

10 Common Mistakes Men Make in Life

This is a list written for men, by men. This isn't criticism so much as it is confession. We've all been there, and we all need to learn. Here are 10 of the biggest mistakes men make:

1. The belief that denial is an effective relationship tool. This comes in close to No. 1 on any list. If men pretend for long enough that a problem or a conflict does not exist, then we expect that the problem will automatically go away without further attention.

2. Thinking of ourselves first and others as an afterthought. It's not so much that men are selfish—more that we simply don't think. Guys tend to go with the first impulse that comes into their heads. Typically that's a self-serving impulse, but that's not why we do it; we do it because it's the first thing that came into our heads.

3. The tendency to believe that once we explain ourselves, women will automatically change their point of view. We honestly believe that our rationale is that compelling. Fact is, we might as well get a shovel, dig a deep hole in the ground and jump right on in—because that's typically the effect of a man trying too hard to justify his insensitivity.

4. Not really listening. Why listen when we know we're right? Why listen when we already know what our wife/girlfriend/child is going to say? Well, maybe we don't know; maybe we have something to learn; maybe listening will show some respect; maybe listening more carefully will save the relationship.

5. Not really paying attention. This is listening with our eyes and the rest of our senses. It would help to notice our wife's new haircut or to learn to read the subtext in the conversation or to turn off the game when the relationship

needs attention.

6. “I [chest thump, strut] don’t need any help.” The American spirit of individualism buoys this myth. We often believe that seeking help is incompatible with being a real man. This is a huge mistake.

7. Wanting to “fix” problems rather than understand them. Another huge mistake, and it frequently involves riding roughshod over basic communication—so we can hurry on with the “fix” and leave well enough alone. To paraphrase a well-known board game: “Do not talk, do not listen, go directly to the solution.”

8. “I can put this together without reading the directions.” This is an extension of “I don’t need any help.” What is it about the male psyche that gets stuck in the “I can do it myself” stage of child development? We were designed to live and work in cooperative community. “Plays well with others” may not be on our report card anymore, but learning how to draw strength from community remains a critical benchmark if we want to engage our full potential as men.

9. The irrational belief that hiding feelings and building a wall around emotions will make for a stronger, more attractive man. It actually turns out the opposite is true. Men who are comfortable with emotions and in touch with their feelings and who are willing to open up enjoy better relationships and more satisfying marriages.

10. Attempting to [chest thump, strut] impress other people by trying to do stuff that sends us to the hospital. Again, the opposite turns out to be true. Women are attracted to men who are alive, who demonstrate sound judgment and who act in ways that suggest a secure future.

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