

The WoMan Chronicles #8

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Embarking upon a new year causes one to take the opportunity to reflect, to regret, and to map out a new beginning. When thinking about an article topic to kick off this new year I focused on the resolutions we find ourselves making and the way in which we may often find ourselves failing to follow through by year's end. Perhaps it's all about coming to understand and gain perspective into the topic which we resolve to fix in the coming new year. Given that this is a column centered primarily around the male/female relationship, I chose a topic which gives me cause to write a weekly commentary. Something in which all of this wordy hubbub revolves, and we must all come to understand before we can resolve to make it right.

Whether you be 17 and determined to marry your high school sweetheart, or 27 and living it up in bachelorhood, we all have in us the innate want to love and be loved. Yes, I spend most of my time thinking up ways in which to aid you in smoothly landing that gorgeous looker who bags your groceries at the local food mart, or fool that girl at the end of the bar into believing you're not really trying to edge your way into her life…err…pants. What happens though, when you find that person to be unlike any other? What happens when you start to care about her emotionally? What happens when the lust turns to love and you begin to wonder just how you're going to keep it?

I have always believed that those new word thinker-uppers out there should find more words to help express the emotion of love so that we don't come to a point in which we're accused of malapropism. Certainly "I love your skirt" and "I love you" are two very different terms that beg to be understood through each person's interpretation of the word love. Perhaps when the quote "Love is a many splendid thing" came about, we were indeed supposed to infer its meaning to that of an article of clothing or brilliant knick knack, rather than the joining together of 2 very different beings. Love between male and female can certainly be argued to the contrary, as we rarely find the true thing to be altogether splendid 100% of the time. We are taught that this flight of passion and surge of emotion, which I will argue to maintain should be deemed lust rather than love, will immediately catapult us into a fairytale land, an unearthly utopia, or the empyrean we never thought we'd reach. Perhaps the poet Robert Graves said it best when he proclaimed love to be "a universal migraine". It certainly impairs our vision, makes our head spin, and often times leaves us in a huddled mess seeking refuge under cover.

When I was a little girl I bought into the Cinderella fairytale. I believed that a prince on a white stallion would carry me away from all of life's troubles and we'd begin anew, happily ever after. I know, no wonder you have such a hard time trying to keep your gal satisfied. Like many of my generation, I came from a divorced and divided household and I refused to believe that this was the way in which males and females co-existed. I just couldn't grow up accepting the fact that love often times fails, leaving us alone and bewildered at the turning point, in which it all went wrong.

We have grown up entertained, enthralled, and inspired by film and television. Our morals, beliefs, hopes and dreams have, whether we choose to accept it or not, been influenced by the 2-dimensional images that have been reflected back upon us. As a girl I grew up watching Disney films that centered around a love which defied all odds. Growing into adulthood, many females become infatuated with romantic comedies or dramas which still lead us to believe that love just comes about effortlessly. Despite distance, time, age or happenstance, it once again defies all odds and comes together without fail. Perhaps the biggest downfall of both the writers who cater to, and the viewers that buy into this romantic love scenario, is that there is no perspective into the future, or into just what it takes to really make it last. Sure Prince Charming swept Cinderella off her feet and gallantly galloped away into the sunset, but what happened when she started her life with him in the castle? Did Prince Charming stand lovingly by her side when she found herself in need of counseling over the loss of her mother, and the harassment of her evil stepmother? What happened when she found that Princes also sometimes forget to call when they're going to be late or say sorry when they've said something foolish.

Perhaps Pat Benatar said it best when she proclaimed that "love is a battlefield". Love is a 24-hour-a-day occupation. We may often times proclaim it not worth the heartache and headache, but we must come to understand that in order to have it, we must be willing to risk enduring the effort it takes to keep it. I once saw a forum topic discussing the difference between love and lust, and perhaps it's differentiating between the two that's exactly what it takes to truly understand just how rare love is. Recognizing just where that line is drawn and not proclaiming yourself in love until you come to understand the other person, until you have seen them at their worst, helped them through that battlefield, argued about the impossible to agree upon, and acknowledged that the only perfection you are going to find in that person is in the acceptance that they aren't perfect.

How many times (and perhaps men won't admit to it) have we sat there in angst, letting every smiling couple and every seemingly well suited pair rub our faces in their happy couplehood? How do they make it when we seem to stumble through every relationship without anything to show for it in the end?

Putting love into concrete terms via a smaller dimension, let's imagine that you exist within the confines of the world engulfed within the solitary tip of your #2 pencil. This silver flecked universe is composed of atoms. Wait, let's take this further. Your graphite-flecked universe is composed of millions and millions of subatomic particles all bumping into one another in a spectacular mating of chemical conundrum. They bounce about always seeking to gain common space in order to fully come together. They seek, but don't find, seek again, but don't quite fit, and then finally find their resting space because they must eventually pair off in order to create a seemingly concrete space. The subatomic particles, neutrons, protons, and atoms must flourish in order to fully populate the universe which is your lead tip pencil. Too deep...okay, well basically we must come to understand the way in which the opposite pair come to find and keep love, in order to keep our existence or universe thriving. There are millions of us all searching and we are supposed to simply come together through initial attraction and evolve into creatures who stay together. This is the most basic concept in the world, but it's not so basic if you understand the real intricacies involved. A friend recently mentioned to me that after years of dating she finally understood the virtues of arranged marriage. There's no hassle and you're forced to stick it out as you grow to know and understand one another. I still don't believe that love can thrive out of a thrown-together arrangement, but they've at least got the sticking together thing down pat.

Perhaps the real fairy tale takes place when you find that you've huddled in the trenches, made it past enemy lines with a few battle scars, tended to one another's wounds, moved past the argument over who accidentally launched the grenade, and you're still left standing. Sure you're weary, you may be peeved that due to her neglect, you're left with a pierced heart and broken leg, but you can't imagine enduring it all over again with anyone but her. Perhaps this is love in its truest form. Found in the acknowledgement that it may leave us emotionally scarred, bruised, and weary at times, but that these little wounds only happen out of misunderstanding. If we can then pick ourselves up, dust each other off, and proclaim that the battle to find and keep love is well worth any fight it takes to make it through. Perhaps then and only then will we be ready to teach the next generation by way of Cinderella the sequel rather than Cinderella the tale of 99.9% impossible-to-find love.

I still believe in love, but with the newfound acceptance that it's not the fairytale I was led to believe it is. Sure, I still believe it to be a beautiful thing, but I won't take its rarity for granted any longer. I will no longer hold my relationships up against those that have been falsely glorified through the media. Not until I find the man willing to carry me beaten and broken through the trenches of the battlefield, will I admit to having found and conquered true love.