

Effortless English

Emotionally Intelligent Husbands

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data: n. information, facts
newlywed: adj./n. people who were recently married; newly married
indicate: v. show
transformed: v. changed
emotionally intelligent: adj. good at handling emotions, good at talking about emotions
honors: v. respects
emotions: n. feelings
emote: v. show feelings

evolution: n. change over time, development
superior: adj. better
upbringing: n. how someone was raised (by parents)
moral fiber: n. goodness
convey: v. show, communicate
elementary: adj. simple, basic
priority: n. something that is important
revised: v./adj. changed, edited
map of his wife's world: detailed knowledge of wife's life
keeps in touch with: remembers
admiration: n. liking, respect
fondness: n. good feelings for
outstanding: adj. great

My data on newlywed couples indicate that more husbands are being transformed. About 35 percent of the men we've studied fall into the category of "emotionally intelligent husbands". Research from previous decades suggests the number used to be much lower. Because this type of husband honors and respects his wife, he will be open to learning more about emotions from her. He will come to understand her world and those of his children and friends. He may not emote in the same way that his wife does, but he will learn how to better connect with her emotionally. As he does so, he'll make choices that show he honors her. When he's watching the football game and she needs to talk, he'll turn off the TV and listen. He is choosing "us" over "me".

I believe the emotionally intelligent husband is the next step in social evolution. This doesn't mean that he is superior to other men in personality, upbringing, or moral fiber. He has simply figured out something very important about being married that the others haven't yet. And this is how to honor his wife and convey his respect to her. It is really that elementary.

The new husband is likely to make his career less of a priority than his family life because his definition of success has been revised. Unlike husbands before him, he makes a detailed map of his wife's world. He keeps in touch with his admiration and fondness for, and he communicates it by turning toward her in his daily actions.

This benefits not only his marriage but his children as well. Research shows that a husband who can accept influence from his wife also tends to be an outstanding father. He is familiar with his children's world and knows all about their friends and their fears. Because he is not afraid of emotions, he teaches his children to respect their own feelings-- and themselves. He turns off the football game for them, too, because he wants them to remember him as having had time for them.

leads: v. does, lives
troubled: adj. having a problem, upset
delighted: adj. very happy
mourn: v. feel sad for someone who is dead (or gone)

entitlement: n. power (given by society or government)
righteous indignation: n. feeling very angry and correct; angry because you think you are right
authoritarian: adj. bossy, controlling
withdraw into a lonely shell: idiom. stop communicating with other people
is his due: idiom. he is supposed to get, is his right
consequence: n. result

The new type of husband and father leads a meaningful and rich life. Having a happy family base makes it possible for him to create and work effectively. Because he is so connected to his wife, she will come to him not only when she is troubled but when she is delighted. When the city awakens to a beautiful fresh snowstorm, his children will come running for him to see it. The people who matter most to him will care about him when he lives and mourn him when he dies.

The other kind of husband and father is a very sad story. He responds to the loss of male entitlement with righteous indignation, or he feels like an innocent victim. He may become more authoritarian or withdraw into a lonely shell, protecting what little he has left. He does not give others very much honor and respect because he is engaged in a search for the honor and respect he thinks is his due. He will not accept his wife's influence because he fears any further loss of power. And because he will not accept influence he will not have very much influence. The consequence is that no one will much care about him when he lives nor mourn him when he dies.

Learn More:

Dr. Gottman's Relationship Institute
<http://www.gottman.com/>

Bill Ferguson's Relationship Mastery
<http://www.masteryoflife.com/>