

Confessions of . . . A Sensitive Guy

From cave man to *The Second Sex*...
...the Sensitive Guy has progressed

by Nairne Holts
reprinted from the *Dalhousie Gazette*
Canadian University Press

Times are changing. And sensitive guys say they're right for the times.

One of the newest animals to prowl the 80s social landscape is the Sensitive Guy, those men who aren't too stiff to cry or too shy to tell everyone about it. One such tamed beast is Stefan S. (not his real pseudonym), whom we found at a local cafe in the act of detailing his shortcomings to a young woman.

We managed to distract his attention long enough to obtain the following interview:

What exactly are sensitive guys and how did they come about?

Well, I don't normally like to speak for a group because that's a very male-identified trait, but I will anyway. The way I see it, times are changing, and sensitive guys are those men who see the need to change or be... left behind. For me it started when this woman I was dating sort of turned into a feminist.

That made you more responsive to women's needs?

Absolutely. I found she wasn't paying attention to me when I talked about my job, my university courses, or even the little bald spot on the top of my head that's thinning really fast — see? (he leans over). So, all of a sudden we had nothing to talk about after coming back from dates. I thought our relationship was over until I decided to read some of those books she'd been reading.

And that made you more responsive to women's needs?

Oh, absolutely. After reading the books, I

could see exactly what feminists didn't like about men. So I went to my girlfriend at the time and said, "Look, I'm dominating, insensitive, patriarchal and on average I can earn much more than an equally qualified woman. Let's talk about it." She did, and we had something to relate to again. Our relationship was allowed to run its course on an even keel. It worked with other women I went out with, too.

"Whenever women have a need, I try to respond with one of my own."

You're not very responsive to women's needs are you?

I think I am. Whenever women have a need, I try to respond with one of my own. That way we're more equal.

Are you saying you haven't learned anything about yourself by being a sensitive guy?

That's not what I'm saying at all. Since I've been a sensitive guy, I've gotten more in touch with my feelings. I can appreciate beauty in the world around me, I have a less goal-oriented approach to my career, and I've learned to cry since the manual arrived. I'm not like other men anymore.

How so?

Well, I've progressed beyond the he-man approach to life where aggression is something to be rewarded and you put a tough exterior before the world. I'm not interested in impressing anyone by my physical prowess or by acting like a cave-man.

"Look, I'm dominating, insensitive, patriarchal, and on the average I earn more than an equally qualified woman. Let's talk about it."



You've made a conscious decision to reject these unhealthy attitudes, then?

They never really worked for me, anyway.

Hmmm. Maybe you could offer some insights into your lifestyle — with a few tips for the aspiring sensitive guy.

Sure, I do have some ideas for other men. I guess the first thing I'd mention is the importance of the correct friends to a sensitive lifestyle. Having a gay friend is very important.

You mean friends.

No, that's friend in the singular. You see, it's important to maintain contact with an oppressed male group, and prove how open-minded you are. One gay friend does just fine for that. If you have too many gay friends, a sensitive guy might give off the wrong... messages to women. Lesbians are another matter, though. When you can tell your date, "as I was talking to Sarah yesterday — she's lesbian, and I'm the last man she's close friends with — "...then you're in the sensitive gay club for life. Of course, actually being gay is going a bit overboard — for me anyway.

Have you modified your sexual life any to accommodate this?

You bet. The cave-man approach is dead for sensitive guys. One good alternate way to work things is to say, "You really look tense, how about a nice foot massage?" That can lead just anywhere...

What about the act itself? How is that changed?

Well, the tyranny of man-on-top, woman-on-bottom sex is definitely over, let me tell you. It's important to let your girlfriend know how strongly you feel your sexual habits should be balanced, with her in command some of the time, and you on top at times also. If you work it just right, when you're kinda tired or bored you can let her take charge. That way, when you're in the mood, you can get on top and it'll be your turn.

That's as far as your changes go?

Oh, not by a long shot. One thing I've found is that there's nothing women hate more than men just rolling over and going to sleep after sex. That's really... insensitive. So after I've just made love, I always make sure to spend the time afterwards in gentle touching

Student Ombudsman Service

NEED HELP?
Consult the Ombudsman . . .

- If you require information or assistance in appealing a grade, an academic decision, or an admission decision, etc.
- If you feel that you have been unfairly or inequitably treated by a University or Students' Union employee.
- If you consider yourself the victim of discrimination or unfair treatment based on race, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, sex, mental or physical disability or political ideology.
- If you are unsure about which University policies, procedures or regulations apply to your situation.
- If you want advice on any other University related matter.

ROOM 272, SUB
432-4689 (24 hrs.)

Paul Alpern
Office hours
M.W.F. 9-10
T.R. 10-2

J. Shah Pemberton
Office hours
M.T.F. 1-2:30
W. 5-6
R.12-1:30

If you are unable to meet during these hours
leave a message to set-up a convenient time.

"The tyranny of man-on-top, woman-on-bottom sex is over"

You certainly have some... unique political beliefs.

I've been told that. Something like that, anyway.

Besides who you're seen with, are there other lifestyle changes a novice sensitive guy should make?

Well, your position on sports is another choice that says a lot about a man's sensitivity.

How so?

There are sensitive sports and he-man sports. Sensitive sports aren't limited to big-muscled men competing. They're open to both men and women; sports like jogging, swimming, cycling and so on are ideal sensitive guy sports. It's a good idea to talk about how good it is, too — especially to women who can appreciate your progressiveness. After you finish that pool length, casually state, "You know, I really enjoy swimming because of it's non-competitive nature," or "Well! Sports where you don't have to be violent are so much better!"

What exactly led you to this critique of traditionally masculine sports? Was it recent socio-psychological research on the effects of aggression in sports?

Yeah — uh absolutely. That, and the fact that I never was any good at them anyway. I must've seen what trivial, useless sports they were even before I was sensitized.

I see... If you don't mind us saying this, most of your responses seem geared towards

meeting women — feminist women anyway, and caressing.

Now that sounds like a positive change. Absolutely. I figured out that it takes the same amount of time to fall asleep whether you roll over or do this caressing business. So it's not like it's an effort or anything. Sometimes your lover even gets aroused again, so it's just good sense to do it.

But what about the woman's pleasure?

Ohhh. You mean the clitoris thing.

Uh, something like that, yes.

See, that's another area where the whole equality issue comes up with sensitive guys. When your lover raises that question, you had better be prepared to deal with it. That's even if you find the area down there personally distasteful. Where equality comes in is that it often... obliges women to do something in return, something they might not ordinarily do. It all balances out.

That's sick.

Hey, you asked for honest answers. My name isn't going to show up anywhere in this, is it...

Feeling a bit nauseous, at this point the interviewers ended their chat, leaving Stefan S. to read Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*, over a cooling cup of herbal tea.

As they left, a familiar faint voice could be heard from the cafe even over the noise of the street: "Hey would you like to talk about pornography from a male perspective? I have some feelings I'd like to share with the right person..."