

Violent Women

“Roses are red, violets are blue ... we men are violent and women are too.” – T. H. Pine

What’s with women these days? I just read about a dancer, Demi Lovato, who, while on an airplane, punched another dancer in the face! Huh? After all the canards I’ve heard directed at us men, complaining about our “evil testosterone,” where have women shown us the way? Is estrogen or progesterone *that* powerful?

Perhaps it’s more evident because of the media, but it seems to me women have become more violent somehow. I’ve seen movie after movie where, when a woman is having an argument with a man, she sees fit to throw something at him. We’re not talking a pillow here, but things like coffee mugs, tools, statuettes and lamps—all capable of inflicting wounds! Then there are the action movies where the female lead punches and kicks the living snot out of a male opponent. As unrealistic as much of it is, is that the vision of femininity women want to enshrine? (And, yeah, I fully realize that men have been acting abominably toward women lately—I’m not letting men off the hook here.).

I’ve seen examples of “road rage” from women that exceeded what I’ve seen from men. Get some women behind the wheel and they become raving maniacs! A petite 5’ 2” woman behind the wheel of a 3 to 4 ton vehicle is as formidable as any 6’ 6” man. I remember one morning, about thirty-odd years ago (already!), when I tooled down the NJ Turnpike on my way to work, doing the speed limit, enjoying my mug of coffee. The traffic was unusually light for a weekday morning, one of those “golden” moments we don’t often get. I pulled into the tollbooth to collect my toll ticket and this woman behind me *flipped out!* She ranted, she raved and she made obscene gestures—all because I had the audacity to get there before her. She zoomed past me and gave me the New Jersey, one-finger salute. Needless to say, that ruined my Zen mood of the morning. Unbelievably, when I pulled into the exit tollbooth to pay my toll, I saw she had pulled in behind me! For a tense moment, she fished in her purse for toll money, then looked up and saw ME sitting in front of her, paying my toll. Need I say what happened next? As I proceeded toward the exit ramp, she cut in front of me, nearly clipping my front bumper. Holy cow, did she need anger-management sessions! Switch to decaf, hang a heavy bag in your apartment, meditate—but CHILL OUT! Perhaps women, in their desire to become “liberated” (whatever that means) and independent, have gotten the wrong message as to how to achieve that.

As a boy growing up and as a man, I’ve always tried to avoid physical confrontation. My first fight, in the third grade, occurred over a girl I had a crush on. She acted friendly toward moi and I thought her the most beautiful creature imaginable. Even her name—Georgina—sounded beautiful. Well, this other kid informed me that he was her beau and challenged me to a fight after school. I met him, we squared off, he bloodied my nose with the first punch and I surrendered—not very heroic. I thereafter avoided afterschool meetings. I sat on the curb, my nose spouting blood, pondering the mysteries of love. The next day, he went to the lovely Georgina and informed her I was out of the way and *he* was her man. Do you know what happened next? *She* informed *him* that she had no interest in him, that I was her boyfriend and walked over to me. Aside from a moment of anxiety over his reaction, my chest swelled with pride over the outcome. Thereafter, since I lacked fighting moves, I sought to negotiate my way

out of such confrontations. I didn't always succeed, but the only two times I can remember I got into fights, I prevailed or tied (giving as good as I got). When I got into the Army, I reasoned that I shouldn't allow anyone to think me a pushover, so I adopted a sterner attitude concerning confrontation, since the Army had improved my fighting skills. Do you know how many times I had to duke it out with someone? Zero, zip, nada. Oh, the confrontations occurred, but it never went beyond harsh words and chest-expanding braggadocio. I mention this to illustrate that we men, testosterone and all, CAN deal with confrontation without violence. Not all of us are like me, but, for the most part, I've seen men deal with conflict admirably. Yet, sometimes, the situation demands a punch in the nose (the other guy's nose).

At a time when Americans expect their men to employ conflict resolution over fisticuffs, I find it curious that women seem to be employing exactly the opposite, kick-butt tactics. Though I'm not averse to "getting physical"—up to and including the use of firearms—if the situation ever demanded it, I consider physical force, especially lethal force, a last resort. I've managed to survive six-plus decades without any major personal physical conflict and will seek to continue that way. One of the things the movies don't make clear, since the actors employ stunt doubles, is the toll a fight takes, even on the winner. One does not strike an opponent with a fist and remain unscathed—flesh is flesh and easily injured.

Ladies, I'm in your corner in regard to equality, but it doesn't have to include bare knuckles and weapons proficiency. Leave testosterone to the guys—we've had longer experience with it.