

The Independent Woman: Do We Need A Do-Over?



By SMF Marcus Osborne for GalTime.com

If you've been a regular reader of StraightMaleFriend.com or if you've been following this column for the past year or so, you already know that one of my steadfast beliefs is individual independence.

In other words: "Be honestly you."

When it comes to love, dating and relationships, the very best advice anyone could ever offer is for you to be who you truly are. But what happens when being yourself is pushing your love one away?

That simply means that when it comes to love, dating and relationships, the very best advice anyone could ever offer is for you to be who you truly are, as opposed to what you believe people want/expect you to be. Sure you can (and many people do) fool the masses into buying into some image you've manufactured. Pretending to be "outdoorsy" when you're a couch potato. Acting as though you love foreign cinema when you abhor the idea of reading anything more than the credits during your favorite motion pictures. Passing yourself off as less accomplished than the high-powered executive that you are in order to massage the ego of your latest date.

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I've long supported women going out and exercising their power in their communities, in the workplace, in the home and in the marketplace. Why not? You've earned it. You've gone to school, fought for your education, worked your way up the corporate ladder and established yourself as a pillar of the community and yet... you're still unfulfilled. For all that you've achieved, there's still a glaring vacancy on your life's resume.

Unmarried and childless... and full of regret. Does that description fit you?

I've made no secret of my deep respect and admiration for the woman who get out there and chase their independence, but on more than one occasion recently, I've had heavy conversations with women who harbor some real regrets about their life choices.

We've gone from a culture that once pushed the idea that women needed to stay at home, raising kids, cooking dinners, and pampering their husbands in order to society to thrive. In essence, women were considered domestic servants with benefits. With the rise of the women's movement, we've reached a point in time where having women outside the household is

not a luxury but in most cases, a requirement for the survival of families.

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Now, maybe this is a small group of professional women feeling the angst of being over 35 and unmarried and without kids, but it's an issue that deserves a conversation. My friend lamented, "Marcus, I'm 40 years old. I'm not married. I don't have kids. And I WANTED all those things, but it may be too late now. Most of the decent guys are already married and even if I met someone TONIGHT, fell in love, got married, and had a baby (if I can still even HAVE a child) it'll still be another two years."

She went on to say that at a young age she decided that she would pursue a career and get settled professionally before settling down to start a family. But throughout the course of her life, career consumed her because that's what she was always advised as a young girl: marriage and family should come after you've established yourself.

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In hindsight, my friend was wishing that she had given more weight to that life goal. Her feeling was that if she had to do it all over again, she'd have put more stock in long-term relationships and perhaps gotten married and even had those kids. In her mind, even if the marriage hadn't worked out she'd still have had that experience and the children to show for it.

I found her reasoning interesting, but I found her belief that her pursuit of independence had actually been an obstacle to her long-term happiness... absolutely fascinating.

Where do you stand? After all your success, are

you feeling like you'd go back and make different choices if you could?