

Hopefully you've benefited somehow from this workshop in your ability to create better male characters and write from THEIR voice.

A quick recap: So far we've learned that men are emotional, at least as much if not more so than your typical woman appears, and to write from that point, we need to become familiar with the types of men out there, meaning the archetypes ]

**EVERY** man fits into one or more of those archetypes mentioned. If he doesn't appear to, then it's harder to tell how he might function, etc. But with men, we have clues. We tend to look for a mate based on appearance first (our eyes see more than clothing!); those impulses shoot to our brains, which then creates anything from a fantasy (god I'd like to find out how yummy he is!) to potential reality (he looks like a slob/banker/car salesman.) How he walks speaks volumes. A confident man walks upright, keeps himself clean and well groomed (does NOT necessarily mean well dressed), and looks people in the eye when he talks.

The outdated models of men, such as the military alpha who is stuck on making his wife behave, or the abusive man, may have moral issues. Or they may have psychological issues that run beyond the scope of this workshop. However I do acknowledge that the two categories of men I just mentioned are still made, and I can't understand why. We don't write those men unless they're villains, right? I tend to believe these men are not correctly focused on their goals.

While we're on this subject, I'd like to mention a recent blog post.

[“One of the Girls.”](#) I wrote this blog post for Midnight Seductions Blog back in 2008 after some thought. I had to stop and think and then ask my female best friend of over twenty years about this. We have boys clubs and girls clubs. Cliché, I know but I recently realized, ten years too late, that I belonged to the “girls club.” Why is that? Does it bother me?

But on that note, why is it that I was allowed to go out on any number of girls' nights out? Or why is it some of my female friends call me, before they talk to husband/boyfriend, etc?

I believe it's because I am viewed as a successful man that listens with an open heart. I can back this up with any number of phone calls to various female friends. We do have women, obviously, who are part of the "boys club." Thing is, in our core, unless we're transgendered (an entirely new batch of confusion there!), we are what we are. So yeah, I can go out with the boys, get drunk and have a good time acting like a fool.

But I'd rather go out, get drunk and go home at this point LOL! My priorities are in line with my goals.

### **OPTIONAL EXERCISE**

I would love to suggest for all of the women in this course to try and spend half a day imagining yourself as man. What benefits would you enjoy? What disappointments would you find? What thoughts

would come into your mind and how would they differ from what you'd normally think? Look down at the ground when you walk, see what you miss, thinking from both genders. Then stop the behavior! Think about your primary focus in a crowd, that hot little number across the way, or the beautiful weather we're enjoying in some parts of the country. Hint, as a man it's NOT going to be the weather, lol!

Why? Because the man's focus appears to be sex, but in reality it's propagating the species as a rule. That much we already knew. What is new for many of us is that I believe that all men want offspring and families, it's their legacy of greatness. So again, we have a motivational factor for his behavior.

Can you even objectify someone properly? By that I mean to suggest that not all men see women as a piece of ass, but instead categorize them. If I haven't mentioned it before, men tend to compartmentalize things. And the importance of that as a writer is in how you use that compartmentalization in your hero's mind to further your plot.

If a man's got a stack of bills to pay, a time sensitive workload, stress at home and a woman he's focused on because she's either disarming him and breaking down that wall OR it's become obvious to your readers (and our hero) that she has become the ONE thing that is greatest among all, do you know which one he'll choose? Well, in your story he could NOT choose her out of fear because he's just not the bravest soul, but that could be bad and piss off your readers. Or make them emotional, there is a difference.

In real life, he'll almost always choose the woman. We may not see it, but he'll always choose her over other stuff because **he believes she can nurture him**. This statement is reinforced in everything from movies to T.V. and magazines and of course, our wonderful romances J

If you take away that one thing men believe they want, then you create a mad man. Example: Vin Diesel's character in A Man Apart didn't go mad per se, but he was reckless because someone had taken

what he believed was the greatest thing in his life. His wife, of course.

I know an author who was so upset over the loss of his Mistress that he became self-destructive; because even though his life was good, and he had his physical needs met, he felt spiritually that his emotional needs would never be met again because that One Thing that could nurture him was gone.

Do we have any idea what men really care about in this world?

The answer is, yes! But men have not “told” us what they care about. Even in my behavior, I have not confessed my love for my former Dominants publicly in any one post. I’ve been a brat prince, a stubborn pain in the ass, a smart ass, in short, difficult to deal with. I torment my submissives, my lovers and anyone else I care about with less than perfect work habits, seemingly dangerous drinking and health habits, and let’s not get started on how many hours a week I work just as a writer.

But my language and how I refer to the dominants, submissives, and lovers in my life has probably given you clues. For those who took my workshop on BDSM in Romance, you were given truths. But to the rest of the world who is locked out of the private aspects of my relationships, what have you?

There is the way I refer to them, even as a smart ass. But that's about it, unless we spoke on the phone and you asked me questions, or HEARD this seminar via recording.

By now you probably gather that I love them, and cherish my relationships. Most men will tell you flat out, they love the woman they married if they're truly happy. The need to have the big car, the fancy suit, the large income, all of those things are really attempts to satisfy two things.

One, a man's natural desire to take care of himself and his loved ones.

Two: Ego stroking (IMO!)

This is why we have the standard college kid male who has to out-drink everyone else, while maintaining grades. This is why Van Wilder the movie was so popular with that sort of male. Men who are NOT leaders like to follow men who ARE. It gives them confidence and more of a backbone. There is an obvious pack mentality here.

Men go through growth cycles at varying rates due to peer influences and family influences. As I've mentioned, successful men are confident in themselves.

On that note, I just realized I had a problem. Well, it's not actually my problem. It's Scott Stapp's problem. And this is just My Humble Opinion but how many of you are aware of the frontman for the band Creed?

Scott Stapp is a bitch. A whiny little bitch who got

knocked out by his ex wife. What was Stapp's problem? Having been a big fan of the band, I felt honestly that Stapp's problem was that he struggled with himself as a man. The first half of all three Creed albums are the same, angry, gritty, in your face. Then around the middle he peters out into soft "let's save the world" mode. Is this for sales? I doubt it.

In short, Stapp's insecure. A man that can't make up his mind will attract problems in his life. I believe if Stapp would have just once said "Fuck the world" the same way half the greater metal bands do more often than not, and then kept with that until he'd worked his way through that darkness, Creed may have been a more successful band.

Why is this relevant? How many of you have heroes who need a kick in the ass? If Stapp were a romance hero, we'd be in trouble unless you could get him started off at a different point in his life that included him being angry and gritty, like our Lost Souls. Then pair him with someone who **BALANCES** him out.

Remember, since we're focusing on ego and emotion, we need to bear in mind that man will go to any length to impress the one that is for him, even at his own expense. In a previous version of this workshop, Cynnara Tregarth made a smartass comment about moving furniture herself because another male might whine about soreness. Cyn's comment earlier about moving heavy furniture herself was an accurate example of how far a man could go to impress her. How?

Say I was the male she referred to. Maybe to her, I appeared weak, which as the apple of her eye is no good. What would I do to impress her? (You could try obeying more often!) Anything.

I mean that literally. Any dumb thing I could do to show her that I'm worth my weight, I would probably try to do.

Any other man will tell you that he feels the same way about the woman of his dreams. The need for an expensive lifestyle, the façade, it's all designed to

prove that he is the best male among his brethren. For then he will get the girl of his dreams.

If that's so, then why the bullshit image?

Because men are judged by their peers, they put up the lame front. Men are held to a high standard in many societies. I have to have the most money, the best job, be able to drink the most beers (though this one still puzzles even ME!) etc. I have to get all the pussy in the world, have to be with every woman possible...

I have to search for that one that is for me. Else my peers are going to laugh at me and consider me weak. And the weak die off, usually. As a man gets older, his self-image either takes a dive due to the aging factor and his current environment, or he grows into self-esteem that should have been there anyway.

There is that idea that men seek out as many partners as possible due to a primal need to procreate. While likely, the idea is not helpful for our romances. I

believe if I had slept around as a man, many of you may be disappointed in me. Of course it may have been expected as well. Certainly any lovers I have or will have during my sexual career would have a less than perfect opinion. Why? As we've covered, women are more in touch with feelings. Men are not so much.

Ever wonder why you see so many nudists who are not the model of attractive by television standards? Those men have become comfortable in their own skin. They may be wrinkled, weaker, look tired or they could go the opposite direction. But either way, they are comfortable in who they are.

I believe women have a harder time with this lesson due to stupid men and stupid television.

It's a tough road if we factor in things like the economy and role reversal in society where more women are holding high-powered jobs than ever and their salaries creep up to that of a man's. If you're 25 or 30 and your significant other makes as much as you

or more, it's not a big problem. If you're 60 and set in your ways however, you may feel threatened and outdated as a man.

And you as a man *are* outdated. The inability to change and grow makes this true.

As of this writing, I have not read too many romance novels where the hero was the older one out of the couple, but I have read them with the heroine being the older one. One of Judy Buranich's earlier books comes to mind. She portrayed her couple quite well, the young fiery male who was smart yet stupid, and the older woman who was classy yet equally stupid until they both figured things out.

Just know that there is a huge amount of pressure, even as society changes, for a man to perform to the highest of standards at any age.

We've also learned that the character creation worksheet shouldn't be so deep that it takes longer to

write than the novel! Short, simple and filled out, this powerful tool touches on key things for our Hero and his voice.

## **THE HERO'S VOICE**

Let's spend a moment talking about that voice.

Some men are very well spoken, others aren't. Some are profane and NOT offensive, others are profane *and* offensive. Why? We were all taught the same English (based upon our regional differences, lol).

Again, that voice came from years of conditioning, and our environment. I just learned what it meant to "go dumb" when I lived in Hayward, California, because the youngsters listen to Rap music that's different from where I lived. In the southern part of the country, going dumb is sort of an equivalent to "crunk."

Now, does your hero talk about going dumb in the

club? Maybe, because he's a player type. He could be that Charmer we referred to earlier.

The key would be to spend a great deal of time listening to other men talking. That same Charmer will probably behave differently at work, but we can't follow him everywhere and see, can we? So we'll have to guess based on other factors, the area he lives in (which you create), his background (again, created based on your knowledge), and the like. If you're talking about voice in relation to slang, your homework is important.

Did you know that a fairy in the Bay Area is an effeminate man, in Albuquerque, NM it's a pretty fag-hag? Know your slang.

We've learned about goal/motivation and the differences involved in getting our Hero to that point where he's chasing what he needs and realizes it.

We've discussed emotional differences and behavioral

patterns, though if we went into deeper detail it'd be weeks before we finished, lol! Though there are no *emotional* differences between men and women, it's how men *react/respond* to the emotion that is **different** from how women react/respond to the SAME emotion. Make sense?

I meant to cover this earlier, but it's fine to put it here. The jaded male, the one we all want to save, why is he delicious? Why does he captivate our hearts, whether we're straight women or gay men?

The bad boy, the jaded male has an appearance of great control. His life runs how he wants it, when he wants it, or damnit it doesn't run! I believe women (even those in control) are seeking a man who is confident. If you're in control, you're either very confident or you're faking it.

The fakers show their true colors sometime down the line. The confident male may falter, but he never loses his cool at an inappropriate moment.

## FACTORS OF SUCCESSFUL MEN

What makes a man successful? If we've muddled through Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill, we've probably figured out a great sleeping method! The book was written in 1920 something and language-wise, was a sleeper.

I read it because several investor friends of mine who are successful in their endeavors suggested I read it. And it was one of the best things I've ever read.

Here's what it boils down to in order to make a man successful. By the way, these factors apply to straight men and gay men alike.

**Confidence** – In himself, first and foremost. If he can handle any situation that comes his way, then he can obtain his life's dreams, which may include that woman who is just for him and the family they want. When a man is confident, his image clearly demonstrates that. His actions demonstrate that.

**A healthy Ego** – Ego driven by desire helps get the ball moving in life. I desire something so strongly that I'll do anything to get it. Ergo, so will our romance heroes.

**Desire or Passion** – if we don't desire anything, what is there for us? Are we listening to anything at all? By that I mean, do men desire fame, fortune? Lots of sex? A family? Great life?

**Purpose** – A man with a purpose is aware of himself and why he's here. He doesn't spend time questioning himself. Our characters, those of us who write Military romances especially or romances involving cops have this one down. Cynthia Eden in her novel Midnight Sins did a good job of showing us that Todd was a cop for a reason. He discovered later what his purpose in life was. Those of you who have read Acheron probably know Ash's purpose. (But don't spoil it for those who haven't read it yet!)

**Support** – From loved ones. From anyone who

constructively helps and motivates us. Even the Loner Alpha Dark Hunters have had support. Even Zarek. As men we need someone just like women do who understands our plight, our problems from OUR perspective.

**A sense of right and wrong** – Notice I did not say morals. Morals are subjective to different whims. One of my Dominants wants me and another male. By “moral” standards, that’s wrong. I don’t get how, but some folks don’t see it that way. However, we both have a sense of right and wrong. No child harmed, always try to do best for everyone involved, etc. A man with a sense of right and wrong trusts his gut. More often than not, he’s powerful in his own right.

Lastly, **successful men aren’t afraid of Failure.** They understand that it’s an event that triggers a learning experience and a chance to grow.

## IMAGE

Have I covered the image thing enough for you all to understand why it is that men's and women's magazines differ so greatly?

Pick up any copy of a good men's magazine (Men's Health, Men's Journal, occasionally STUFF) and you'll see financial advice, information on weight loss, keeping healthy and fit, parenting (because I believe all men deep down inside want to be a father), and other issues that help men handle LIFE.

Pick up any woman's magazine that sells high volume (Cosmo, Jane Magazine and even Women's Health) and what do you see?

Sex tips. Tips for trying to fit into clothes you're too big for, bad fashion. Bullshit gossip. (Sadly, I used to love Jane magazine but over the years...\*sigh\*)

Advertisers, and Hollywood, tell us along with society what we think we want to hear. This is because desire for money driven by greed has caused a shift in proper thinking that has left female-kind with a case of what Zig Ziglar calls “stinkin’ thinking.”

I can’t speak for the why of this but I believe reasons are money-driven.

## **LASTLY, CHANGE VS. GROWTH**

One thing I want to cover, quite simply, is the difference between growth and change. Nowhere in our novels (or with our partners) do we want them to change for us. That would ruin what it was that makes them who they are. However, we DO want our partners (and characters) to grow into their full potential. This I believe is something most people misunderstand. Now onto the last two lessons!

