

EMBRACE YOUR INNER DUDE

Women, generally speaking, are kind, compassionate, patient, nurturing, generous, sweet (most of the time) and tend to provide unconditional love. Yes, we are the soft souls that provide the heart-warming gentleness to our families, friends and partners. Yet, we can be doormats, suffer in silence, become martyrs to our circumstances, and tend to put our lives on hold- all for the sake of others. Don't get me wrong, I think women are amazing at juggling it all, and mostly being successful at it. Yet, we sometimes lack the drive, self-confidence and gumption that men seem to carry off so easily.

One of the recurring themes I coach on is assisting women in re-building their confidence, self-worth, value and self-esteem. It seems to be a bigger issue with women than men. For example, last year I worked with a client on creating strategies for her to ask for a raise. She made the comment that other men in her office had asked for what they wanted easily, directly, expectantly, unemotionally, without hesitation and had a sense of detachment that translated into "of course, I am worth it." They got what they wanted. So, I suggested that she take the same approach, and not only was it effective, but it was also easy.

This leads me to ask the questions, what can we learn from our male counterparts? How can we aggressively go for what we really want and vanish the victimization? Isn't it time we stop over-analyzing and get going? I think some of the answers can be found in lessons we can learn from guys, thereby, "embracing our inner dude."

HERE ARE SOME OF THE "MACHO" TRAITS TO GRIP AND TAKE ON:

Persuasive Power Men are natural born leaders, and do not question their individuality. They have the ability to use not only their external resources, but also access and activate their internal gifts and talents. Take the initiative, get empowered and use that power to create greatness.

Physical Strength Men stay committed to being active through working out and athletic endeavors to keep up their physical well-being, youthful energy and stress relief.

Rational Reasoning Men are less emotional when processing things, and would never cry in the face of adversity. They are able to be objective, see the bottom-line and tend to be much more logical and practical.

Bold Bravery Men have the courage gene. Even if they are scared, it is not as obvious, especially when it comes to going for what they want both personally and professionally.

Basic Simplicity Men know who they are and what they do. Plain and simple. It's not complicated for them.

Decisive Assertiveness Men put their stake in the ground and continue moving towards that truth. Men seem to make a decision and move on, whereas women tend to dwell on decisions and question themselves after the fact. Stand up for what you think is right, and say it out loud with confidence, effectiveness and intensity... and don't look back.

The Lighter Side Lighten up... dudes don't worry so much. Keep it simple and consider giving up the agony of decision-making, guilt, shame and attachments.

Action-Based Opportunities Men generally want things to move along and go forward. They don't ask for permission; they take action, adjust, and keep going so as to not miss out. If needed, they will ask for forgiveness later.

Sense of Adventure Men follow their urges and are playful, spontaneous, independent, sexual, and free-spirited. They say when, not if.

The Visionary Men tend to hold the vision of the big picture, are success-oriented, see where they are going and what it will look like when they get there. Their vigilance and focus is unshakable and allows them to stay on task.

It is not my intent in this column to over-generalize or segregate the sexes, but rather to provoke thought and learning from each other. I am not suggesting that we stop being who we are or give up the goodness that already exists, as we need both energies. There is no right or wrong with the sexes, just differences to embrace. The key is to integrate the best qualities of both men and women. The truth is, men have a strength and power that women struggle with owning, and with a little work, we can harness and transform our power into productivity and prominence.

A COACHING EXERCISE TO EXCAVATE YOUR MALENESS:

1. Think about 2 or 3 dudes who you either admire or they motivate you? What qualities do they possess that you would like more of?
2. When and to whom, do you give your power away? Is there an opportunity to use some "male" traits to change this dynamic? Choose one bold characteristic, and practice it as much as possible.
3. Now, balance your life by fully integrating your masculine and feminine traits in as many areas as possible. Assess where you are now, decide what you need and what your new "normal" needs to be. Ask for what you want from yourself and others, using ALL the traits needed to be your best you. Some examples... do you need to be:
 - More vocal at home?
 - More caring at the office?
 - More self-assured in your relationships?
 - Bolder in your creativity?
4. Choose three brave strategies that will strengthen your self-esteem and start implementing those today.
5. Finally, and most importantly, don't forget to thank the men in your life OFTEN... they need to feel appreciated for all that they do to support you and your greatness.

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