

Does Raising Your ‘Good’ Cholesterol Level Really Mean Much?

For decades, studies have found that people with naturally high levels of HDL cholesterol tend to live longer and have less risk for heart disease and heart attacks. The reason for this was thought to be what was called the “good HDL fraction.”

Naturally, much research focused on learning how to raise it.

Unfortunately, it turns out to be far easier to lower LDL cholesterol than to raise HDL cholesterol. And now researchers are questioning whether they should be concentrating on this at all.

Questions about the role that HDL plays in heart disease began in 2006, when the development of a drug that could raise HDL was halted after researchers found it increased the risk of death.

Then last year, scientists announced that they were halting a study of an extended form of niacin, one of the only substances found to raise HDL cholesterol, because patients taking it along with a cholesterol-lowering statin fared no better, or perhaps even slightly worse, than those not taking the statin drug at all.

Now, a study published in *The Lancet* has looked at individuals who were born with a gene that provided them with higher-than-normal HDL.

The researchers expected to find that these individuals had a 13 percent lower risk of a heart attack, but they were surprised to find that these study participants had the same

heart disease risk as those who did not have the gene.

While these studies are causing us to rethink the role of HDL, and may result in less focus on how to raise it, they do not cast doubt on the role that LDL-cholesterol plays.

LDL cholesterol remains the “bad” cholesterol. You should absolutely continue to focus on lowering that type of cholesterol.

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For the original article, visit .

How to Avoid These 4 Holiday Mistakes That Hurt Families

Our “Happy Holidays” are not just going to be happy simply because they’re holidays or because we hope them to be happy. We have to make our holidays happy by the way we approach them.

But that’s easier said than done, right?

Life is really about relationships more than anything else. And mistakes in our relationships can kill the holiday mood

and the sense of goodwill that the holidays are supposed to encourage. So here are four holiday mistakes that I hope we'll all avoid this year:

1. Letting the good things take your focus off the best things. It's so easy to do. With all the fun, creative, and well intended distractions of the season, we can get so focused on things that are good that we lose our focus on things that are best—our relationships with family and friends. Decorations, holiday activities and special events are good, but they can pull our attention from being present in the moment with those we love. Time together is one of the best gifts we can give one another.

2. Being a problem-seer instead of a problem-solver. Remember Eeyore in Winnie the Pooh? He was a downer most of the time. He also was usually less than helpful when it came to solving problems, although he was great at pointing them out to everyone.

During the holidays, it's easy to identify and complain about the stressors and challenges of the season. But strive to be a problem-solver, not just a problem-seer. Example: Instead of saying, "Here we go again with your mother criticizing my career!" Be more constructive and helpful. Try to solve the problem with a positive attitude by saying, "If your mom brings up my career, would you help me graciously steer the conversation to something else?"

3. Being controlling instead of flexible. Sticking with our Winnie the Pooh theme, think about Tigger. He was the bouncy one with the can-do attitude. He was a character that was quick to look for a silver lining in a cloud. My mom is like that. She is always very *flexible*. She just goes with the flow. It's a lot more fun during the holidays to be with someone that lets things go.

4. Being financially out of sync with your spouse. There are a

lot of stressors during the holidays and money is surely one of the biggest ones. If you and your spouse are not together on issues such as how much to spend and on whom, the stress is bound to intrude on the health and happiness of your marriage and family. Develop a plan, in advance, and stick with it.

While trying to avoid all these holiday mistakes, remember that teamwork is the key to success. And you and your spouse are on the same team.

What other mistakes do you suggest your family needs to avoid to keep the holidays happy? Please share in the comments below.

Mark Merrill is the president of Family First. For the original article, visit .

Never Ignore These Cancer Warning Signs

Many people ignore potential warning signs of cancer, a new British survey found.

The study involved 1,700 people aged 50 and older in the United Kingdom who completed a health questionnaire listing 17 symptoms, including 10 widely publicized possible cancer symptoms.

The symptoms included:

- Unexplained cough
- Unexplained bleeding
- Significant changes in bowel or bladder activity
- Unexplained lumps

- Changes in appearance of a mole

While 53 percent of the participants said they had experienced at least one of the potential cancer symptoms in the previous three months, only 2 percent thought cancer was a possible cause of those symptoms.

In many cases, people attributed potential signs of cancer to reasons such as age, infection, arthritis, cysts and hemorrhoids, according to the Cancer Research survey. It was published Dec. 2 in the journal *PLOS One*.

“Most people with potential warning symptoms don’t have cancer, but some will and others may have other diseases that would benefit from early attention,” lead author Dr. Katriina Whitaker, senior research fellow at University College London, said in a Cancer Research U.K. news release.

“That’s why it’s important that these symptoms are checked out, especially if they don’t go away. But people could delay seeing a doctor if they don’t acknowledge cancer as a possible cause,” Whitaker added. “It’s concerning that even the more obvious warning symptoms, such as unexplained lumps or changes to the appearance of a mole, were rarely attributed to cancer, although they are often well-recognized in surveys that assess the public’s knowledge of the disease,” she said.

Sara Hiom, director of early diagnosis at Cancer Research U.K., said in the news release: “Diagnosing cancer early saves lives because it gives patients a better chance that treatments will be successful.”

For the original article, visit .

Why Men's Discipleship Is a Difficult Calling

After decades of “information” flow, the church is still resistant to men's discipleship. Not everywhere, of course, but enough to make you wonder, “*What's going on here?*” It's not hard to imagine a spiritual battle raging in the cosmos over the souls of men.

Ministry to men can be lonely and discouraging. Let's face it. Magazines, newspapers, radio and TV stations are not exactly clamoring to interview us about the unglamorous trench work of ministry to men!

Most of the leaders I started with have moved on. I don't fault them. It's not easy when you want more spiritual success for men than they want it for themselves.

And yet, here you are. What lures you to this conflicted world of ministry to men?

Men's Discipleship Is a Difficult Calling

We are hardly the first ones lured into a difficult calling. Not a week goes by that I don't think about how God “tricked” Isaiah into a ministry doomed to fail. You remember the story. “In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord” (Is. 6:1ff).

The glory of the Lord filled the temple with smoke. Isaiah got all excited and had “a moment” with God—a glorious, holy experience. Isaiah was fired up!

Then the Lord asked, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”

Isaiah, now bursting to do something for God, squealed, “Here am I. Send me!” I've been there, and I know you have too.

But then the Lord gave Isaiah his marching orders. The Lord told Isaiah to go and tell the people not to listen. "Go and tell this people: 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes"

A stunned Isaiah asked, "For how long, O Lord?" And God told him for a very long time.

Frankly, most of the men we admire in the Bible had long dry spells. David dodged the spear of King Saul. Joseph suffering as a brother sold into slavery. Daniel's faithfulness landed him in a lion's den. And Abraham *never* saw the promise fulfilled.

Jeremiah, who spent 23 years ministering to people who finally got so tired of his message that they imprisoned him, bemoaned, "O LORD, you deceived me, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed" (Jer. 20:7). Peter was crucified upside down by his own choice, Paul's hardships and trials are legendary, and our Lord Himself was brutally murdered.

A major step in ministry success is to accept that men's discipleship is a difficult calling reserved for a few. You're special. Success, however, takes a tough, determined leader with a flinty forehead willing to grab a shovel, get in the ditch, and keep digging long after everyone else gives up.

Is it possible that God has "lured" you to this great cause because, like the great servants of old, He knows He can count on you?

We Need Other Brothers

When I was in business, I attended a resident executive education program. On the first day, during the welcome reception, I thought, I've made a terrible, terrible mistake. I have never seen a group of people with whom I have less in

common.

There were men and women from in their 30s to their 60s from every conceivable industry and country. It was like the university had intentionally put together the most heterogeneous group of people they could find. The only thing we had in common was that we were all the owners and presidents of private companies.

Three days later I had completely changed my mind. I thought, This is absolutely the most homogeneous group I have ever been around. Yes, the school had intentionally diversified the group. But when we started sharing our common problems, struggles, challenges, questions and opportunities, I realized that I had more in common with those people than any other single business group.

The same is true in men's discipleship. We each come in our own unique "package." We are young, old, black, white, brown and yellow. We're from all over the world and every theology. And yet "men's discipleship leaders" are absolutely the most homogeneous group of servants we will ever be around.

To realize that the problems, struggles, challenges, questions and opportunities I face are exactly the same ones you face creates a common bond. "We are in this together." And that is very encouraging.

Do You Need a Kick in the Pants or a Hug?

We need to spend time together. You already know this, but serving God is expensive. People you thought were your friends drop you because they think you've become a fanatic or a Jesus freak (you have, of course, but more on that in some future article).

The math is simple. God says, "You can have all of Me when I can have all of you." He demands everything you've got in return for everything He has to offer. Not a bad deal, but

painful in the beginning.

Sometimes we need a hug, but other times we need a kick in the pants. Sometimes we need to hear, “Suck it up. We are not our own. We have been bought with a price. We’re in His army now. We have been crucified with Christ and we no longer live. To live is Christ; to die is gain. His Word is in our hearts like a burning fire!”

Other times we need a hug: “I love you, brother. How can I pray for you? What is bringing you joy? How is your walk with God? How are you really doing? You’re not in this alone.” Or at least you don’t have to be. In fact, it’s doubtful you can survive on your own.

Being Together Is All About Fuel

Being together is fuel. Like a runner needs energy. Like an entrepreneur needs ideas. Like a soul needs worship. Like a man needs brothers. Like a leader needs strategies. Like a discipler needs knowledge. Like a soldier needs skills.

Whether you need a hug or a kick in the pants, or you don’t know what to do next; God has crafted you in such a way that these needs are best met by spending time together.

How’s that going to happen, you ask? There are many ways, but it all depends on what you do next. Man in the Mirror wants to stand with you. We have a dizzying number of free online resources at .

Just don’t try to do this alone. That’s tempting the trolls.

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How to Talk to Your Son About Sex

When my son was only four he asked me, "Where do babies come from?" I told him that they come from their mommys' tummy. Hoping that answer would satisfy, I tried to change the subject.

Then came this, "How do babies get in their mom's tummy?" Fortunately, my wife and I were just talking about a brilliant analogy made in a book she was reading called *The Hiding Place* by Corrie Ten Boom. Sometimes, my son helps me bring in the groceries after a trip to the market. So I asked him if it would be good for me to give him a bag that was too heavy to carry and he said, "No." I explained to him that when he grew up and got older, he would be able to carry the heavier bags.

In other words, I told him, the answer to his question was too much weight for his young age. But I would give him the answer when he was older and could handle it.

Is your son old enough to carry the weight? Like me, you may have been putting it off for as long as you could. The last thing you want is for your son's first discussions about sex to come from anyone else. You probably know that it's time to talk about it, but it's tough to know what to say. Here's how to talk to your son about sex:

1. Setting the stage. Think of this as starting an ongoing conversation. For the first discussion, I think it would be best to take him away for an overnight or a weekend. Make it a special time with bonding activities. Let him know the purpose of the time and what you are going to talk about.

2. Ask them questions. Start by asking him open-ended questions. You need to find out first what he knows and where he has been getting his information. Hopefully, you are

getting to him at a place of limited exposure. Here are some questions to get you started. "What do you think of girls? Are you interested in a particular girl? Do you ever want to get married? What do you know about sex?"

3. Treatment of women. When boys mature, girls become desirable and their natural thirst for girls grows strong. It's important to guide their understanding of the honorable way to treat them. Girls are a precious and valuable gift, like fine china. Boys need to know that girls are not objects from which they selfishly take pleasure and then discarded when finished. The desire of girls is to be won and for their affection to be earned. They want to be made to feel cherished, protected and secure.

4. Explaining the purpose of sex. Emotional and spiritual intimacy between a man and a woman is one of the richest gifts in the human experience. Sex was created by God as a visible expression of the invisible (emotional and spiritual) bonds created in intimacy between a married man and woman. It is in knowing someone and being known at the deepest level. When the physical, emotional and spiritual come together in the security of a lifetime commitment, it is the highest pleasure a relationship can offer. The pure intensity of that loving bond is actually powerful enough to create life. It is an amazing gift but only reaches its fullness in that context.

5. Monogamy vs. "casual" sex. There is a Kid Rock song called "Only God Knows Why." In it, he says, "Outstretched hands and one night stands, still I can't find love." In my observation of the world and relationships, I have come to the solid conclusion that sex is at its best in a committed, married relationship. Without it, at best, there is something missing. At worst, it leaves people feeling empty, alone and wounded. Further, it is physically dangerous.

Having sex is like putting your hand on someone's soul. Pulling away and leaving the relationship is like ripping your

hand off of a spider web. Protect her (and yourself) by waiting until you are committed for a lifetime.

5. Self-exploration and pornography. Boys going through puberty have raging hormones. As a result, self-exploration and masturbation understandably occur. Your son needs to know that he isn't weird or perverted. Reassure him by sharing your own personal experience. Then, discuss with him that controlling raging hormones is an opportunity to build self-discipline and control.

If a man doesn't exercise control and feeds his appetite for sex, the appetite has a tendency to grow. As it grows it can lead to porn, and porn is a road that he needs to stay clear off of. Porn is highly addictive and destroys relationships. Remind him again of the purpose of sex—for emotional and spiritual intimacy between a man and a woman, not just a man alone. Also, see [How to Talk to Your Son About Pornography](#) and [The Effects of Porn on Marriage](#).

Have you talked to your kids about sex as of yet? What did you say?

Huddle up with your wife and ask, "What things do you think would be good for me to cover with our son about sex?"

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Why Some Jews Will Never Trust Evangelical Christians

Evangelicals, while maintaining their view of Scripture and their faith in Jesus as the Messiah, are largely motivated in standing with Israel and the Jewish people worldwide.

As someone who has spent the last 20 years of my life at the intersection of Jewish and Christian communities worldwide, I have been asked countless times by Jewish friends: “Why do evangelicals possess such love for the Jewish people and the land of Israel?”

The question is usually presented with a mixture of perplexed amazement when a Jew first encounters this unwavering support along with an often unspoken skepticism attempting to uncover the real reason for this phenomenon and this unique offer of friendship. The skepticism is due, of course, with concerns regarding the evangelical agenda, the proselytization of the Jews, or relating an awareness of an apocalyptic theory that all Jews must return to Israel before the Second Coming of Christ.

The skepticism is well understood. Christian history has not been good for the Jews, and though many Jews welcome this commitment of friendship, nonetheless, it comes with deserved suspicion.

Pundits who would write off evangelical support to a cloaked, conspiratorial strategy for mass proselytization or wide-eyed hyper-apocalyptic theories simply do a vast disservice to reality. Reporting evangelical support for Israel as such is willful ignorance and shoddy journalism at best. It is blatant misleading of the public at worst.

Consider the brief history of evangelical support. It can be argued that modern organized Christian Zionist movement has

found its structure and voice only over the past 35 years or so. Without question, the movement was profoundly catalyzed and impacted by rebirth of the State of Israel.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Bible-believing Christians, those who maintain a high view of Scripture as the inspired Word of God, viewed the rebirth of the State of Israel as perhaps the greatest prophetic fulfillment of Scripture since the birth of Jesus. It should be understood that the great majority of the Scriptures which evidence this are found in the Hebrew Bible, not so much in the New Testament.

Thus, Christians were amazed and rejoiced to witness the fulfillment of a prophetic promise from the Bible coming to pass in front of their eyes. It gave rise to a sense that Christians of today were living in prophetic times, and perhaps the return of Christ was at hand. The same Jewish texts that foretold the regathering of the Jews often made reference to the Messianic Age.

While this may have been the emotional, spiritual milieu into which the modern Christian Zionist movement was established 35 years ago, it is incorrect and borderline ridiculous to think that the movement has not grown and matured over the ensuing years. Indeed, especially those of us in its leadership, have wrestled with and as a result deepened our theology and have grown in our understanding of the sensitivities that exist in the newly established Jewish-Christian friendship and cooperation. While certainly still informed by the miraculous (even by agnostic standards) re-birth of Israel, today, my experience is that evangelicals, while maintaining their view of Scripture and their faith in Jesus as the Messiah, are largely motivated in standing with Israel and the Jewish people worldwide by three certainties.

First, evangelicals feel an enormous sense of gratitude towards the Jewish people. There is a solid and increasing sense of appreciation for the Jewish foundation of the

Christian faith. The Scriptures, the prophets, the Ten Commandments, the Mosaic foundation of Western law, the Jew Jesus, the early Christian leaders, who were all Jewish—these are all an absolute, a byproduct of Jewish fidelity to Jewish identity, which often came at the ultimate price of persecution or martyrdom of the Jews. Evangelical Christians stand in awe and are profoundly grateful that we in the West live in an ethical monotheism that is the result of Jewish faith and perseverance.

Secondly, evangelicals have a tremendous sense of repentance—tshuvah—for the past horrors perpetrated against the Jewish people, especially those done under the banner of Christianity. It should be noted that evangelicals do not relate to crusaders or more modern Christian expressions of anti-Semitism as even remotely Christian.

Indeed, this a significant disconnect from Rome-based Christianity, for an evangelical has validation in history and the current day. Like the Jews, Proto-evangelicals were often persecuted in times such as the Inquisition. Moreover, today, there is great tension and even animosity between Catholicism and evangelicalism throughout Latin America, as, for example, evangelical growth often results as Catholics abandon Catholicism for evangelicalism.

Simply put, evangelical Christianity is distinctly philo-Semitic in its theological orientation, while historic Rome-based Christianity has not been so, the blessed progress of Nostre Aetate, and the graciousness of John Paul II notwithstanding. Thus, evangelicals feel a tremendous sense of pain and sadness for what has been done in ancient and modern history to the Jews in the name of Christianity, coupled with a profound sense of wanting to help right that wrong.

Finally, there is undeniably an exponential increase of Christian martyrdom at the hands of jihadi Muslims around the world. There is a growing sense that much of the more liberal,

mainline versions of Christianity are drying up and may soon cease to exist. Yet today, evangelicalism is experiencing exponential growth. That growth tragically has come with increasing persecution, especially at the hands of Islamists. Evangelicals understand intuitively that radical Islam is a threat to the Jewish people, the State of Israel, evangelicals and, in reality, the modern, civilized people of every background.

Evangelicals understand the need to forge alliances in light of this threat, and that the future existence of our world may well depend on how we bond together.

Evangelicals are natural allies of the modern State of Israel at a time when identifying and cultivating these supporters is crucial. We as a community have demonstrated unwavering support for decades in every way imaginable.

Continuing to buy into media stereotypes for evangelical motivation does a great disservice to this important relationship and slows progress towards mutual goals. In short, the Jewish community would do well to be as welcoming in reaching out and developing relationship with the evangelical community as they have with mainline Christian denominations and other interfaith groups.

Sometimes, people just want to be your friend.

Robert Stearns is the founder and executive director of Eagles' Wings, a global movement of churches, ministries and leaders. For the original article, visit [.](#)

Why a Father Quit His \$100 Million-a-Year Job

Have you heard of Mohamed El-Erian? He's a multimillionaire. Until May 2013, he was chief executive of the PIMCO investment fund, one of the largest in the world. His *annual* earnings were estimated to be more than \$100 million.

Why did Mr. El-Erian step down from such a prestigious and lucrative position? It is because he is also a dad.

When he first left the fund, there were all kinds of speculations about why. Then earlier this year, he wrote a short article telling about his "wake-up call." The biggest factor in his decision was his daughter, who was 10 at the time.

It started as a routine interaction at home. He asked her to brush her teeth, and she didn't do it. He asked her several more times. Again, nothing.

That little girl was up to something, and as Mohamed grew more frustrated and began to confront her about her disobedience, eventually it came out. She excused herself, went to her room and came back with a piece of paper.

It was a list of 22 *items*—important events in her life, all of which *her dad had missed*: her first day at school, her first soccer game, a parent-teacher meeting, a Halloween parade.

Mohamed felt bad of course, and at first he got defensive. He had legitimate reasons for missing all of those! Travel, important meetings, urgent phone calls, emergencies he had to take care of.

Eventually, this dad realized that *he was* "missing an infinitely more important point." His work and family

commitments were way out of balance, and it was seriously hampering his relationship with his daughter. He wasn't making nearly enough time for her.

So, he made the career change, took on work with fewer hours and travel responsibilities, and now he's regularly making her breakfast, driving her to and from school, and taking more time off to be with family. He writes, "She and I are doing a lot of wonderful talking and sharing." Sounds like he's off to a great start.

Honestly, I would like this story a lot more if Mr. El-Erian were not pulling in eight or nine figures a year when he decided to make a change. It's clearly a lot easier for millionaires to make these kinds of changes—and he acknowledges that.

But dad, I hope you still hear the heart's cry of that 10-year-old daughter. What would your child put on a list of important events that you've missed because you're busy with other things? And maybe a more difficult question is "How important are those other things?"

Maybe you can't totally change your career so you can be with your family. But are there smaller changes you can make?

We hear it all the time, but it's so true: Our kids' childhood years go by very quickly. Let's do all we can to be there for them.

What was the 'wake-up call' for your fathering? Has your child ever done something similar? Please leave a comment about your experiences at below.

Action Points for Dads on the Journey

- Plan a block of time this weekend—at least an hour—to do whatever your child wants: reading a book, an outing for ice cream or coffee, listening to his or her music,

practicing a sport, etc.

- Ask your child, “Have there been events I’ve missed that meant a lot to you?”
- What’s the biggest barrier to you spending more time with your kids? Your work schedule? Your other interests and hobbies? Think creatively and come up with a win-win-win solution ... or make a difficult change for the sake of your relationship with your kids.

Carey Casey is the CEO of the National Center for Fathering, a nonprofit organization seeking to improve the lives of children and establish a positive fathering and family legacy that will impact future generations by inspiring and equipping fathers and father figures to be actively engaged in the life of every child.

For the original article, visit .

Why You Need to Man Up and Show Her Some Affection

It’s not uncommon to find couples that are dating to be holding hands, hugging or even just being close.

I can remember many times walking down the mall walkway and seeing young couples all over each other, or even being out at dinner with my wife and seeing couples that are just having a little too much fun. We’ve all seen those couples.

What I failed to recognize as I looked at these couples was my relationship with my wife. At that point, we had been married for about four years and we just didn’t act that way anymore. The chase was over. The mystery was fading and I figured our

relationship was fine with or without me trying to hold her hand or put my arm around her.

It was true that some of the mystery was gone, but it was wrong of me to think that our relationship didn't need some kind of affection anymore. Hear me out.

Practical Experiences

Think back with me for a few moments to when you were dating your wife. How often would you hold her hand while driving? How often would you move closer to her when you were at the movie theater? How often would you put your arm around her when sitting next to each other? I can honestly say I did all of these things while I was dating my wife. What about you?

But what about more recently?

As I mentioned above, it was about four years into our marriage that I stopped doing many of these affectionate things to my wife. Our marriage was already crumbling, so why would I want to do something nice for her? Why would I want to hold her hand if she didn't do certain things for me? Why would I want to pull her in close?

I was looking at love in all the wrong ways. I was looking at myself and my needs rather than her and her needs. I decided to make some changes and here are a few reasons why:

1. She's waiting for you to make a move. I've learned from my wife that there is no limit on how much affection I can show her. In a sense, her cup is always going dry and needs filling up. Even after a few years of marriage, even if there has been some turmoil in the marriage, she still wants you to make a move. So make it!

2. Your hand is better in her hand than in your lap. When I realized her need for affection, I started to pay attention to it a lot more. A quick example is when we're driving in the

car together. There were many times when I would think about holding her hand or resting my hand on her leg, but I wouldn't make the move. I've come to learn that my hand does much better in hers than just sitting on my own lap.

3. You may not have another chance. Just like I mentioned the issues of "time and routine" in a recent post, I'll bring up the point again here. Time can play funny games with us and make us think that we have plenty of it. But if we look at time in a more mature way, we'll come to realize that it's short and it's not always guaranteed. You may not have another chance to make the move and hold her hand or put your arm around her. So as I said, make your move.

What's Holding You Back?

It's a simple, yet necessary question to ask after stating some obvious points in the paragraphs above. What's holding you back? What's keeping you from "making moves" on your wife again? What's halting your desire to show affection again?

I once had a long discussion with a couple that was experiencing this kind of issue. They had been married for 15-plus years and the relationship was bruised and battered at this point. But in all of that, the wife's request always stuck out to me. All she wanted was for him to show affection to her in public. She wanted him to embrace her around friends, to hold her hand when they walked into a crowded area or just put his arm around her when other friends were nearby. It might sound strange, but it was her cry and call for affection. It was the type of love that she needed from him, and he wouldn't do it. He just couldn't understand why he would need to do that type of action for her. We didn't accomplish a lot that night.

But now that you understand that mindset and idea, here are a few ideas I've come up with on what might be holding you back. Consider each point carefully and see if they are the things

impacting your marriage.

- **Your peers around you.** I believe there is some confusion when it comes to what is manly these days. It doesn't consist of what you look like or how well you are dressed. Instead, I feel there is great manliness expressed in how well a man treats his woman. When men are around other men, it can be hard to embrace your wife in an affectionate way and still feel like a man. I think that's a lie our culture feeds us these days. I like to believe that embracing my wife around my friends is one of the strongest moves I can make in front of them. Don't be intimidated, but rather set that standard. Show off to everyone that you're proud of your wife and that no matter where you are, she deserves to be treated well.
- **Your selfishness.** It will blind your affectionate actions to your wife instantly. As soon as you feel the push to embrace her, you'll automatically think about your needs and at what level she is meeting them. If you can assess quickly and find her to be up to par, then you might make a move. But if you find it to be the other way around, you clam up in selfishness and pull back on any type of move. Instead, try to behave in a way that once you make a move, you open the door for her to have a desire to make a similar move for you later. Set the standard men; don't wait for it.
- **Your fear.** There were many times I held back just out of useless fear. I'd know what she would want, but I wouldn't do it. What if she didn't like it? What if she pushed away from me? What if I do it this time and she expects it again? Right? I think I hit the nail on the head with that last one. Fear will keep you from showing affection that first time, but embracing or pushing past that fear will yield returned rewards that will make you *want* to do it again. Make a move and discover it for yourself!

Simple Ways to Take Action

With all of that said, or if you just scrolled down to this last section, my encouragement to you is to man up and show her some affection. Here are only a few examples for you to consider. Add some of your examples in the comments:

- The next time you go for a drive together, go for it and hold her hand.
- The next time you are at the movies or church, go for it and put your arm around her (pull her close).
- The next time you are in a crowded area, keep her close as you guide and protect her.
- The next time you are having a dispute, grab her hand and ask her to pray with you.

Now it's your turn. What are some simple ways that you show affection to your spouse?

Manturity is a blog built on establishing spiritual maturity in today's man. The goal is to assist men in building better marriages and help them grow in maturity and explore different aspects of manhood. features new weekly blog posts, daily social-media updates and a powerful resources page. Stay up to date with the Manturity blog communities on Facebook and Twitter.

For the original article, visit .

How to Talk to Teens Who Don't Care About School

When your high-school junior or senior is on the verge of dropping out, what can you do?

David and his wife are struggling with their 17-year-old daughter. Her attitude is, "I don't care about school." She'd rather be hanging out with her friends.

Well, Dad, before exploding, I urge parents to look hard at the reasons behind the behavior. Maybe the child is over committed; maybe she's depressed or has a learning disorder. It could be some family situation that's distracting her—or a boyfriend. It could be substance abuse.

With David's daughter, it was a lack of interest. He decided to take away some of her privileges until she shows herself responsible enough to earn them back.

From there, a father has several options. One approach is to take responsibility for his child's education upon himself. That means checking with the school every day, calling teachers, driving her to and fro and sticking to his guns until she graduates. That's high-maintenance for you, dad, but it may be the only way for her to get that diploma.

Or, you can put it completely on her shoulders, and introduce her to the real world.

Say something like this: "I love you, honey, and I want to provide for you. And I can provide for you because I do at least an average job at work. But since you're not doing at least an average job at school, it might be time for you to make your own way in the world. Or if you want to live here, you can get a job, pay room and board, and pay for your telephone, transportation and cable TV."

Often, this shot of reality will motivate a child to apply herself at school. If it doesn't, then you need to set that deadline for her to start paying her own way.

Whatever approach you take, dad, make sure you sit down with your teenager and talk. Talk about her needs and goals and your expectations. If you can, help her see into the

future—even just a year or two—and she may realize that sticking it out will give her more options later on.

And stay calm, dad. Remember that your job is to be helpful and love her through this—without being mean-spirited or imposing guilt.

For the original article, visit .

What 2 Months of Eating a Sugar-Laden Diet Did to 1 Man

Just like Morgan Spurlock, who ate only McDonald's food for one month in the movie *Super Size Me*, an Australian man has decided to eat sugar-laden foods for 60 days, just to know how his body will react to the ingredients.

As reported in , in the upcoming *That Sugar Film*, Damon Gameau, a renowned TV actor and filmmaker, is set to strictly stick to a diet of low-fat but sugar-laden food.

In a period of three weeks, Gameau, who usually looks healthy, became moody and appeared sluggish. He was shocked when his doctor carried out tests and reported that he was beginning to develop fatty liver disease. Mayo clinic says that in advanced stages, fatty liver leads to liver failure.

Gameau said during the time, he never consumed chocolate, confectionery, soft drinks or ice cream. He added that all the sugars he was consuming were also found in perceived healthy foods that most parents give their children, including sports drinks, low fat yoghurts, cereals and muesli bars.

It is reported that Gameau took 40 teaspoons of sugar daily,

which slightly exceeds the quantity taken by an ordinary teenager, according to . The American Heart Association (AHA) reports that an ordinary American consumes 20 teaspoons of sugar each day.

According to the AHA, per day healthy woman should take at most 6 teaspoons of sugar while a healthy man should take a maximum of 9.

In *That Sugar Film*, Gameau noted that the additive had some impact on his mental and physical health. According to doctors, he experienced unstable mental functioning and put on almost 4 inches of unhealthy fat around his waist. He was quickly becoming obese.

According to Gameau, the sugar-laden diet gave him insatiable appetite.

Gameau's final meal comprised of snacks such as juice and jam sandwich, common foods in an ordinary school kid's lunchbox.

Commenting on his blog documenting of the experiment, Gameau said that it was quite easy to do and could well fit into a small plastic container.

The last meal resembled the one parents usually give their children due to negligence. They may not be acting out of negligence if relying on food processors' adverts, which normally give the wrong message.

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For the original article, visit .