

WHAT IS “MALE ENTITLEMENT?”

The home is often viewed by abusive men as an “inner sanctum” and a place where the man has the right to be the “king of the castle” and where outsiders and behavioral and legal directives for the world-at-large do not belong or apply.

...Many abusive men say that they are surprised to learn that pushing, grabbing, and hitting are illegal with their partners (and, sometimes, with their children)

The decision to increasingly “up the ante” from emotional and verbal abuse to threats and intimidation to actual physical and sexual violence is part of the process of exerting control that is deemed to be their prerogative as a man due to the belief that they are “entitled” to be in control of their partners and children.

DEFINING MALE ENTITLEMENT: Having an attitude that conveys male dominance, women’s subservience, a general sense of disrespect for women, and the idea that men are just naturally more competent and capable than women are. This attitude leads directly to the belief that:

...”I, as a man, have the right and even the responsibility and obligation to control how my partner thinks, feels, and acts and to make her into the person I think she should be.”

This intense desire to shape and CONTROL his partner underlies all disrespectful and abusive attitudes and behaviors.

MALE ENTITLEMENT = NO COMMUNICATION AND DISCUSSION ABOUT THE RULES OR THE EXPECTATIONS IN THE RELATIONSHIP OR IN THE FAMILY

...”This is just the way things are done:

...because I’m the man and I get to decide what happens in our relationship and family,

...because this is the way my father (my parents) did things, and/or

...because this is the way that “real men” do things and live their lives.”

MALE ENTITLEMENT = A “DOUBLE STANDARD”

...The man thinks to himself and truly believes: *“I should make all the rules in this relationship...”*

...AND I don’t necessarily have to follow them”

...i.e. there is little or no reciprocity or mutuality in the relationship when male entitlement is present

Male entitlement attitudes, expectations, and behaviors always exist on a continuum and not all of the examples listed below appear in every male who has these sorts of attitudes and behaviors but even having some of these can be hurtful and destructive to a man’s partner and to their relationship with one another

Male entitlement attitudes, expectations, and behaviors are an extension of traditional and rigid cultural and historical beliefs that have existed for centuries regarding the place and roles of men and women in marriage, at home, and in society

SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF MALE ENTITLEMENT

A man making generalizations, believing stereotypes, or telling disrespectful jokes about women (to his partner or to other people)

- **Thinking to himself or actually saying things like “*Women are irrational*” and believing that “*Women should be barefoot and pregnant*” or telling “dumb blonde” jokes if his partner has blonde hair**

A man believing that he has the right to “objectify” women generally

- **A man keeping magazines like *Playboy* and *Penthouse* sitting around the house ...even if his partner is not comfortable with his doing this**
- **A man staring or “gawking” at other women (e.g. on TV or the internet, in the world-at-large) when he is by himself or when he is with his partner**
- **A man talking about other women and their bodies around his partner**
- **A man making “crude comments” and jokes about women and sex around his partner or in front of her with others**
- **A man believing that he should be able to have sex with his partner whenever he wants it from her because she is with him (i.e. thinking to himself, “*it’s just part of her ‘job description’ as my wife (girlfriend)*”)**
- **A man believing that he has the “right” to expect (and, sometimes, even demand) sex how often, how, when, and where he wants it**
- **A man believing that he can say “no” to sex if he is tired or preoccupied but also believing that “his woman” cannot say “no” to him no matter what is going on with her at the time**
- **A man believing that he has the right to “punish” or “scold” his partner if she is not willing to have sex whenever he wants it (e.g. being critical, harsh, and shaming with her or sulking and withdrawing from her to “get back at her”)**

A man expecting that his partner will take his last name when they marry

A man discouraging his partner from getting a driver’s license or expecting that he will be the driver of the family car when they are going somewhere together (or whenever he wishes to be the driver)

A man believing that he “owns” his partner or that she “belongs to him” because she is in a relationship with him

- **e.g. His thinking to himself or actually saying to his partner, “*You are my most prized possession*”**

A man expecting that he should be “the leader” in the relationship with his partner and “the head of the household” and that believing that he should have the “final say” in most or all the important decisions that have to be made

- **A man believing that his partner should “follow his lead” and “do what he says”**

- A man assuming that he has ultimate “veto” power over any decision that is made
...e.g. he will decide where they live, when and where they will move, whether both he and his partner take particular jobs, what vehicles they will both buy and drive, what remodeling should be done and how it should be done, with whom they will spend their time
- A man expecting that he will be the one to handle important phone calls, salespeople, and the like

A man expecting that his partner will “wait on him” and take care of his wishes, whatever they happen to be

- Especially if his mother was focused on doing this for him and/or his father and thus took care of them before thinking about and taking care of herself (in his family of origin and childhood)
- Treating a partner like an “employee” or a “servant”
 - ...a man demanding that his partner “do things” for him (e.g. saying, “Go get me a beer” or “I’m hungry; hurry up and get dinner on the table”)
 - ...a man expecting that his partner will pack and get him and the children ready to leave for vacation
 - ...a man expecting that his partner will set up social activities for them and will keep their social calendar (i.e. as if she is “social secretary”)
 - ...BUT: only with people he feels comfortable spending time with and doing activities that he enjoys

A man believing that what he has to say is “very important” and that his partner needs to listen attentively whenever he is speaking to her or others

A man believing that what his partner has to say is generally “chit-chat” or “gossip” and that he has the right to interrupt, stop listening, or change the subject if what she is saying is “boring” or “unimportant” to him (or anyone else around them) or when she is “going on and on” and “just rambling”

A man believing the idea that he “owns” his partner’s body if she is with him and that he should be able to expect his partner to:

- Look a certain way
- Have a certain hairstyle
- Wear clothing that he likes and wants her to wear (which can be either “prim and proper” or “sexy”)
- Have the kind of body he wants her to have
...e.g. expecting her to “exercise more” or lose weight if he thinks she is getting “too fat” or to get breast implants (i.e. if he believes that her breasts are “too small”) or other cosmetic surgery to correct her physical “imperfections”

A man expecting that his partner will stay at home to take care of their children (whether or not she wishes to do this)

- If he makes enough money for her to do this, the man believing that his partner’s first responsibility and allegiance is to him and to his wishes and expectations

A man expecting that a woman will take care of their children (day and night) or that she will be the primary caregiver (he will just “help her out” once in a while if he feels like doing this)

- e.g. she needs to change the diapers, read to the kids, put them to bed, keep them “quiet” so he can have some “peace” at home, give the kids their baths, feed them, get the babysitter when he and his partner “go out,” set up and drive them to and from daycare, help them with their homework, drive the kids to their activities (if he doesn’t want to attend the activity himself)
- This reinforces the idea that a man should not have to “interrupt” his normal daily schedule and routine to do any parenting tasks that interfere with his daily activities ...e.g. take time off from work if their children are sick

A man believing that it is his partner’s “primary job” to take care of all his (and their children’s) emotional and physical needs and issues (i.e. he should not need anyone else in his life to do this for him once she becomes his partner)

- e.g. A man expecting that his partner will grocery shop, buy his and their children’s clothing and household items, drive the kids to their activities, take his laundry to the dry cleaners and pick it up when it is done

A man expecting that he will determine “who does what” around the house

- A man expecting that his partner will cook, clean, do laundry, vacuum, do the dishes, and handle all the “inside” chores or chores that he doesn’t like to do (i.e. “women’s work”)
- A man expecting that, if he has the time and “wants to do it,” he will be willing to handle the “outside” chores or the chores he likes or feels comfortable with (what he thinks of as “men’s work”) ...e.g. shoveling snow, mowing the lawn, taking care of their cars (i.e. servicing them himself or taking them in to be serviced)
- A man believing the idea that, since he has to “work all day at his job,” he should not have to “help around the house” before he goes to work or when he gets home
- A man believing that he has little or no responsibility for “keeping the house running”
- A man believing that his partner and other women are also responsible for what happens on the holidays and at family gatherings ...e.g. holding the belief that the women are supposed to prepare the food, clean up before and after the meal, and keep track of the children and make sure they are entertained and that he and other men can sit around, drink alcohol if they wish, and watch TV and/or sporting contests throughout the day
- In the end, the man believes that he has the “right” to do the chores, projects, and activities that he determines to be the priorities for him

A man expecting that he will be the “primary breadwinner” and that, if his partner works outside the home, it will only be for “pin money” (i.e. the idea that her income is not as important as his)

- A man believing that his partner should make less money than he does and should have a “less important” job
- A man believing that his job and career are more important than his partner’s job and career

- A man assuming that his life and work issues and problems are “important” and that his partner’s are “less important” and, at times, even “trivial”
- A man pressuring his partner not to get a job or go to school or actually “undermining” her efforts to do this for herself
 - ...e.g. A man telling his partner that her working or going to school is a “waste of time” or arriving home late so that she will not be on time for her job or a class she is planning to attend

A man believing that his partner staying home with the kids is not a “real job” (either if they have decided or she has decided that she will do this) and that his “outside” work is “more important and valuable” to the family because he is the one who “brings in the money”

A man expecting that he will make all the important money decisions and that he will be the one to handle their finances

- He expects to control the checking account, their credit cards, and the investments they make (even if his partner is working outside the home and making money)
 - ...his believing that the accounts should be in his name or shared by both of them
 - ...his believing that his partner should not have separate accounts of her own
 - ...his believing that he may also decide to keep the credit cards or their checkbook in his possession
- He expects to pay the bills or monitor their payment “to know where the money is going”
- He expects that he has the right to give his partner “an allowance” that she can spend which he determines for her (as a parent would do with a child)
- He expects that his partner will account for all the money she spends
- He expects that he will make the decisions about what is “reasonable” for her to spend to maintain their household and lifestyle (e.g. on food, on the home, on their children, on herself, on vacations)
- He expects that he should be able to withhold money from his partner whenever he believes this is “necessary”

A man expecting that his partner will not talk to or “flirt” (whatever that happens to mean to him) with other men

- A man being overly “possessive” and frequently acting in a jealous manner with his partner
 - ...A man assuming that his partner is always “on the make” and continually looking to get involved with another man
 - ...A man brooding about or continually bringing up a partner’s imagined relationships with other men
 - ...A man referring to his partner’s male friends and acquaintances as her “boyfriends”
 - ...A man “interrogating” his partner about her previous relationships with men
 - ...A man berating his partner for previous relationships she has had or for her past sexual involvements with other men

A man believing that his partner should be willing and “eager” to do anything he wants her to do sexually if it is “stimulating” for him

- e.g. oral sex; anal sex; grabbing, patting, or pinching her breasts, butt, or crotch in public or private; bondage or “kinky” sex; having sex with his friends or other men and women if he finds this exciting

A man believing that he should be able to determine what activities he and his partner do together as a couple

- With little or no interest in doing what she would like to do
- With little or no interest in watching what his partner wants to watch on TV (i.e. he is “in charge” of the remote control)

A man expecting that his partner will not be involved with certain activities because she is a woman

- e.g. hunting; fishing; going to bars with women friends; playing “rough” male sports such as hockey, football, and boxing; spending time with her male friends

A man believing that he should be able to “go out” whenever he wishes and participate in whatever activities he wants to do, e.g.

- Going out with his “buddies” whenever he wants
- Getting drunk or using drugs as he wishes
- Spending time with whomever he wishes
- Playing golf, softball, basketball, broomball, tennis or other sports or “work-out” activities as often as he likes
- Playing video games and spending as much time as he wants on the internet, his computer, his tablet, or his cell phone
- Watching whatever and as much as he wants on television

A man believing that his partner should not tell him what to do, make requests of him, ask him to change, or expect him to alter “who he really is” (from his perspective) in any way