

## Perspectives on Why Men Refuse To Commit

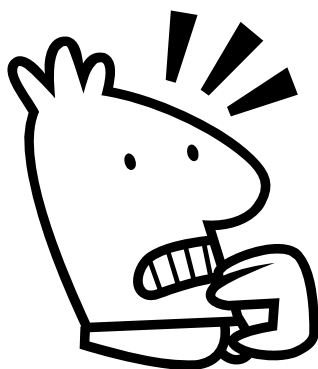
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Compiled from own personal counseling experience plus references from :  
**Why Men Won't Commit** : by George Weinberg Ph.D. , Atria Books , 2002

Men frequently have difficulty committing to relationships, or staying in a lasting relationship -such as marriage - for a number of personal reasons. The most common ones are :

(1) **The "Peter Pan Syndrome"** : this is the little boy , the perpetual teenager, that does not want to grow up. Behind it are typically three issues :

> **An Aversion to Responsibility.** Even though he may hold down a very responsible position, have a successful career, there may very well be aspects about family that frightens him. The burden of being responsible for a wife and kids is too great to face. This fear may be so intense, that while it is not evident on the outside, inside he may have abnormal anxiety , verging on feelings of panic.



> **A Fear Of Growing Old.** Growing up means growing old and this means loss of male youthfulness, virility, good looks , and deterioration of general health. It may also mean to him that he has to get serious, settle down and take on responsibilities ( ergo : see above ).

> **Trying to Recoup A Lost Childhood.** Because of family tragedy, divorce, or even abuse, some children never had a childhood. They may have been forced to go out to work early in their teen years; they may have had to assume parental roles too early in life. Whatever the circumstance, once they got to an age of independence and developed sufficient income to be financially independent, they made a vow to live the life they missed. (see Independence Issue on page 3)

(2) **They No Longer "Love You "** : Too many people - including women - confuse infatuation, sexual chemistry, and biological drive as being "love". When the passion and the thrill lessen, they assume that the "love" is gone. True, there is a special "bond" and a feeling of "connecting" that two lovers need to have if they are to feel "in love", but the intensity of that is going vary over time.

Men, being highly sexually sensitive to visual stimulation, are especially poor at separating love, sexual infatuation, and commitment. Many men want their mates to always be attractive and sexually stimulating ; or they lose interest. Yes, this is shallow, but it is the male "trophy" mentality and was essential to the evolutionary survival of the species. Collectively, social psychologists, claim that we have a "bias for beauty".

We assume - and attribute - extremely positive traits and trustworthiness on to "beautiful people" . Ergo , consider the fascination and adoration given to the so-called "beautiful people", especially those in the news (Lady Diana, the Kennedy's, movie and TV personalities) or those delivering the news and weather as anchorpersons.

However, some men apply somewhat of a double standard. They can literally "go to pot" , but will still somehow see themselves as attractive. They may even desire their "fling" and their "night with the boys", while still expecting a dutiful - and somewhat attractive - wife to be waiting at home.

### **(3) They Have An Immature, Adolescent View Of "Love" -**

**Well , Lets Just Say of "Sex" :** This is really a continuation of the preceding two themes. Men want the "Britney Spears" , the "Julia Roberts" , or the Angelina Jolies of the world. But partly because that's what the "world" says they should want (assuming they are healthy, fully functioning, heterosexuals) .

Female images of this genre are the stuff of adolescent fantasies. Moreover, marketing and media feed into that fantasy. They foster a macho, male stereotype of love them and leave them . Think of every James Bond film, the women he is coupled with and the way each story ends. This then factors into the next point of why men can't - or won't - commit.

**(4) The Hero Image Phenomena:** Dr.Weinberg (*Why Men Won't Commit*) states that , based on his years of practice, he believes that every male- at point in their development - has this "hero" fantasy image of themselves, that includes the "perfect woman" . The perfect woman is sexually stimulating, dutiful, loyal, and *THERE WHEN HE NEEDS HER* ( notice the emphasis on the last part. *HER NEEDS ARE SECONDARY* in this fantasy). Pregnancy, babies, dirty diapers, midnight feedings and the like have no place in this hero's world. Call it selfish, call it childish, but until a man matures sufficiently to see Hollywood created fantasy and associated male stereotyping for what it is - that it is not representative of reality, he unfortunately will be forever trying to attain it.

### **(5) Power Positioning Or At Worst , Settling for Being An Equal Among Equals :**

Among the messages society sends the Male of the species, is clearly the message that success is measured by the size of a man's income and the material things he has

collected. The saying : *"The older the boy, the bigger (and more expensive) his toys "* is a true one. What this means, - or translates into as behavior - is that a lot of men will postpone committing to a long-term relationship or to marriage until he feels that (a) he has something to offer; (b) has reached at least a significant milestone in his career goal (such as completing a degree or professional designation) ; (c) has an income equal to or better than yours.

**(6) Valued Independence - Keeping Options Open :**

Along with the "hero fantasy , described on page 2, is a strong drive to be independent, to be a **"free agent "** ( ibid. Weinberg). This keeps a man's options open, and is protection against "settling" . "Settling" is a term used to refer what could best be described as "surrendering" , giving up "searching " for Miss Perfect. By being "free" there is always that possibility that she will come along and I will be available. Plus, until then, I am free to be Macho Male, riding off into the sunset for another adventure.

**(7) Avoiding Parent's Mistakes - Avoiding Emotional Pain :** Last, and somewhat sadly , is the growing number of men who have come from broken homes. Statistically, 50 % to 51% of all marriages fail, and 60% of remarriages fail ( US Stats. quoted by Lefrancois [1999] : *Lifespan* ; and also Davis [2001] : *The Divorce Remedy* ). These young adults remember the pain their parents went through - and that they , themselves went through as innocent victims, - and have vowed not to do that to another person. They have concluded that :

- (a) **love hurts;** and
- (b) **marriage, or any long-term relationship** resembling marriage, is likely not to work and I'll end up hurt.

**There is hence a fear of Intimacy** that acts as a barrier - a protection actually - for the heart. Gaining access to that place requires that the one trying to enter there builds TRUST, shows TENDERNESS and EMPATHY, as they proceed slowly and sensitively.

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