

# Should a Woman Propose to a Man?



By McLean Robbins, GalTime.com

A woman dreams of the day when that special someone sinks to one knee, looks them lovingly in the eyes and utters those four magical words, “Will you marry me?”

But in today’s glass-ceiling breaking, two-income household holding, Mr. Moms-are-totally-cool day and age, is this notion a bit antiquated? Has the women’s liberation movement come so far that we can now propose our own version of happily ever after?

Our initial reaction after being presented with this topic was a resounding “heck no,” but naturally, more exploration was necessary. So we queried leading relationship experts, lawyers, dating coaches and wedding professionals to get their opinions.

We’ll warn you – there’s no concrete answer, but our industry experts did come up with some valuable arguments for and against the issue.

## **Traditionalists Say “No Way”**

Tasha, a love coach who appeared on VH1’s *Secrets of Aspen*, says that when a woman proposes to a man, she castrates him. “When you take the proposal away [from the man], you cut off their ability to make you [the woman] the happiest you could be.”

“If you’re putting the best product you have out there, you will capture your rational mate [without proposing] rather than drag him [to the altar],” says Constance Dunn, M.A.

etiquette specialist and author of *Practical Glamour*. “And this is coming from a card-carrying feminist!”

“It’s all about perceived mate value,” she says. “Sure, you might be able to drag some dude to the altar, but he’s always going to wonder if he could have done better.” “If something is readily available, it isn’t as valued ... look at the success of the Birkin bag wait list.”

Letting a man take charge isn’t about letting go of your own self or conceding that he has more power in the relationship, says Tasha. It’s about allowing the person you love to make a grand gesture.

“There’s something important about that ritual of a man making that commitment to a woman,” Dunn says. But, she admits, women have the ultimate power – saying yes or no.

Dunn agrees that as society continues to evolve, the idea of women proposing may become both psychologically and socially more acceptable. “But it’s only been a few decades ... we aren’t there yet.”

## **Moderates Say “You’re Doing It Every Day”**

Laurie Puhn, lawyer, couples mediator and author of the national bestseller *Fight Less, Love More: Five Minute Conversations to Change Your Relationship Without Blowing Up or Giving In* says that women “propose” to men every day – they just don’t call it that. “It’s called an ultimatum.”

“The reality is that women initiate probably over fifty percent of the ‘are we in this for the long haul’ conversations,” says Puhn. This gives the man the information he needs to know that when he asks you to marry him, he’s assured you’ll say yes.

Of course, Puhn cautions, conversations of that nature should not be brought up lightly. But if you’re nearing or over 30

and have been seriously dating for six months or more ... it's natural and fine for a woman to want to bring up the topic.

A huge number of changes in relationships, for good and for bad, come about as a result of women initiating, poking, prodding, and setting time frames, she says. The issue isn't necessarily what one says, but how they phrase it. Relationship discussions of any nature won't be successful if phrased as "you'd better do it," she says. Women who feel the need to issue proposals – of the mini or major variety – need to know before speaking what they are and aren't comfortable with ... and how to walk away if they don't get the answer they need.

"You're never too young to value your time." If you want to make sure you're giving yourself ample opportunity to meet Mr. Right before you have to meet Mr. Right, that's the outlook to have, says Puhn.

While this type of proposal isn't "fun or exciting," it's the reality of many relationships today.

And, if a woman wants to get down on one knee and ultimately do the proposing, Puhn is fine with that – so long as she has the confidence and guts to "make that the story [you tell your grand kids]."

But will it ever become commonplace? No. "When we get to the male birth control pill, you can talk to me about a woman proposing."

### **Progressives Say "Go For It ... Selectively"**

In the Old World where civility is king, the man should always make the moves," says Paul A. Falzone, CEO of eLove, a dating and matchmaking service with a three-decade history. "But now we're in 2011 and the world has evolved quite a bit. If a guy can take a woman's assertiveness, God bless her; let her run."

Of course, he says, this type of forward thinking need require a certain type of man. If your sweetheart is a traditionalist, a subtler hint might be the better route. But, as Falzone cautions, "at the stage in the game where you're getting down and proposing, choice shouldn't really be in the game. You should have it pretty nailed down by then."

In other words, are you damn sure he'll say yes? For some women, it's about taking life into their own hands and being the master of their own destiny. "You're the most important person in your life and you've got to look at yourself and think, what's best for me?"

If the answer is marriage and your relationship and timing are right, a proposal might be the way to go.

If you're determined to do the asking, make sure you're planning a proposal the man would enjoy, says Sandra Aaron, owner of Mindless Sophistication Events in Toronto, Canada. "This isn't the moment for a female's fantasy proposal. This is the moment to make him feel appreciated."

Sometimes, Falzone says, men need a god kick in the pants. Just remember, he cautions, that one should make sure they're doing it for the right reasons – that they're truly ready to get married.

***What about you? Would you propose to your sweetheart, and under what circumstances?***