

# Why Men Avoid Commitment

by Marc H. Rudov

## Introduction

In the past few months, I've encountered several single women who registered this common complaint about the men they've been dating: *I just can't find a man who wants to commit*. To compound this chorus of woe is the recent rash of books and articles about why men can't commit, don't commit, or won't commit to women. One would think, by seeing these literary titles, that men are socially inept, irreparably ambivalent, and emotionally stunted cavemen.

There's a simple explanation for drawing such a dour conclusion: The overbearing feminist movement in our country—supported by the liberal media, spineless federal and state legislators, and a Napoleonic judicial/law-enforcement system that presumes men guilty before proven innocent—has made it socially acceptable to bash males. Does TV show *Everybody Loves Raymond*, in which the star character is portrayed as an idiot father, come to mind? No? How about T-shirts encouraging girls to throw rocks at boys? Ring a bell? How about Verizon's insulting TV commercial showing fathers as incapable of helping their kids with homework? Still not convinced? Perhaps the pending legal case in Chicago where a woman secretly impregnated herself with sperm she received through oral sex, then successfully sued the unwitting sperm owner for paternity? Shocked, aren't you? Finally, let's not ignore the countless incidents of vindictive women making false 911 calls to get their boyfriends and husbands arrested and thrown into jail. If you find nothing disturbing about the aforementioned examples, you are uninformed, apathetic, desensitized, or part of the problem.

Take a gander at the social pages of any newspaper, and you'll see that plenty of men are getting engaged and married—to women. It is true, though, that some men *avoid* commitment—not the simplistic *can't* or *won't* or *don't* that dejected women will decry. Why is that? Anticipated pain. It's that simple. A man who avoids commitment foresees a lot of pain. Tony Robbins, widely regarded as the world's number-one success coach, teaches us that, in general, *people will do more to avoid pain than to seek pleasure*. This is true about every

aspect of life, and it is especially true about relationships. Consequently, although a man believes that a particular woman—or, based on his past experiences, women in general—will bring him pleasure, he believes the anticipated pain will exceed that pleasure. Such a man will want no part of commitment.

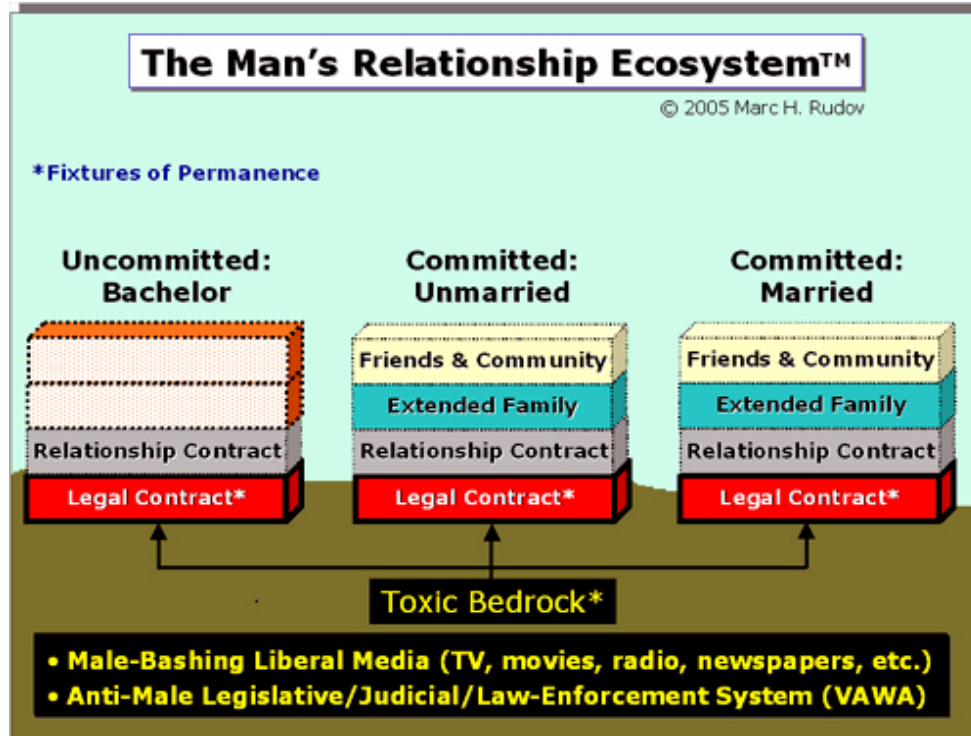
Frequently, a woman will presume that a man's commitment avoidance is a general intimacy problem, rather than accept the painful truth: he doesn't want to commit to *HER*. So, if a woman becomes involved with a man who won't commit to her, it's *her* fault. Why? It's very easy to determine his desire to commit by *asking him*, at their first meeting, what kinds of relationships he's had and what kind he wants now. More important: she should *listen to his answer!* Too often, he will tell her he just wants to date casually, but she will assume she can change him. Lunacy. Whether he doesn't want to commit to her, or to anybody, is irrelevant: he doesn't want to commit. So, if a woman fails to discern and accept his answer, *BEFORE* getting emotionally attached to him, shame on *her*.

At a natural level, there is no difference between the propensity of men and women to commit—one of the great myths is that women are more relationship-oriented than men. This is total nonsense: Men, just as much as women, want to be in healthy, happy relationships. Besides, I've met and received letters from many women who fear or don't like commitment. The difference, and the reason for this article, is that men face societal and legal hurdles, nonsense, and penalties that women do not. *And, these hurdles, nonsense, and penalties are the key reasons men avoid commitment.*

### **Three Categories of Relationships**

To illustrate how the prospect of dating and marrying women looks to men, I have created a model, called The Man's Relationship Ecosystem™, in which I graphically depict the social and legal landmarks of male/female relationships. There are three categories of the way a man can relate to a woman (see diagram below). I present them in order of increasing commitment:

- **Uncommitted: bachelor** (no commitment)
- **Committed: Unmarried** (informal commitment)
- **Committed: Married** (formal commitment)



Each relationship category is composed of building blocks, which sit stacked on the Earth. **The bachelor** doesn't get involved with women, so no friends & community or extended family enters the equation. He does use the part of the relationship contract that governs how he and his woman, even on one date, will navigate logistics, sex, and money. If, however, an encounter with a woman results in a child, the state's imposed legal contract immediately kicks in. And, make no mistake: the woman and the state control this legal contract. Remember this: whether a woman lies about her fertility or use of birth control, the state does not care. Imagine that every one of your sperm cells holds a fountain pen in its hand. The moment one of them unites with an egg, it signs the state's contract. The woman decides whether or not to enforce it. Should she do so, it will endure at least 18 years, maybe 23, depending on the state.

The man in the **committed/unmarried** category experiences all levels of the stack. He is either seeing his woman all of the time from a separate residence or is cohabiting with her. The relationship contract is a continuously evolving, mutually created set of rules for navigating the details of everyday life—sex, money, socializing, friends, household chores, religious practices,

schedules, family issues, etc. It endures only as long as the romantic relationship lasts. As before, if this union produces a child, that state-imposed legal contract kicks in. Also, if the parties live together long enough to invest and spend from commingled funds, the state-imposed contract may govern the disposition of assets at the termination of the relationship. This is a nebulous area of the law, but if the parties cannot agree to terms themselves, and one party brings a legal action against the other, the legal contract dictates the terms.

In the **committed/married** category, the man, once again, experiences all levels of the stack, with the added legitimacy that a marriage license and wedding ceremony bestow. If the marriage fails, all that remains is the legal contract. In this category, the law is quite clear about what happens at divorce. The legal contract governs the disposition of assets, income, debts, spousal and child support, and child-custody and child-visitation guidelines. With a 50% divorce rate, ignoring the ramifications of this powerful contract is dangerous behavior. That is why the man and woman should sign a prenuptial agreement, which is *their* agreement, signed when they get along, and not be straddled with one imposed by the state.

### **The Toxic Bedrock**

Solidly embedded in the soil of The Man's Relationship Ecosystem is a layer of **toxic bedrock** (see diagram above), which has the potential to contaminate every relationship a man has with a woman. Because of this toxic bedrock, women have more power and legal protections than men do. The man, therefore, must rely on the goodness, honesty, and stability of each woman for his well-being. This toxic bedrock contains two, interlinked substrata:

1. **Napoleonic legislative/judicial/law-enforcement bias against men** (guilty until proven innocent) in domestic-violence cases and in many divorce and child-custody cases. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) of 1994—thank you, OJ—defines domestic-violence cases and dictates how they are prosecuted. In general, VAWA's premise is: woman good, man bad. Here are two examples:

- Lisa Scott, family-law attorney in Bellevue, WA, and founding member of *Taking Action Against Bias in the System*, opines:

“VAWA was based on lies and distortions about the true extent of intimate-partner violence, yet it continues to be funded at astounding levels. Feminist groups, led by the domestic-violence ‘scream queens,’ tout hysterical claims such as ‘the leading cause of emergency-room visits by women is domestic violence,’ and ‘95 per cent of victims of domestic violence are women.’ Ten years of VAWA has resulted in the wholesale criminalization of being a man. VAWA didn't originate this nightmarish system, but it legitimizes and subsidizes it.

In today's domestic-violence police state, it's expected the woman is the victim. All she has to do is call 911 and report that her husband assaulted her. In many cases, she conveniently fails to mention she slapped, punched, kicked, or pummeled him to the point that he pushed her away. As a family-law attorney for 17 years, I have experienced the DV system personally.

To some, the solution is a gender-neutral law, such as ‘Violence Against Persons Act.’ Even without overt gender bias, federal intrusion into local domestic-violence policies is corrupting. It nourishes a gargantuan beast and ensures a massive stream of taxpayer dollars creating endless constituent groups lining up to feed at the federal trough.”

- Greg Schmidt, a Seattle police lieutenant who, in 1994, created the department’s Domestic Violence Investigation Unit, said:

“The domestic-violence industry—the trainers, the shelter directors, etc.—can spin things however they want, but most street cops know that women are just as likely to start domestic disputes as men are. But, arresting women puts you under lot of scrutiny. It's bad for your career.”

2. **Liberal, anti-male media:** systematically treat men as moronic oafs. Men are constantly portrayed in TV shows and commercials, and movies as unable to help kids with homework, do household chores, or relate to women.

**An example:** On *Everybody Loves Raymond*, an extremely funny, now-in-reruns TV series, I watched three shows in a two-week span in which “smart wife” Deborah (Patricia Heaton) hit “dumb husband” Raymond (Ray Romano)—in the testicles, in the eye, and in the stomach. Funny, huh? I’ve seen mother Marie (played by Doris Roberts) hit father Frank (played by Peter Boyle) numerous times, usually in the arm. Marie is considered smart, although a hot-tempered buttinsky, but Frank, an irascible character, is considered stupid. “Smart woman, stupid man” is considered socially acceptable. Women physically abusing men is also considered socially acceptable. Had the roles been reversed—smart men, stupid women, or men hitting women—the show would have been shut down after two episodes. Instead, its stars won many Emmys, and Ray Romano, at \$2.8M per episode, holds the record as the highest-paid entertainer in TV history.

### **The Essence of the Relationship Contract**

As I point out in my book, *The Man’s No-Nonsense Guide to Women: How to Succeed in Romance on Planet Earth*, we men love to be with women because of their ability to soothe us and share intimacy. Fair-minded, intelligent, talented, dinner-buying, men-loving women are so much fun and irreplaceable. Their opposite sisters, though, are not. In my book, I also admonish men to stop tolerating women’s double standards and attitudes of entitlement.

What to accept and not accept, and what to give and not give comprise the essence of the relationship contract: how men and women negotiate the rules of daily living. This, of course, is a nonenforceable, innocuous contract that lives only as long as the relationship has a pulse.

So, in what situations do men dislike the relationship contract? When women demand double standards. Some women just don’t get this concept. They *want* double standards. They *want* chivalry, that one-way offering of special, gender-based, deferential treatment. Chivalry is benevolent sexism, or **BS**, tendered in exchange for sex with a woman deemed unworthy of a peer relationship. The more BS a woman wants, the less a man respects her. When a man cannot consider a woman his peer, he has trouble committing to her. He

may commit verbally, but not in his heart of hearts—which is not a true commitment. So, in many such situations, he will avoid commitment.

Here is a pithy example of one woman's idea of a relationship contract. She shamelessly acknowledged in this letter to me her attitude of entitlement. The reason I reproduced it here is that many women never get to see what some of their sisters are *really* like. If this letter doesn't educate you, nothing will:

"I think that there is a lot of merit to what you say, but I doubt very much that there are a lot of woman out there who would welcome your concept of how the male/female relationship should develop. I agree that the woman wants it all—she wants to be wined and dined by her man, and yet she wants an equal partnership. I am not saying that it is fair or rational, but I will say that you are not going to get women to change how they feel, and you certainly are not going to change the deeply ingrained emotions women attach to such treatment.

I believe that equality does not have to come by a shared monetary relationship but only in a shared level of "power." Power comes in many forms, and I don't believe for a moment that it is all about who picks up the bill at the end of the night. I will grant you that power can come from who picks up the bill, but it is not a given. Nor do I believe that the reverse is true, that a woman always uses sex as her 'power' card. I think that your concepts are stereotypical, but your suggestions for equality are not the only answer.

I will use myself as the example because, although I could be fooling myself, and you may shoot holes in how I see my relationships, I think that I do not follow your recipe for equal partnership. But I do follow mine: it is all about who has the power. For you, the one who spends the money has the power, and, for me, that is not necessarily the answer.

Even though wealth is a relative term, I think it is fair to say I am a wealthy woman. I am also a very fit, energetic, high-spirited, open, and straightforward female. I was married for 26 years, had a wonderful marriage and two great boys who are now out of the house, and in a position today to do whatever I want, where and when I want—because their father takes care of every financial need that comes along. Because I already had a life that I loved, I am not really looking to jump back into another marriage, even though I am happy to be in a committed relationship. I should also mention that I am a very sexual woman, and I never use that as part of my power.

My point is that my life, and what I am looking for, is a very hard act to follow for most men I date. I bring a lot to the table, and a man must bring a lot to the table for me to stay interested. He has to be able to maintain a certain lifestyle, must be athletic, must have enough of the "A" personality to be driven professionally and physically, must be intelligent and emotionally intelligent, and has to be good in bed (or at least willing and able to become good in bed).

The men I date must be able to wine and dine me, but they do not have to be able to support me and my lifestyle—beyond the wining, dining, and occasional gifts and trips. That is not to say that I don't do a lot of gifts and extracurricular buying, such as tickets to plays and concerts. So, at the end of the day, I certainly hold my own, but I still want a man, at the end of the night, to be pulling out his credit card vs. mine.

I won homes in Aspen and New Jersey and am very generous on many levels. So, although I don't need a man to be able to help me out financially, I still enjoy a man to do that, and I know that, for you, that is the messed up part (or certainly one of them) of a woman. But, if you are talking about "power," for me money doesn't give men power, but it keeps them in the game. If he doesn't have the ability to do that, he holds no power as far as I am concerned.

That I don't need the man's money and am as independent as I am gives me the power—even though I still like a man who can afford to pay for dinner, etc. I think that a man only holds the power over a woman when she NEEDS the man to help support her or needs him to make her life better financially. In that scenario, a woman puts up with things and makes allowances for men, because she needs what the man brings to the table.

Basically, it is the same as when a man dates a woman half his age. He wants that and therefore is willing to make allowances. For me, it is more what I am used to and what makes me feel good. And, for the men I am dating, they are trying to be able to do what I need.”

Any female reading this, who still doesn't understand why double standards cause a man to avoid commitment, should try an experiment: reread it while looking in the mirror, trying to keep a straight face. In this case, commitment would be the last thought on a man's mind. Running away from her, as fast as he can, would be his first thought. After meeting a woman like this letter-writer, any man who actually gets involved with her is a masochist.

## Conclusion

Excluding the fear of intimacy and psychological hangups—assuming a guy is healthy, centered, and generally ready, willing, and able to enter a relationship—**there are three reasons a man avoids commitment:** 1) an unpalatable relationship contract, 2) the toxic bedrock, and 3) the anti-male legal contract. If women want to create incentives for men to commit, they can fix the three reasons men avoid commitment. Otherwise, they should stop complaining.

I recommend the following actions to women:

1. Become a no-nonsense woman. **Lose the attitude of entitlement.** Remove one-way chivalry from your vocabulary and replace it with two-way romance. Make the relationship contract easy and enjoyable.
2. Get radio stations, TV networks and stations, newspapers, magazines, and advertisers to **stop their negative portrayals of men.** Also, demand that your state and federal legislators **vote against VAWA 2005** and change it to the Violence Against Persons Act (VAPA), eliminating the anti-male bias in domestic-violence cases.
3. **Stop using family courts as weapons against men.** Take responsibility for your actions and inactions. Don't use the courts' anti-male biases to your advantage. Take your lumps like a man.

### About the Author

Marc H. Rudov is an investment banker and business consultant residing in Silicon Valley, California. He is the author of the book ***The Man's No-Nonsense Guide to Women: How to Succeed in Romance on Planet Earth™*** (ISBN 0974501719) and eight other articles:

- “Five Myths About Women”
- “The Golden Rule Dictates Your Sex Life”
- “How Every Man Can Land His Dream Woman”
- “Can Men and Women Really Get Along?”
- “Did Your Make Your New Year's *Revolution?*”
- “Romance Lessons from Tsunami Animals”
- “Why Men Dread Valentine's Day”
- “Cellular Compatibility & Great Sex.”

Rudov's book, articles, and dating service are available at [www.NoNonsenseDating.com](http://www.NoNonsenseDating.com)

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