

= Human Nature (Madonna song) =

" Human Nature " is a song recorded by American singer Madonna for her sixth studio album *Bedtime Stories* (1994) . It was written as an answer song to her critics , who had panned her provocative image of the previous two years and Madonna 's release of sexually explicit works . Written and produced by Madonna and Dave Hall , with additional writing from Shawn McKenzie , Kevin McKenzie and Milo Deering , " Human Nature " includes a looping sample from Main Source 's 1994 track " What You Need " . The track was released on June 6 , 1995 , by Maverick Records as the fourth and final single from *Bedtime Stories* .

Musically it is an R & B track where the sound of drums and the sample is heard looping throughout , with Madonna sarcastically asking rhetorical questions based on her real @-@ life actions over the last two years . The song received mostly positive reviews from music critics who have later noted its anthemic and empowering nature . " Human Nature " became a moderate hit in the United States , peaking at number 46 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 and at number two on the Hot Dance Club Play chart . In the United Kingdom , the single entered the chart and peaked at number eight and it also charted within the top ten in Italy .

The accompanying music video was directed by Jean @-@ Baptiste Mondino , and features Madonna and her dancers dressed in latex and leather , while executing highly choreographed dance routines . Inspired by S & M imagery , the video later influenced the work of singers Rihanna and Christina Aguilera . Madonna has performed " Human Nature " on three of her concert tours , most recently on her 2012 *The MDNA Tour* , where it was the subject of controversy when the singer exposed her nipples during a show in Istanbul .

= = Background and release = =

In 1992 , Madonna released the coffee table book *Sex* and her fifth studio album *Erotica* , both being of explicit sexual content . She also starred in the erotic thriller *Body of Evidence* the next year . Madonna promoted *Erotica* with *The Girlie Show World Tour* , which was met with protests and boycott threats due to its explicit content . In March 1994 , Madonna 's appearance on *Late Show* with David Letterman was highly criticized for her controversial behavior and usage of profanity . The release of her sexually explicit film , album and book , and the aggressive appearance on Letterman all made critics question Madonna as a sexual renegade . She faced strong negative publicity from critics and fans , who commented that " she had gone too far " and that her career was over .

Madonna wanted to tone down her explicit image . Her first attempt was to release the tender ballad " I 'll Remember " (1994) from the soundtrack of the film *With Honors* . Musically she wanted to move in a new musical direction and started exploring new @-@ jack R & B styles with a generally mainstream , radio @-@ friendly sound . She incorporated it in her sixth studio album , *Bedtime Stories* , released in October 1994 . Journalist Mary von Aue from *Vice* magazine noted that Madonna and her publicist Liz Rosenberg started promoting *Bedtime Stories* as an apology album with the promotional videos promising that there would be " no sexual references on the album " .

However , the singer was still seething about how the media had treated her unfairly over the last two years . When she started working with producer Dave Hall on the album , she wrote an answer song for the media . Titled " Human Nature " , it directly addressed the media and the press who had criticized her for dealing with taboo issues with her previous record and tried to punish her for that . " I 'm saying in the song that I 'm giving my back to them . I 'm not sorry " , Madonna explained . Described by *Billboard* as " Madonna taking on her critics more directly than ever with a logical , defiant attack on slut @-@ shaming " , the song was also about closing the book on the previous two years of her life . " Human Nature " eventually became the fourth and final single released from *Bedtime Stories* on June 6 , 1995 , by Maverick Records .

= = Recording and composition = =

" Human Nature " was written and produced by Madonna and Hall , with additional writing credits from Shawn McKenzie , Kevin McKenzie and Milo Deering . The song was recorded and mixed by Frederick Jorio and P. Dennis Mitchell with Robert Kiss working as an assistant engineer during the sessions and Joey Moskowitz doing the programming . Musically , " Human Nature " is a R & B song with a hip @-@ hop influenced beat . It also includes a looping sample from the song " What You Need " performed by hip @-@ hop group Main Source along with the sound of slamming doors . " Human Nature " begins in a trip hop style with the sound of bass and drums and Madonna whispering " express yourself , don 't repress yourself " . Throughout the song , the music continues looping around the same chord sequence and Madonna utters whispered phrases to counterpoint the actual lyrics . Her vocals utilized the 1990s soul style of music with a nasal , thin sound . The chorus ends with the line " I 'm not your bitch , Don 't hang your shit on me " which was often censored by the radio stations from airplay . Unlike the other tracks on the album , " Human Nature " does not employ the pentatonic melody and is devoid of the melancholy nature of Bedtime Stories , as observed by Jon Pareles of The New York Times . Composed in the time signature of common time , " Human Nature " has a key of C major while progressing in 88 beats per minute . Madonna 's " nasal " vocals range from F3 to E7 and the song follows a repetitive sequence of Fmaj7 ? E7 ? Am7 ? Fmaj7 ? E7 ? Am7 as its chord progression .

Rikky Rooksby , author of The Complete Guide to the Music of Madonna felt that the lyrics , along with being an answer @-@ song , could also be interpreted as a rebellious one , where Madonna looks back on a relationship where she was not allowed to speak her mind . The song 's lyrics contain sarcastic backing vocals with Madonna asking rhetorical questions based on her real @-@ life actions , such as " Did I say something wrong ? Oops , I didn 't know I couldn 't talk about sex . I must have been crazy , " as well as the line " What was I thinking ? " Madonna explained that the lyrics were about " about basically saying don 't put me in a box , don 't pin me down , don 't tell me what I can and can 't say . It 's about breaking out of the restraints . " With the Los Angeles Times she further clarified that there was a defensiveness with the lyrics for " Human Nature " :

It 's my definitive statement in regards to the incredible pay @-@ back I 've received for having the nerve to talk about the things that I did in the past few years with my Sex book and my record . It 's getting it off my chest . It is defensive , absolutely . But it 's also sarcastic , tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek . And I 'm not sorry . I do not apologize for any of it .

" Human Nature " also received nine official remixes clocking a total of 53 minutes and 26 seconds . Most of the remixes turned the R & B sounding song into a house one . The radio edit omitted the line " " I 'm not your bitch / Don 't hang your shit on me " but AllMusic 's Jose F. Promis felt that the removal made the version repetitive and made it " lack the punchline " . The " Runway Club Mix " is stripped down while the " I 'm Not Your Bitch Mix " replaced the verse and the chorus with whispered comments like " I have no regrets " , " I 'm not your bitch " , " Deal with it " and " I 'm HIV negative " which are added over a much deeper house groove . The hip hop mixes include one clean and one adult rated version . According to Promis , the " Love is the Nature Mix " was the best remix created , describing it as containing " swirling instruments " , which converted the song into a dance track .

= = Critical response = =

" Human Nature " received mostly positive reviews from music critics . Sal Cinquemani of Slant Magazine gave the song a positive review , stating that " for years , Madonna spoke in metaphors , fantasies and blatant shock tactics , but the performer indignantly struck back at her critics on ' Human Nature ' . She didn 't just hold up a mirror , she became the mirror " . Barbara O 'Dair from Rolling Stone also gave a positive review of the song , commenting that " Madonna does a drive @-@ by on her critics , complete with a keening synth line straight outta Dre " , adding that " Madonna 's message is still ' Express yourself , don 't repress yourself . ' This time , however , it comes not with a bang but a whisper " . Scott Kearnan of The Boston Globe included the track at number 11 on his list of " 30 Ultimate Madonna Singles " , stating that the line " Absolutely no

regrets " was a " Madonna mantra if ever there was one " .

Larry Flick from Billboard was also positive , and expected " radio to hungrily come to the table and dine on this wickedly catchy jeep / pop jam in which La M unapologetically snaps at her more close @-@ minded critics " . He complimented her vocals which were " playfully snide and aggressive , holding strong against a forceful hip @-@ hop groove and a host of ear @-@ pleasing funk guitar links and synth hoops " . Author Chris Wade wrote in his book , The Music of Madonna , that " Human Nature " lifted the sadness emanated from the first few tracks from the album . " There 's a great beat to this , a brilliant vocal where Madonna answers herself with whispers and an unforgettable chorus , " Wade added . Matthew Rettenmund wrote in his Encyclopedia Madonnica that " inspite of the chart performance " , the song has become a modern " self @-@ empowerment anthem " .

Charles Aaron from Spin described the song as " slinking through [Hall 's] low @-@ ridin ' , gum @-@ smackin ' groove , Maddy 's hard @-@ bitten ingenue expresses no regrets , but this time you feel for her . " Aaron highlighted the lyrics " Would it sound better if I were a man ? " as subversive and coy . Author Lucy O 'Brien described in her book , Madonna : Like an Icon , that " Human Nature " was one of the " quirkiest " tracks on Bedtime Stories , " throbbing with with a tightly restrained but devastating anger " . For Barry Walters from Moscow @-@ Pullman Daily News , the song had the catchiest chorus among all the other tracks from the album . Jim Farber from Entertainment Weekly gave the song a negative review , noting that Madonna 's " on far surer ground thrashing through such neurotic (if not uncommon) views of relationships than she is trashing the media . In striking back at her critics , Madonna simply sounds self @-@ righteous and smug . ' I didn 't know I couldn 't talk about sex , ' she sneers in ' Human Nature ' . ' Did I say something true ? ' Yes . But tooting your own horn about it just sounds petty " . Rooksby said that the repetition of the sample was " wearing " and it " did not suggest that the world of the singer was very appealing " .

= = Chart performance = =

" Human Nature " debuted at number 86 on the US Billboard Hot 100 , for the week ending June 24 , 1995 , with 7 @,@ 400 units sold . It reached its peak position three weeks later , at number 46 . " Human Nature " became Madonna 's second consecutive single not to enter the top 40 in the United States , following her previous single " Bedtime Story " , which had reached a peak of number 42 . Fred Bronson from Billboard reported that although the song had moved up the chart with a positive bullet point , the song being a risky choice for radio , it stalled progress and failed to become Madonna 's 33rd top 40 hit . " Human Nature " was a success on the dance chart , peaking at number two on Hot Dance Club Play . It also peaked at number 35 on Hot 100 Singles Sales , number 58 on Hot 100 Airplay , and number 57 on Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs . In Canada , " Human Nature " debuted at number 90 on the RPM Singles Chart on July 10 , 1995 . It reached a peak of number 64 on the chart and was present for a total of seven weeks only .

In the United Kingdom , " Human Nature " entered the chart at its peak position of number eight , but rapidly descended down the charts , being present for a total of six weeks only . According to the Official Charts Company , it has sold a total of 80 @,@ 685 copies as of August 2008 . In Australia , the single peaked within the top 20 , at number 17 , on the ARIA Charts . On the Irish Singles Chart the song peaked just outside the top 20 , at number 21 . It was not as successful in New Zealand , peaking at number 37 , making it Madonna 's poorest performing single to stay on the chart for a sole week . The song reached the top 20 in Finland and Switzerland , peaking at number 11 and number 17 respectively , while in Germany it reached a peak of number 50 .

= = Music video = =

= = = Development = = =

The accompanying music video for " Human Nature " was directed by Jean @-@ Baptiste Mondino , who had previously directed Madonna 's videos for " Open Your Heart " and " Justify My Love " . It was shot over two days , May 6 to 7 , 1995 at Raleigh Studios in Hollywood , California and was created under Palomar Productions ' Anita Wetterstedt . The video was choreographed by Jamie King , who later directed Madonna 's concert tours . " She wanted me to dance in her ' Human Nature ' video . I didn 't want to do it , but she begged " , he stated . King was one of the dancers in the S & M attires hanging down from a swinging trapeze in the video . Her dancer Luca Tommassini was the choreography assistant . Madonna 's main inspiration behind the video was the work of artist Eric Stanton who did S & M inspired drawings . The singer enlisted Mondino to direct the video and wanted to be about the fun aspects of Stanton 's work and more dance @-@ oriented than her previous videos from Bedtime Stories . For Mondino , the main problem was that he did not prefer too much dancing in the videos , because that resulted in extra editing .

I remember most of the video you had shot with the crane , some Steadicam , plus some panning . So you have about five different cameras shooting a performance , and after they edit like crazy . It gives you a lot of freedom , but I feel very frustrated because I like to see somebody dancing . I hate when there 's too much editing . I like the steadiness of the performance because then you can really enjoy the movement of the body . You see the skill .

So Mondino came up with the concept of boxes and had Madonna and the dancers perform choreography inside it . The director was satisfied since the small space of the boxes meant there was not much movement , and he could create the desired graphic S & M imagery and choreography . According to Dustin Robertson , editor of the video , Mondino and Madonna both had opposite work ethics . While Mondino was " cool and laid @-@ back " , Madonna was a " stickler for details " and the former had " a wonderful way of handling her , while she demanded a strong handler to pull out the best she 's got to give " .

= = = Release and reception = = =

The music video premiered on May 19 , 1995 , through MTV . It features Madonna , her dancers , and her chihuahua Chiquita in black leather and latex outfits . The S & M inspired outfits were to symbolize the " breaking out of the restraints " as the lyrics described . Her hair , which appears brown in the video was actually blonde at the time . She had leather strips painstakingly braided into her hair to blend with her dark roots . The frizzy afro she sports halfway through the video was actually a hairpiece . During the middle of the video , Madonna and her dancers appear in a series of boxes , trying to break free . Another sequence shows the singer being thrown around within a series of ropes managed by her dancers . As the video concludes there is a shot of Madonna sitting in a chair , looking straight into the camera as she says the line " Absolutely no regrets ! " . Then there is a brief shot of her standing next to the chair as she boxes into the air .

Rettenmund complimented the video saying " God Bless [Mondino] ... One of Madonna 's worst performing singles was nonetheless given one of her best videos ... Simply staged , it is equal parts funny and sexy ... If its possible for one video to sum up Madonna 's Madonna @-@ ness , ' Human Nature ' is that video " . Louis Virtel from The Backlot ranked the video at number 22 on a list for " Madonna 's 55 Best Videos " , and called it " tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek , pleather @-@ heavy " . He went on to say that " It 's rare that Madonna gets a chance to be both harsh and hilarious in a music video " , and in this one , " Madonna basically does whatever the hell she wants . Brandish a chihuahua ? Mock and celebrate kinkiness ? Sneer at the camera like a bored third @-@ grader ? She does it all , and even in black cornrows , she 's a vision of coolness and sexual superiority " . Carol Vernallis , writer of Experiencing Music Video : Aesthetics and Cultural Context noted that the concept of black outfit against a white background " works well , but the snare drum , which corresponds to nothing in the imagery , seems to float above the soundtrack " .

Roger Beebe , one of the authors of the book Medium Cool : Music Videos from Soundies to Cellphones noted that the video was an example of the viewer 's impulse being intensified regarding " what will happen next ? " by placing its primary performers against a stark background . In 2011 , singer Rihanna 's music video for the song " S & M " was compared to " Human Nature " ' s music

video with James Montgomery from MTV News saying that the video for " S & M " was not a new concept and was done in the video for " Human Nature " . Montgomery also noted that singer Christina Aguilera 's music video for 2010 single " Not Myself Tonight " was heavily inspired by that of " Human Nature " , including scenes portraying Aguilera in " leather get @-@ ups , her dominatrix attitude and the sultry chair @-@ related activities she engages in throughout " . The music video further inspired the dancing and the video of the song " Kambhaqt Ishq " , from the 2001 Bollywood film , Pyaar Tune Kya Kiya .

= = Live performances = =

Madonna has performed " Human Nature " three times on tour . During the 2001 Drowned World Tour , she performed the song while slow @-@ riding on a mechanical bull , which was considered by Rob Mancini from MTV News as " magical " . During the performance , the singer was dressed as a cowgirl . For John McAlley from Entertainment Weekly , Madonna " prompts the oddly natural sight of lap @-@ dancing a mechanical bull " . Similar review was shared by Alexis Petridis from The Guardian , who noted that the media had heavily reported on the tour making all the details available from much before the London show that he reviewed . Nevertheless , Madonna riding the bull and performing " Human Nature " was one of the " most startling moments " of the tour according to him . The performance of the song on August 26 , 2001 , at The Palace of Auburn Hills was recorded and released in the live video album , Drowned World Tour 2001 .

Madonna performed the song again on her 2008 ? 09 Sticky & Sweet Tour , while playing an electric guitar and adding vocoder voice effects on the background harmonies . The singer was dressed in a black leotard and fishnet tights . She also wore a white hat and black leather boots . During the performance a video backdrop portrayed American singer Britney Spears trapped in an elevator and trying to get out , while kicking the walls . At the end of the performance , the doors opened to reveal Spears saying the phrase " It 's Britney , bitch " , from her song " Gimme More " (2007) . Madonna explained that she intended the video to stand as an analogy of Spears ' career , saying " Didn 't that explain what I thought ? ' I 'm not your bitch , don 't hang your shit on me " . On November 6 , 2008 in the Los Angeles show at Dodger Stadium , Spears joined Madonna onstage halfway through the performance . Aidin Vaziri from Gibson.com was positive in his review , saying that the best moment of the tour was when Madonna picked up her black Les Paul guitar and emulated musician Slash while performing the song . Paul Schrodtt from Slant Magazine was negative in his review of the performance , saying that by the time the performance of " Human Nature " had started , " it 's the same as all her shows : A remixed mind @-@ fuck " . The performance was included on the Sticky & Sweet Tour live CD and DVD release , recorded during Madonna 's four shows in Buenos Aires , Argentina , in December 2008 .

In 2012 , Madonna performed the song on The MDNA Tour as part of the third segment of the show . She performed the song while her dancers moved mirrors around her , as she removed articles of clothing . At her concert in Istanbul on June 7 , 2012 , Madonna briefly exposed her right breast to the audience , before covering it up again . This prompted criticism about her age , with Sophie Wilkinson from Heat World asking , " at 54 , is she too old to be getting a boob out ? " The striptease towards the end of the song continued in other cities where the tour visited , and most of the times the singer had messages written across her back talking about social issues . Amy Odell from The Huffington Post said that criticizing the gesture based on her age sends " a very archaic message " , adding that " Women who are 53 still have breasts and ... sex drives ! " . The performance of the song at the November 19 ? 20 , 2012 , shows in Miami , at the American Airlines Arena were recorded and released in Madonna 's fourth live album , MDNA World Tour . In April 2015 , Madonna performed " Human Nature " along with her 2005 song " Hung Up " as a medley at the Coachella Festival during Drake 's act , sporting thigh @-@ high boots and a tank top that read " Big as Madonna " . She then went on to kiss Drake ; the activity went viral on the Internet due to Drake 's reaction to the kiss .

= = Track listings and formats = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

Credits and personnel adapted from Bedtime Stories album liner notes .

= = Charts = =