises he makes about not allowing a woman to control or dominate him in order that he might maintain his fantasy of being stronger and totally in control of the relationship, the male unconsciously comes to see the female as his lifeline—his connection to survival

and his energy source.

Many adult men, once they have established a primary relationship with a woman, begin to abandon almost all of their other relationships. The dependency becomes increasingly intense and the crisis, if and when she does leave him, is often life-shattering.

The female does not develop this kind of intense dependency on the male. The male was never her lifeline; she had no deep-rooted dependency on him for psychic nourishment. As a girl she was dependent on her mother and not her father. Consequently, a divorce, widowhood, or rejection by a man may be traumatic, but the trauma is a less profound or primitive one, and she can recover more rapidly.

The earth mother fantasy was also encouraged by the male's self-hatred. As a boy, nursery rhymes told him that he was made "Snips* 'n snails 'n puppy dog tails" while she was "sugar 'n spice 'n everything nice." (*Snip: A person regarded as, presumptuous, impertinent, or mischievous.) He came to believe that she gave life and nourished it, while he destroyed it. Ashley Montagu put it this way: "Woman is the creator and fosterer of life; man has been the mechanizer and destroyer of life... Women love the human race; men are on the whole hostile to it."⁹ The male identified with this negative masculine image and it was remarkable to him that she was able to love him in spite of the fact that he was brutish, lecherous, aggressive—in a word, "evil." The male fantasy of his earth mother's purity was equivalent to the child's naïve belief that his parents never have sex or do dishonest things.

What is happening to the female today? Is she becoming a different person? The answer is "no." She is simply emerging, revealing her true identity, and allowing her long-suppressed aggression to surface. Traditionally, the woman felt compelled to collude with the male fantasy of her as fragile, helpless, and dependent. The male expected little more from his woman other than that she supported his self-image of strength by living up to his expectation of her as pure, loyal, passive, unfathomable, nonsexual (except perhaps toward him)—someone who supposedly fulfilled herself simply by being devoted to him and his children. She seemed quite willing to play this role of supportive, facilitating bed-rock. She was satisfied to bask in her man's achievements. He could please her simply by becoming a success and her identification was drawn from this. She was willing to play Madonna earth mother—modest, pure, sexless, and unworldly.

Two psychologists recently writing on the subject put it this way:

The typical woman . . . in courtship . . . assumed the passive, submissive, conventional, female role; in a phrase, she bolstered his ego at the expense of her own. If she was not completely swept off her feet by physical attraction, she made a shrewd assessment of his potential as a breadwinner and a bed partner, and then set about proving to him that she was what he wanted as a housewife, help-mate, and mother of his children . . . [she] . . . pretended to be more "feminine" than she perhaps really was...¹⁰

Women are also denying that they fulfill themselves by playing the role of mother to their husband's children. One mother who had given up custody of her children to their father began to

recognize previous emotionally unauthentic attempts to be earth mother after she was out on her own. Originally, she had wanted seven children. Now, discussing visits to her children, she stated: "...I realized I was seeing them out of guilt, just like I'd been living with them all those years out of guilt. It astounded me when I discovered I wasn't all that attached to them. . . . Now I'm kind of doing what men do. The children are no longer a major part of my life, in terms of the time I spend with them."¹¹

(As far back as 1923, Ruth Read of Columbia University published an article in which she interviewed eighty-seven pregnant women. She asked them if they were happily anticipating their babies. Seventy-five per cent of them said, "no," and gave many different reasons. Of those who answered "yes," a number did so only because their religion deemed motherhood a duty.¹² Over fifty years ago!)

Traditionally, men did not recognize the existence of female aggression. They needed to maintain an image of her as weak in order that they could deny their own dependency needs and see themselves as strong. Because women's aggression was largely repressed, it emerged in a different form from men's and reinforced the fantasy. A first-grade teacher discussed this difference as it appeared at an early age: "...Boys were more physically aggressive than girls, but . . . they were like 'teddy bears.' Their behavior was fairly direct and active. In contrast . . . the girls who were aggressive tended to be 'mean and devious.'"¹³

When long-suppressed female aggression finally emerges openly and directly it can take extreme forms. This was recently discussed by columnist Shana Alexander. Explaining why she abandoned her administrative role in the National women's Political Caucus, she wrote:

. . . the savage infighting among the feminist leadership wore me down. . . . The reason women are such crude, brutal and destructive combatants, I later decided—the reason women fighters lack pace, grace, rhythm and mercy—is certainly not because we are subject to raging hormonal impulses as some men claim . . . I think that hair-trigger female fury, the surge to leap for the jugular at the merest drop of a glove, the readiness to "drop the bomb on Luxembourg," results from the lack of a female tradition of chivalry.¹⁴

Women across the nation have begun to experience and spit out their repressed anger regarding their old role. This situation is an ego shock to many men whose façade of greater strength is collapsing. Like the nation's original reaction of disbelief to the energy crisis, the male is also having difficulty comprehending that his once seemingly endless supply of energy is drying up. He is being cut loose and pushed into an autonomy he really isn't prepared for. With all their eggs in one emotional basket some men have no wells of nourishment from which to draw. Women, however, are in a much sturdier position. They are discovering the emotional truth that they can do without men very well. They are less fearful of openness and closeness with their female peers and are able to accept and give support to one another. The male has isolated and alienated himself from other men supposedly to bring his woman the spoils of competitive victory. Now his woman also is proclaiming herself his competitor, even potentially his enemy as she harangues him with epithets of "male chauvinist pig." Not only has he lost his earth mother, but in his fear and confusion he is scrambling to

be liberated, not necessarily for his own benefit, but rather to please her.

While women have been quite free in expressing anger toward men, men are largely unable to express their anger toward women, particularly their resentment over loss of control in their relationships with women. In my work in aggression training, I frequently do a ritual we call the “gender club” in which I encourage men and women, single and/or married, to spew out in turn their innermost hostile feelings toward the opposite sex. Invariably, I’ve found that the supposedly aggression-phobic and passive female is able to do this quite readily, while the male is very blocked in his expression of anger toward women. It is “unmanly” to acknowledge openly his vulnerability or his anger. Frequently it ties in with the fear of being a bully, and consequently his anger over the situation emerges only indirectly. He becomes machine-like. He expresses anger primarily by emotional withdrawal from her, as well as from himself. He detaches himself from his rage and becomes invulnerable.

Male rage is being intensified by unconscious and conscious recognition that the old roles are no longer operative, and they may be the only roles he really knows how to play. He knows she is discovering that she is just as strong, if not stronger than he, and can survive without him much more easily than he without her. In his self-hating fantasies he may even feel that he may eventually be discarded by her completely. After all, she is now rebelling against any inference that there is such a thing as “feminine” or “maternal” behavior. Someday she may not even need him for procreation; she may even be inseminated artificially.

The male has yet to realize, however, the powerfully beneficial aspects of the female’s emergence as an openly assertive, aggressive being. The earth mother fantasy is dead. The female is getting in touch with her aggression, her rage, and her strength. As one woman stated, “what we found was that consciousness-raising clarified for us what we wanted to be—valiant, independent, creative, warm, loving, assertive people—and what we wanted to have—work that was meaningful and relationships that were mutual, nurturant, sexual and nonmasochistic.”¹⁵ This is the time for his rebirth as a total person and his reentry into full emotional reality. He can let go of his fantasy image of her as fragile, dependent, and pure and his perception of himself as ever-strong, independent, and evil.

By the female rejecting her role of passive reactor the male now can release himself more readily from the chronic guilt which comes from being the person who acts while she simply reacts. Sexuality is an excellent example of this. In the past the woman had denied her sexuality. Sex was supposedly his need, not hers.

She took no responsibility for her sexuality so that he often was left feeling degraded and selfish for acknowledging his needs. She could also wait for him to lust and to cheat and then point an accusing finger. She was “clean” and he was “dirty.” Now, however, that she is owning up to her own sexual needs this picture is changing radically.

It is informative and often quite surprising to men to hear what women are really thinking and feeling about sex. It is often in stark contrast to what men believe their earth mothers are experiencing. A ritual I often use in marathon therapy groups is called the “fishbowl.” As their part of this ritual the women sit in a circle and discuss among themselves their experiences and feelings

about men in bed, speaking as if the men were not present. The men sit on the outside and listen. Here are some of the comments of the women: “I wish they wouldn’t worry so much about my damn orgasms.”—“I’m so afraid of damaging their egos by telling them what I really want.”—“Sometimes I feel like making loud noises but I’m afraid they might freak. Men are so quiet in bed.”—“If I tell them I want sex or make the first move most guys freeze up. I guess they think I’m a nymphomaniac.”—“Most guys feel they have to take a lot of time, all of the time. They don’t seem to understand that sometimes I just want to screw and not ‘make love’ too. I love quickies sometimes.”—“Most guys think that because we’ve had sex I’ll expect a relationship, so they run away. Sometimes I also just want a purely physical relationship with no emotional strings attached.”—“We’re supposed to be the ones who feel guilty the morning after but I think that more guys have bad feelings about it afterward. It’s like they don’t want to remember what they did the night before.”

Most important, the male is now being released from the feelings of having to take responsibility for the woman. She is becoming an openly assertive person rather than one who unconsciously or consciously controls and manipulates him by being “helpless,” or “fragile,” or developing psychological or psychosomatic symptoms because she cannot express her aggression or sexuality openly or directly.

In this process of rebirth of female and male he can let go of his distorted perception of her and allow her to assume equal responsibility for the problems and tragedies of life. No longer need his overt and covert competitiveness and even violence toward other men be justified as necessary for the survival of his wife and family. By investing her with fragility and helplessness he took on the dirty aspects of competition and the ugliness of war. That was always man’s business. He fought to prove his worthiness as a protector and provider. He can now abandon that self-destructive posture.

The death of the earth mother fantasy means that he now can free himself finally and totally from his macho pose. He can guiltlessly give himself and his needs priority, just as she is beginning to own up to hers. As she expressed antipathy toward many aspects of her role, he can also acknowledge his true feelings about the many self-denying aspects of being the diligent provider, faithful husband, dutiful father, and all-around strong man.

He’ll be forced to grow in order to survive in another important way. The fantasy of the woman as mind-reader had permitted him to cling to the infantile desire to be divined, to have his needs magically recognized and met by his all-knowing, all-loving woman, without his even having to ask. He will now have to learn to recognize and acknowledge his needs and then ask for and even demand satisfaction directly and openly, or else he will experience emotional starvation. Because, in the past, he was unable to ask for satisfaction directly, he lived in hidden anger when his needs were not divined.

The man who continues to hold on to or search for the few supposedly remaining earth mothers around—women willing to play the role of the old-fashioned, selfless, passive, and devoted female—are courting emotional disaster. That is, even if he believes that he has found the only “real woman” left in the world, he is probably deluding himself. Earth mother may never have existed in the first place. Rather, it may have been a female accommodation to his need to see himself as her defender and protector, born in part, out of her fear and doubt about her ability to survive as an in-

dependent being. It was an emotionally unauthentic posture that camouflaged the full extent of her strength and independence.

Therefore, the male who thinks he has found an earth mother will only get hooked into relating to her regressively—aborting his own growth and being much less of a human being than he is potentially. He will be guilt-ridden and infantile and demand nourishment and energy from “mommy” in return for playing out his self-destructive macho role. He still will get her aggression, only he’ll get it in the old indirect forms of fatigue, frigidity, depression, headaches, forgetfulness, etc. Meanwhile, he’ll destroy himself playing hero-warrior-macho while alienating himself from other men in the process.

Men who already have been able to surmount stereotyped role casting and expectations and have been able to relate to the woman as an equal partner and help-mate, a person from whom they can accept constructive support as well as give it on a mutual, authentic basis, can achieve the ultimate in the man-woman relationship. For it is with her that he can potentially experience many of the deepest forms of ecstatic and fulfilling human interaction. However, refusing to see her as she is—not fragile but strong, not dependent but autonomous, not passive but aggressive, not in need of protection but a canny fighter in her own right, and not self-denying but self-serving just like himself—will lay the foundation for experiencing the deepest levels of anguish and despair.

Earth mother is dead and now macho can die as well. The man can come alive as a full person. No longer need he play powerful, successful “big daddy.” No longer need he indulge in humiliating double standards and hide his unique maleness. No longer is he responsible for her feelings of fulfillment and wellbeing.

When she is she in her genuine, total, strong femaleness and personhood and he is he in his total maleness and personhood they can begin to revel in the realities and joys of an authentic, interdependent, and genuinely fulfilling interaction.

How To Recognize The Earth Mother Trap

You feel alternately sentimental about her, then bored, suffocated or engulfed.

You feel guilty about depriving her and not giving enough of yourself.

You believe that you’re working and doing the things you do primarily for her.

You believe that she’s a more giving and more selfless person than you.

You’re sure that she has no sexual fantasies or desires toward other men.

You feel guilty whenever you’re having a good time that doesn’t include her.

You kiss her on the forehead in fatherly fashion rather than on the lips, in a more sensual way.

You are exhilarated when you see her cooking for you or smell the clean laundry.

You feel you have to hide your sexual fantasies about other women from her because she'll be "deeply hurt" and "shocked."

You're sentimental about what a "good" woman she is and how lucky you are to have her standing behind you.

You're glad that she's not one of those "women's libbers."

You're amazed at how in tune she is with you—she always wants to have sex when you do, she likes the exact same vacation places, and enjoys the same kinds of activities. Everything you like she seems to like.

You like the quiet life with her apart from other people, because with her as a friend you don't need any other people to be close to.

You need her in order to feel that you're a man.

You're amazed that she loves you in spite of your faults and the other terrible things about you.

Footnotes

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