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FORWARD

This booklet is the compilation of articles, surveys and my experiences as the Northeastern Men's Ministry (NECMM) Leader for ten years.

Though I have my professional degrees and credentials, in God's economy it means nothing. His Word alone prepares us for salvation. That's what this is all about. Strengthening men leads to better families, better churches, better communities which will subsequently, create a unity which offsets the divisiveness created by misguided individuals.

I have learned so much, over the years, especially to think outside the box. I have bettered myself through the Holy Spirit and faced successfully, the forces that can tear a man down. Spirituality is one thing, but add psychological and societal, it is one heck of a beast to overcome. Much prayer is needed. We, men, need each other. We need validation. We need to stand shoulder to shoulder. Arms locked. And be ready! It is not easy. There is so much expected of us, yet we have been provided limited tools.

I am reminded of our shameful lack of understanding of: how the legal system works; how to live and conduct business; how to exploit the system as an asset, rather than be a legal responsibility. Then there are the convenient truths from trusted sources. Confused? This is where Men's Ministry comes in. It provides the needed tools – the Real Talk!

Real Talk educates us. Real Talk heals us. Real Talk enriches us. Real Talk helps us to better understand a man's surroundings and what empowers lives. This is first achieved by researching topics that men have a profound interest in, yet tentative to discuss. In recent years, men have been maligned, ignored and even devalued. Made to feel disposable. This is society's trick bag. Elevate one group, put another down. Create the divisiveness, so a culture...a people...a group finds difficulty progressing. Regrettably, many of the very oppressed buy into this themselves. This same methodology has been successful since Bacon's rebellion, in colonial times.

This booklet hopefully and prayerfully will not only enrich men but their families too; help us all find the road to an abundant life with Christ.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Northeastern Conference Men's Ministry (NECMM) has been blessed to work with and be supported by two Northeastern Conference Presidents, numerous Pastors, Department Heads and various Administrative personnel. We appreciate the trust that was given to us from the very beginning.

The NEC Executive Committee was created ten years ago and remains together. It is significant to know, although we're all from different parts of the African diaspora, we work as one and make decisions as one. We have struggled together; faced off political agendas and takeover spirits, together. We have become more than friends.

NECMM has had up to nine additional committee members. Their time with us has been arguably short, yet deeply appreciated and sincerely missed.

Over the years we, the NEC Executive Committee, have remained deeply committed to each other, the men, their families, the Church and the Lord. HE leads, and we humbly and obediently follow. We have been told we have changed lives. Praise the Lord! Give HIM, HIS honour and glory! It's HIS mission - and HE chose us. We are forever grateful.

I would like to thank my wife, Natalie, son, Jordan and daughter, Dia for their support. I would like to especially thank my NECMM Executive Committee (in alphabetical order):

Anywar KwaMogi

Glen Marr

Mike Spates

Levern Ward

(New Members)

Bancroft Burke

Randy Hibbler

HOW TO START A MEN'S MINISTRY

“Men suffer in silence!” To start a men's ministry or to attract more men into the church, that statement must sincerely be understood. It is the very core of the ministry.

It is hypocrisy to say men should be leaders of the family, church and community and simultaneously not validate them. This hypocrisy is perpetrated through the veiled purpose of supporting women. It is very damaging. Men see through this duplicity and as a result withdraw; leaving churches and God's divine design - unfulfilled.

Men's Ministry is not a gender war. It is not about splitting the family but strengthening it; not just your family but your brother's family as well. Proverbs 27:17 says it best – “Iron sharpeneth iron so must a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”

“Men suffer in silence” infuses pain into the lives of men, particularly African-American men. Safe havens to discuss, acknowledge or validate the sameness in each of our lives, are limited. This causes men to act out in self-destructive ways.

Men's ministry is that safe haven where a man can go, share his feelings, be supported and reassured he is on this Earth because God placed him here - to fulfil a divine journey.

Confidentiality and real talk are the ground rules, if not the cornerstone, for men to feel safe. Their masculinity will not be challenged nor ridiculed because of alleged flaws.

Men's Ministry meetings should start with God:

- It is not a ministry for a collection of men to do more work for the church. Note the keyword, ‘more.’ This is not the purpose. It is a ministry for men to learn, bond, heal and strengthen each other; return to their families better prepared to manage the educational, emotional, economic and parental requirements; to lead their families into prosperity; assist each another in becoming the watchmen God had mandated.
- The men need to focus, undisturbed, on the matters at hand.
- Dues/offerings should be collected to support the ministry. This is only a suggestion.
- Build by committee. It is too much for one man alone.
- Focus on “real talk” topics that are relevant to the men. Research, research, research!
- Bring in speakers to discuss specific topics.
- Schedule recreational events for the brethren.

In conclusion, it is very rewarding to receive God's blessings; it is also rewarding to see Men's Ministry change lives. It doesn't get any better! Let us connect and create something special.

VERBAL ABUSE

Proverbs 21:9 and in Proverbs 25:24, "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house."

How interesting that this verse is mentioned twice in the same book. Proverbs is called the "Book of Wisdom" or in Hebrew *Sepher Hokhmah* (see Remnant Study Bible). How painful is a "brawling" woman to a man? Is this not, abuse?

E. G. White says, "The lifetime effect of one moment" – In one moment the hasty, passionate, careless tongue may wrought evil that a whole lifetime's repentance cannot undo. Oh, the hearts that are broken, the friends estranged, the lives wrecked by the harsh, hasty words of those who might have brought help and healing! *Ed 236.6*

What is Verbal Abuse?

Unlike physical abuse, verbal abuse does not leave visible bruises.

It can be just as painful, and recovery can take longer. In public, she is one way, in private she may become another. Verbal abuse most often takes place behind closed doors. Most verbal abuse cases describe a woman's experience. It is a fact, that some men suffer verbal abuse as well.

You have been verbally abused if you have been told in subtle and not so subtle ways, that your perception of reality and your feelings are wrong. This is a psychological term called "Gaslighting." The term comes from a 1940 movie, entitled, "Gaslight" where the husband is manipulating his heiress wife's sense of reality. He wants to drive her into a mental asylum in order to be the sole beneficiary of her financial riches.

Do you receive double messages – are you unable or even fearful to ask for clarification? If you do ask, you're not getting it. Do you or have you felt vaguely suspicious that something is wrong? Have you learned to tolerate abuse and lose self-esteem without realizing it or discover you were mistaken on where you stood? Are there quick come-backs or put-downs?

The abuser gets what she wants through indirect and devious means. According to Health Magazine's Holly E. Messick, author of "Karmic Dance—A Spiritual Journey through Verbal Abuse." An abuser undermines a victim's confidence by making statements that destroy that person's enthusiasm or interest in something. Undermining is also seen as a sabotaging behaviour. She also reminds, "Abusers are unable to show compassion and empathy towards their victims."

Verbal Abuse closes the door to true communication and intimacy. Intimacy in a relationship requires mutuality. Mutuality requires goodwill, openness, and a willingness to share oneself.

The abuser's indifference, criticism or disregard is felt like a rejection by the partner, as if the partner does not meet the abuser's standards. It is the abuser's control of the interpersonal (countering) communication, that is the means of domination or POWER OVER the partner's thoughts, beliefs and feelings.

Getting Help

The first step in getting help is reaching out.

The Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men is the only one in the nation that offers support and help in finding resources specifically for men," says Jan Brown, Executive Director and founder of the not-for-profit helpline Domestic Abuse Helpline for Men. "We'll provide options and support and help a man understand that the abuse is not his fault and it is not acceptable." The Domestic Abuse Helpline can be reached from anywhere in the US and Canada, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by calling 1-888-7HELPLINE (1-888-743-5754).

"What people should know is that abuse is about power and control, and regardless of whether the victim is a man or a woman, it is never OK," says Havilah Tower-Perkins, media relations coordinator for the National Domestic Violence Hotline.

Stopping the Abuse

Other steps for men who are being abused to take include:

- "Never allow yourself to be provoked into any kind of retaliation," says Brown. **"We tell men if they have to be in an argument, do it in a room with two doors so they can leave; a lot of times a woman will block the door, the man will try to move her, and that will be enough for him to get arrested."**
- "Document everything. Go to your doctor and tell him what happened, even if he doesn't ask how you were injured. Take photographs of your injuries, and make sure if the police are called that they take a report and get a copy of the report for yourself."
- "Work with an advocate from a domestic violence program to get a restraining order," says Brown. "Not only will this help protect you from an abusive partner, but it will also allow you to ask for temporary custody of your children in order to protect them from the domestic violence."
- Get counselling so you can start healing and get legal advice. Talk to your family and friends who can help support you. "They will understand," says Brown.

"Abusers are good at making you feel isolated and alone, but you're not," says Brown. "We get calls from all types of people -- doctors, lawyers, labourers, people in the military. The biggest hurdle they face is finding someone who believes in them. If they are believed, they can get help, and that's why we're here."

*Job 5:21 Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the **tongue**: neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction when it cometh.*

FAITH IN A PERSON

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen – Hebrews 11:1.

There are many scriptures on faith in the Bible. Hebrew 11:7 “by faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”

This passage has an impression on me. “...being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear...” We often are stifled with fear of failure, fear of ridicule, fear of loss or even fear of success. It is normal to be afraid of something. As a child, we eventually grow out of the simple fears, mainly because we grow to understand more of the world around us. As we develop as human beings, it is faith in ourselves which helps us overcome our fears. That is a learning process.

As with God, faith is a learning process, He must teach us. We must learn or better yet experience, our irrefutable dependency of God. That, my friend, is easier said than done. That’s why God, often waits before answering your prayer, to ensure you know that it is not your own means, but His. And to develop your personal connection with Him. What a powerful and rewarding connection.

Faith is trust. Faith can truly move mountains. Faith can withstand others doubts. Faith gives hope. Faith helps us to persevere. Faith in a person gives them the confidence in themselves to persevere especially when "there are things not seen as yet" in themselves.

Faith has power. I’m sure you are reminded of the woman with the issue of blood. One touch was all she needed, one touch - it was her faith! She didn’t need a sermon. She didn’t need to know a lot about anything. She knew who the Son of God was, and she had to get to where He was. We too must get to where He is.

In today’s world faith in someone can be a dangerous or a wonderful thing. Faith can turn someone’s life around. It can remove doubt, insecurities and psychological errors. Faith is patient.

MISSING THE MARK ON LEADERSHIP

Nominating Committee selects your name. You’re not sure, but you agree. The church gives approval and now you’re elected.

The question is what type of leader are you going to be? Strong? Visionary? Absentee? Is your personal or professional approach in line with the ministry you were elected to serve? Are you going to research to expand your thinking? Are you going to be arrogant or domineering? Will you be able to navigate through the politics? Are you a “builder” or a “wait and see - before jumping in” kind of person? Is this your first opportunity to lead or have you had experience? What is your best approach? It all matters.

The Bible says in Philippians 2:2-3. “Fulfil ye my joy that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”

Ephesians 4:15. “But speaketh the truth in love, may grow up into him all things, which is the head even Christ.”

Philippians 2:14-15. “Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.”

Organizational structure is extremely important. Some tasks do not adequately prepare a man for the job. When his time has come he is unable to fulfil what is requested of him. That is why leaders must ensure they themselves have mentors and they themselves are mentors. Learn to set up committees, delegate roles or tasks. Use the spirit of discernment to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your committee members; not to criticize but to place everyone where their strengths will give them every chance for success.

Make every effort to learn presentation skills. You undoubtedly will be called upon to express your ideas and goals. Sharpening your presentations skills will boost your confidence. Enhancing your research skills will subsequently increase your overall knowledge. It will make you a leader in all things.

That’s why God gave you the gift. Iron needs to sharpen iron.

MARRIAGE: AREN’T YOU YOUR OWN PERSON?

Dr. Paula England, a member of the Council on Contemporary Families and a sociology professor at Stanford University. Dr. England’s has been examining who initiates divorce.

Dr. England explained that a study had found that about 2/3 of divorce petitions are filed by the wife, but that doesn't necessarily show who wanted the divorce. There could be a myriad of reasons why it was more convenient to divorce under the wife's name.

But comparing that data to survey responses of couples after their divorce, women were the ones who were saying that they wanted the divorce more than their husband wanted it. One study found that the majority of divorced wives and husbands both agreed it was the wife who wanted out.

One study found that about 10% of divorced husbands claimed to be at a loss as to the reason their marriages ended. None of the women said they didn't know why they'd divorced.

JULY 02, 2006 Will This Marriage Last? – Who Wants Out and Why? By, PO Bronson, Ashley Merryman

The following are two articles written by the author, Steve Horsmon (www.goodguys2greatmen.com). It has been compiled here, to suggest two important situations you may find yourself in: 1) feeling under-valued in your marriage - what to do about it and; 2) 'deep-dive' your environment - which allows everyone in it to thrive.

Second Class Citizenship in Your Marriage

By: Articles by the author, Steve Horsmon (www.goodguys2greatmen.com)

Feeling like a second-class citizen in your marriage is usually accompanied by feelings of being under-valued. You feel subordinate to your partner and you feel your needs are less important than their needs.

There is a chilly awareness of feeling deprived, empty, lonely, weak, defenceless, inadequate, minimized or frightened.

These feelings make you sad and desperate. You may continuously pursue your partner to fix these feelings or you may withdraw yourself from the relationship and seek solace elsewhere.

This is second-class citizenship.

And the only way it can happen is if you allow it to happen.

A truly self-reliant person is not looking to be completed or filled up by another. He knows that the cold feelings of rejection and emotional betrayal are not caused by another person. Those feelings are the result of lacking reliance on himself for truly knowing his own value and a true source of well-being.

This kind of stirs you up, doesn't it?

What About Interdependence?!

You may be thinking, *“Yeah, you’re talking about unhealthy co-dependence. But what about the interdependent nature of a relationship?”*

You may believe that a "healthy relationship" is one where you can count on each other to meet your unmet childhood needs. That a "good spouse" will learn how to avoid your emotional landmines and do whatever it takes to not piss you off.

You may believe it's the right of each person to depend on the other to fulfil their need for self-esteem, significance, personal value and sense of well-being.

That doesn't sound like interdependence to me. It sounds like a prison.

I believe that interdependence applies to the responsibility of BOTH partners to "mind the store".

Both must be conscious, committed and proactive in protecting the agreed *values* of the relationship – not the egos within the relationship. Your ego is your job.

What Interdependence Really Means

Interdependence means choosing each day to take action in *protecting the environment* in which both people can learn, grow and thrive as individuals and partners.

If you have agreed that your relationship values include an environment of acceptance, affection, warmth, support, honesty, appreciation, adoration, emotional safety and vulnerability...then those are where your interdependence lies.

Both partners must commit to preserving those values through intentional and unconditional action. Without an interdependent joint-effort, the environment will crumble and turn toxic. And you already know what happens when that happens.

The importance of self-reliance cannot be understated.

It is only the truly self-reliant person who can prioritize his accountability and commitment to his relationship values over his expectations from his relationship.

It is only the truly self-reliant person who has the clarity and courage to take the loving actions necessary to possibly repair a crumbling environment.

And it is only the truly self-reliant person who can confidently make the correct decisions if he determines his partner is unwilling or incapable of creating that environment with him.

The road to self-reliance is an amazing and fulfilling trip. The journey should be a key part of your mission in life and love. I wrote this booklet for men who want to change their relationship environment and create the life they want.

Saving Your Marriage by Saying Nothing at All

“Just stop talking!! I can’t take it anymore!! Can’t you hear how you’re speaking to me?”

Are you a man who have heard these words from your wife?

If so, perhaps this article is for you. You just might be one of those “Good Guys” who is trying to fix his marriage and his wife, with words instead of actions. And she’s tired of it. And yes, I have some firsthand experience with this and think I know exactly what you’re going through. And I’m sorry about that.

The issue may be that you are trying to fix a problem with words that was caused by your past behaviours and emotions. As Steven Covey wrote, "You can't talk yourself out of a problem you behaved yourself into."

When a marriage starts to get rocky, a guy might find himself saying things like this:

- Why are you being so irrational?
- Why can't you discuss things like a normal person?
- Everybody has more sex than we do? Why can't you be like xyz's wife?
- That's the stupidest thing I ever heard! You're insane.
- If I do what you want to do, will you do what I want you to do?

There's a pattern I've noticed in a lot of the Good Guys I coach. These guys are typically very sharp, technically astute, logical, literate, and result oriented types. But, they are unaware of the slow and insidious ways in which they have caused their wives to lose respect and attraction for them. Because they have not been getting their needs met, they enter into a long, painful phase of causing more bad feelings than good. These Good Guys are used to talking their way into getting what they want. It works wonders for them at work and in their social life – why not their marriage?

It doesn't work in their marriage – or any marriage – **because it is actions that form the most credible and sustainable levels of trust, respect, admiration, and attractiveness in a man. It is the feelings we create that matter most.** Our abilities to talk, persuade, influence, or debate are really not useful when trying to recover a damaged relationship.

I heard this great old song today and it reminded me of a message I'm constantly trying to get across to men. Keith Whitley wrote it in the 1980's. It captures a notion that millions of women desire for

their relationships. Most men think it's a fairy tale. But most women crave these feelings and they will never tell you they need them or expect them from you.

You might say, "Okay. I want to save my marriage and you're telling me WHAT?! You're telling me not to communicate? No compromising? No negotiating? No explaining? No finding our common ground and working together?"

That's exactly what I mean. Just shut up for a change. Why?

Because you got where you are for some important reasons.

One reason is the types of words and tone you choose when you speak to her.

But the REAL biggie is your consistent "energy" of bargaining, compromising, judging, demanding, controlling or expecting to get your needs met.

It's funny – we don't hear a lot of songs about women who crave those unspoken motives.

Some "Good Guys" screw this up ALL THE TIME! They are SO focused on pleasing their wife and doing things to earn her respect and affection they wind up at the table of "talking", "negotiating" and "compromising" to see if they might get a morsel of what they need.

Other "Good Guys" think they have done all they need to do to "deserve" some respect and affection and resort to tactics of demands, control, and ultimatums. They will resort to clever verbal and emotional attacks to hopefully "guilt her" into submission.

And their wives see RIGHT THROUGH IT...every time. And guess what?

It is the most unappealing, unattractive, spineless, sexless energy a man can give off.

Wives find it exhausting and exasperating. They do not know why their men don't get it and will not just shut up already. This is the story of a lot of "Good Guys". They don't know how to create the environment women need to feel safe, respected, and SEXY. They don't know how to reset

their ENERGY in ways that their wife can FEEL the depth of their appreciation, respect, and DESIRE for her. This is an energy of WANTING her – not NEEDING her.

This is ALSO an energy of ACCEPTING her that comes from a place of love and your personal values for a healthy relationship with MUTUAL appreciation, respect, and desire. This is important! This is not a one-way street. It is not "all up to you". She has changes to make too. No doubt. In most cases, she is only waiting for you to lead the way and make it safe for her. By changing your energy, you finally give her a chance to demonstrate that she has her own values and high expectations for a rewarding relationship and is happy to be your equal partner in the process.

"Good Guys" can be so preoccupied with "fixing" their wife or saying and doing everything right to get emotional validation and sexual rewards they refuse to believe that their tired old formula has NEVER really worked.

So what do they do? They try even harder. Maybe if they have one more discussion, one more clever insult, one more clearly worded logical argument, or even one more total house clean while she's away....

Yes! That might convince her to connect. To touch. To appreciate. To finally “allow” sex to happen.

I get a lot of "flack" for telling men that their wives have "supernatural" abilities to sense their intentions. Of course, this is never meant to tell a guy he doesn't need to communicate. The metaphor is useful because the "Good Guy" I described above has NO CLUE that his true self-serving and critical intentions are transparent to her.

The intensity of the hurtful insult or critical tone can be compared to a how HE would feel if a woman made a critical observation of his penis size. Seriously. That is exactly how intensely a woman can FEEL a man’s negative, disapproving energy.

She will almost NEVER come out and tell you how she really feels.

Why?

Because she is both confused and astonished.

She’s unsure how to tell you exactly what she needs from you especially when you seem, so hell-bent to keep doing it your way. What she needs is so far from what you're doing, it's almost hurtful to tell you how badly you're doing.

She’s astonished that you don’t know this. Now granted, she probably has no good reason to be astonished.

She’s probably done a piss poor job of communicating her needs to you. She may have some emotional baggage. She’s not comfortable talking about it. She may suck at managing conflict and would rather just avoid you. And your father probably didn’t do a thing to clear up stuff like this for you when you were growing up. You almost don’t stand a chance.

Almost.

Yes, I know it very well – first hand. I was lucky enough to learn the lessons from the ranks of the thousands of "Great Men" out there. Finally learning the cause and cure of this condition is how Great Men get back on track. It's how they

become secure, confident, and happy to be “work in progress” – but finally on the right trail.

Dr. Robert Glover’s book, No More Mr. Nice Guy does an artful job of explaining this “condition” in much greater detail. It’s part of my recommended reading for “Good Guys” trying to save their marriage.

My mission is to help YOU get on this trail and stay on this trail. It will be the MOST REWARDING ride a man will take in his lifetime – first for himself, then for her, and then for his marriage!

My clients have told me that they get SO MUCH VALUE from our FREE DISCOVERY CALL that their relationship improved a little that same week!

It’s okay if you don’t choose me as your coach. I want to help you anyway. At least take the important FIRST STEP of talking to another man who gets you. CALL ME or EMAIL me to see what you are missing. You have nothing to lose.

IT'S THAT TIME

America is moving. It's becoming more media driven and subsequently more easily sidetracked. We, the people, are bringing up the rear on what really matters. The presidential coverage and political schema are overwhelming. A small group of Americans are trying to have their voices heard. They're shouting their disappointment in discovering that their values and beliefs may be antiquated and subsequently no longer tolerated. They too are feeling left behind. America has no intention of going back to the 1940s or 1950s. Technology simply won't allow it. People who are different and unashamed of being different are encouraged and saluted to be different. They won't allow it. We are at that time.

The Bible says in:

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8,13 (KJV)

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:² A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;³ A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;⁴ A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;⁵ A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;⁶ A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;⁷ A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;⁸ A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

¹³ And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.

There is a deliberate swing to return to Bible basics. It doesn't seem so right now but wait and see. Christian men are becoming relevant again. African American men are joining all sorts of Christian male organizations to learn more about their God-centered purpose. There is a drive and willingness to no longer accept the stereotype bequeathed to them; calculated from the infiltration of worldliness in God's church. Men are seeking insightful answers, respectfully disapproving pulpit acquiescence. It will change. It is present day truth. We are at that time.

The Bible says in:

John 16:13

Howbeit when he, the **Spirit** of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Rev 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the **Spirit** saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Rev 2:11

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the **Spirit** saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

God is watching everything! The Sons of God are essential to the church and the world. Our knowledge must increase. His Watchmen are to warn the saints and steady the course. HE is coming!

It is that time.

MEN MARRY THEIR IMAGINATIONS

Men marry their imaginations...that's the power of sex! Both male and female are guilty of marrying for the wrong reasons. Women think sometimes they can change a man, sometimes it can happen but that would be the exception, not the rule. Maybe they just want to change him into whatever they want, period.

Men, on the other hand, look at choosing their mates not with the insightfulness which will bring real happiness otherwise, their selections would be different.

A friend recently told me about a woman he was dating. She was dispensing all the signals that she wasn't right for him. In all honesty, from what he was telling me about her, she may be too difficult for any man. Yet he was willing to accept her abuse. His reasoning, "she has bucks." He later realized she was too much and decided to let it go.

How do we not make the wrong decision? Some say pray. I agree. Is that it, though? Did God not give us an intellect? Well, there have been significant studies in the selection process of male and female compatibility. The following is just a synopsis of one study:

There are five major personality traits, according to Psychology Today: **Conscientious**, measures a person's degree of organization; **Agreeableness**, how we deal with others; **Extroversions**, cheerfulness, initiation and communicativeness; **Neuroticism** measures emotional stability; **Openness** loves novelty and generally creative.

Understand, there are positive and negative degrees in each category and one person can own more than one trait. Our job is to navigate, with honesty, to identify our individual traits and then review that of our potential or significant other, to determine if there is such a match... then pray!

When we choose a partner based on the wrong reasons we become susceptible to narcissism. A narcissist will make you believe you are always the blame. It's all your fault. You can do no right. A narcissist can be your boss, your parent and even your spouse, according to Catherine Pratt, author of www.life-with-confidence.com. This type of person is not easy to identify at first. They can be charming, likeable but there is a darker side. Being with this person can cause depression. They blame everyone but themselves. They can manipulate your reality. It's called "gaslighting."

An in-depth presentation of the five (5) personality traits will be presented in Volume II.

