



From the
Dollhouse
to the
Doghhouse

By Elroy Byam

**Dollhouses & Action
Figures: A Difference
in Mindsets**

There's one thing that I believe everyone can agree on when it comes to relationships – men and women think differently. I know that I for one am a male, so at times some of my joys and pleasures may not be the same as a female's. One of my female friends once said, "I don't understand that brain of his. Its like he never wants to do anything with me." Ladies, have you ever considered what you want some of your

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men to do? And men, just because our favorite game is on doesn't mean that your lady is absolutely dying to watch it with you. We often feel that just because our significant other doesn't think the way we do, something is innately wrong with them. If we find it easy to wake up, they should as well. We exercise a certain amount of days per week, and they need to do the same. Have we ever considered why some men are the way they are and why some women act the way they do? Instead of criticizing every time there's a difference in opinion, empathize. Seeing the world through their eyes may give you a better perspective into the life we believe should be in congruence with our own.

When we're little kids, we have constant desires for toys. We'll play with them, have our fix, and then eventually put them down after a commercial introduces the next best thing. In most cases, commercials that appeal to boys are ones of action, hence the indulgence of action-figure marketing. I definitely fell victim to TV advertisements of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Power Ranger collector sets. It was always the moment within the commercial that captured me – the tense atmosphere of the hero about to face their adversary.

Girls are marketed to a little differently. In my day, they had commercials like My Little

Pony, Polly Pocket, and most important of all, the Dollhouse. Now dollhouses come in all shapes and sizes and allow girls to fantasize about taking care of their own home. They get to maneuver a mommy and daddy (and a baby in some cases) through different areas of the home, gaining an idealistic view of what taking care of a home should be like from a womanly standpoint. These toys allow girls to see life as a whole, and think about their future as a grown woman with responsibilities.

Now let's compare the two types of toys. The dollhouse is a symbol of completion, success, and unity. It allows females to believe that they too can obtain the perfect family and maintain the perfect home. That the man should always be there for his

woman is another ideal the dollhouse brings to light. Girls carry this all the way to womanhood. On a different scale, the action figure represents the moment – nothing matters before or after the event, and the interest is directed towards a situation of action and adventure. This is why men enjoy living in the moment, while women see the bigger picture. Ladies, please understand that this is how men were trained, but not necessarily the way they should think.

From the Dollhouse to the Doghouse

Whenever a woman gets what she considers to be a good man, he becomes a certified member of their "dollhouse." He fits into the woman's ideal of what her life should be like, and meets the criteria of most of her closest friends. He seems to have it all together, and treats her well enough to induce a smile on her face and in her heart. As they continue to grow in their relationship, she expects the man to have a dollhouse mindset as well – to see the relationship in its entirety, to be futuristic, to know the date of the wedding and the middle name of their second child. What they fail to realize is that most men (hopefully all men) have never played with dollhouses in their childhood. They were action-figure guys, living in the spur of the moment or whatever time the relationship appealed to them. This mindset may explain why most women are ready to commit to a serious relationship before men are. Now whenever the man acts up and doesn't see eye-to-eye with the woman, he gets plucked out of the dollhouse and shoved into the doghouse. It's the doghouse where men are put for messing up and not keeping up with the requirements. In some cases, men can be there for something as small as showing a lack of appreciation or affection, and in other cases for something as large as cheating and infidelity.

Why is it that a good man must fight really hard to stay on the dollhouse side of the spectrum? Is a good man really hard to find nowadays? Of the nearly 93 million unmarried people in the US, women make up a little more than 53 percent (according to the 2008 US Census Bureau's Current Population Survey), and since 2005, the unmarried household has become the majority of all US households. I think about these staggering statistics and ask myself, Why? Has marriage become both like a hard-earned degree and commercialized decree? What can a man do to change the negative connotation he has brought on himself over the past few decades? I think part of the problem lies with men being afraid to put their "action-figures" down for a bit and truly tend to the women's needs on a larger scale, not just for the moment. Part of the man's issue is PRIDE, which I like to believe is an acronym for a Personal Resistance to Include a Different Effect.

Women, for those of you who are blessed to have a man in your lives, realize that he is indeed a man. He's not going to want to shop fervently, watch a Desperate Housewives marathon, or have "pillow talk" sessions for hours about one subject. Invite him to the dollhouse, but know that he doesn't live there – at least not for the moment. Men, please remember that women are not action-figures. Don't attempt to "pick them up", "force them into a fight" or try to "collect them all." Know that she is indeed a woman, and what she brings to the table is just as special and unique as what you bring. By understanding each other's mindsets, we can establish the ultimate Venn diagram of a relationship – a man's desires, a woman's desires, and what both desire together. e

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