

Mark bonds with fellow males and, well, he's pretty happy about it

by Mark Owens

I know last week I promised an in-depth expose on the 1-900 telephone industry, but after "covertly borrowing" my roommate's "calling card" from a locked room (hinges, dude, hinges), my one and only experience with the 900 lines has convinced me that I should write on another topic, which I'll think up as I go along.

Originally, I had tried to call a guru in Florida. The ad said The Great and All-Powerful Swami Ralph would predict my future, protect my spirit, restore lost karma, and give me a good deal on Auri car finish.

Instead of dialing 1-900-I-MENTAL, I dialed 1-900-66METAL and found myself listening to a message from Judas Priest. The recording itself wasn't bad -- it was the subliminal message that got to me. I soon found myself ordering \$200 worth of Didi-7 completely against my will.

So that's where I found myself the other night; sitting in my living room with two of my roommates. Surrounded by piles of Didi-7. Eating Captain Crunch. In our underwear. Male bonding at its best -- which, by

the way, is what this week's column is on (I knew I'd find a topic sooner or later).

Male bonding is one of those strange, unexplainable things that ranks right up with why bees fly, why birds sing and why people still think the Cubs *might* win a World Series. Men bond over some of the strangest things too, like televised sports.

Scads of scientists wearing lab coats and carrying clipboards have made an astonishing discovery: Men will watch *any* sporting event on television, regardless of what it is. Take bass fishing for example. I don't like fish. Not even as pets. The closest I'd ever come to having a pet fish is dropping a Mrs. Paul's fishstick in a glass of water.

But if I'm hanging out with the guys, I'll watch shows like "Bassmasters on the Attack," "Baiting the Boise Bass," and "Attack of the Cannibal Bass from Pittsburgh" for hours on end. There's nothing more frightening than watching grown men giving each other high-fives after an overweight man named Clyde has landed a flopping, smelly thing. *Yikes.*

Another site for male bonding is car repair. I should know, since my car is entering the first stages

of Car Leprosy. I have bonded with a great many guys, all of whom haven't been able to do



much with my Nissan station wagon -- a vehicle which was probably designed after several engineers mistook grain alcohol for water.

Anyway, car repair is an incredible medium for male bonding, including the ceremonial Circling of the Car (where men walk around the car

The Missing Pieces

and attempt to divine the vehicle's illness), the ritual Opening of the Hood (where men spend 10 minutes attempting to open the hood and finally have to ask a passing 12-year-old for help), and the sacred Smashing of the Fingers (where one of the guys accidentally drops a large heavy object, such as the car itself, on your fingers).

Once past the ceremonial aspect of opening the hood and damaging body parts, most men will stand around the car, drink beer, and talk about baseball -- none of which does anything to fix the car, but we all feel manly. Eventually the owner of the car will take it to a mechanic, who will make worldly noises and seek to bond with his wallet.

In general, males prefer to bond without female interference. Take, for example, the problems female sports reporters have going into the men's locker rooms after a game. Some people feel the athletes want women out of the locker rooms because they need the time to relax. Some people feel the athletes don't want outsiders to witness fights or squabbles among the team because it's a "family" affair.

The real reason athletes don't want women reporters in the

locker room is men are shy about women witnessing locker room bonding, which involves blindfolding one of their buddies with a jock strap and throwing him in the shower, which happens to be filled with platypuses (platypusi?) and Mallo-whip.

Besides the embarrassment factor, I'm not really aware of a lot of male reporters hanging out inside women's locker rooms. I imagine such a conversation might go like this:

Male Reporter: Excuse me, Ms. Baxter. About your 6-4-6 win over-

Female Athlete: AAAYEEEEEE!

(*sound of Male Reporter being pounded repeatedly with a locker.*)

Nonetheless, aside from sports, women are the biggest catalyst of male bonding.

I'll be the first to admit it doesn't sound good that men sit around. I can't count how many times myself and a bunch of the guys have sat around and complained about the opposite sex. Most of the time we just look at each other and say: "Women; you can't live with them and you can't shoot them."

Louanne comments on codependency, healthy love and love addiction

Ask Louanne

The Collegian Advice Column
Dr. Louanne Barton
Personal Counselor

Thanks for your response to last week's letter regarding support groups for students exploring same sex attraction. If there are others who are interested please call me. Your call will be handled confidentially. Perhaps we can start a group here on the Behrend campus.

Today's letter I shared with another student who asked if he would write a response. I thought it was a good one so I'm sharing it with you.

Louanne,

My girlfriend is driving me up a wall. I can't eat, sleep or concentrate. She's burning me out with worry. She has manipulating parents who expect obedience and demand total control of her life.

She doesn't know how to tune them out and has taken to alcohol to bury her problem.

I've talked, yelled, pleaded till I'm a nervous wreck. Help me. Please.

Signed,
Nervous Wreck

Dear Nervous,

Yes, you need help, not for your friend but for yourself. There is nothing you can do for her. But you have a problem called co-dependency. It is the inability to let people live their own life. You are trying to control something that you apparently have no control over. In doing this you are turning yourself into the guilty party. Stop feeling guilty. When your friend sees what's happening for herself, she'll change. Until then, if you can't live with it then I suggest you ease out of the relationship for your own piece of mind. sometimes this will let the other person have breathing room with no pressure.

Your leaving might be the key to her own self analysis.

Signed,
A fellow student who's been there

I'd like to comment on that word "codependency." It's a term we hear alot about lately. Following are some notes Beattie's book titled, Codependent No More: How to Stop Controlling Others and Start Caring For Yourself:

Healthy Love Means:

Room to grow
Separate interests
other friends
trust, openness
personal integrity
willingness to be yourself
ability to enjoy being alone
ability to accept a break up
Without loss of self worth

Love addiction means:

Dependency, insecurity
intense need, infatuation
total involvement
limited social life and interests
preoccupation with partner
dependent on partner's approval
jealousy

sacrificing one's own needs
unable to endure separation or conflict
breakup brings loss of appetite, depression, agony, hatred,
loss of self worth,

The addictive lover may even turn to alcohol, drugs, or a new lover.

If others of you feel this shoe fits, let me know. I am presently meeting with a few students who are working on developing more healthy relationships. Call the personal counseling office at 898-6164 for more information.

Signed,
Louanne