

Man Talk: Think like a man?

Written by Timothy Houston
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The topic of thinking like a man was first presented in a book by Steve Harvey and more recently in a movie titled with the same name. On Saturday, May 18th at the Hotel Ivy in downtown Minneapolis, Dr. Karen Flynn, assistant professor in the Department of Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Illinois presented the keynote message questioning the topic of thinking like a man. I was asked by LnL Consulting to be on the panel for the discussion that followed the presentation, and I was excited to be a part of the powerful discussion.

In preparation for this event, I asked myself the question, what does it mean for a woman to think like a man? What are the benefits? What are the outcomes and consequences? After my own quiet contemplation, I came to the conclusion that a woman thinking like a man is not always a good thing. Although I saw the movie and enjoyed it, I left feeling that a woman putting the concept of thinking like a man into practice in real life would be more difficult. Here are my top three why I question the concept.

First, in order for the concept of thinking like a man to be beneficial to a woman, the man's thoughts must remain static. If not, the woman will be constantly adjusting to his changes. This in time will cause her to second guess herself in her ability to think like a man. In the movie, once the men realized that the women had inside information to how they thought, they simply changed their behavior. For example, the character that was the mama's boy changed his mother's name in his phone to display "work" so it appeared that he was getting more calls from work and less calls from his mom. The other men in the movie made similar surface changes, but inwardly they were all still the same. Because these men's thoughts and behaviors were never consistent, the women were never able to truly distinguish truth from fiction. This is true for real life as well. A woman will never be able to baseline a man's thoughts. Because a man's thoughts are not stagnant, they will always adapt and evolve depending on the situation.

"For as he thinks in his heart so is he. (Proverb 23:7 NKJV) Secondly, to think like a man means on some level the woman will have to behave like one. You cannot truly act like a lady while thinking like a man. As she thinks more and more like a man, she will behave less and less like a woman. She will be limited to imitating the thoughts of a man without a clear understanding of where they come from. Because of this, the woman may on some level try to be the better man. A man's thinking is a byproduct of the condition of his heart, and what he thinks in his heart is what he will become. If a woman thinks like a man while remaining a lady in her heart, she will be at conflict within herself. This conflict will work against the very relationship that she was trying to improve.

Finally, the concept of a woman thinking like a man will limit the relationship to the intellectual level. This will cause the relationship to appear more like a chess match where the man and woman will try to out maneuver each other. Real relationships require the man and woman to

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be their authentic true selves with no games or pretences. The movie did a good job of bringing this out in the end. All the characters in the movie came to the realization that only open honest communication can bring about a healthy relationship. Healthy relationships will never be based on how a man thinks, but who he truly is. And who he is a based on the condition of his heart. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

Timothy Houston is an author, minister, and motivational speaker who is committed to guiding positive life changes in families and communities. For questions, comments or more information, go to www.tlhouston.com.