

STRAIGHT TALK FOR MEN

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STOP KILLING ME!

By Melvin L. Latimer

In 2001 The FBI reported that there were 4,761 men killed by other men in the United States. Of those 4,761 men killed by other men, 2,567 were African American males killing other African American males.

Genesis Chapter 4, records the first murder in the Bible but more importantly a brother killing his brother.

When Cain killed Abel he did more than just murder someone, he killed apart of himself. The same blood that flowed through Abel's veins flowed through Cain's.

Cain killed more than his brother's natural body; he also killed his dreams, hopes, visions, memories and ultimately apart of his own future. Cain and Abel were connected in soul, body and mind. Cain's destiny was Abel's and Abel's destiny was Cain's.

When another man takes another man's life he in essence is killing apart of himself and his future. A death that prematurely takes a man from the earth before he fulfills his God given destiny, he never has a chance to produce sons and daughters.

SO, PLEASE STOP KILLING ME!!!!!!!!!!!!

Every time an African American male kills another African American male a part of me dies with them, we are killing our dreams, we are killing our hopes and we are killing our future. **It's time for an alarm to be sounded. "Please Stop Killing Me".**

When a man takes the life of another man he is altering his destiny the same as Cain. The devil looks into future generations and sees the potential of man. He knows the impact that one man will have on the world through his offspring, so he plots to destroy him before his time, but man has the potential to have sons and daughters who may be Presidents, Preachers, CEO's, Doctors, Lawyers, and

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Testicular Cancer

By: Dedrick Russell

What you're about to read will make most men cringe.

It's a story that contains touchy information that attacks men where it hurts. For men of all walks of life and of virtually every age group the area of the body housing the "family jewels", as some would call them, is a most treasured and guarded area.

But there is a disease that attacks men in this very prized region. It's painful issue to talk about and most men either skirt around discussions of this potentially deadly disease or are completely ignorant of it. But we're going to tackle it head on because this story could save your life. Later on in the story we're also going to show you ways to check yourself.

Testicular cancer is a somewhat painless disease that can slip up on you. It accounts for one percent of all cancers in men. The American Cancer Society reports that last year about 7,600 men were diagnosed with testicular and 400 men probably died from this silent killer.

As you know that testicles are vital organs that make up part of the male reproductive system. Testicles or testes hang in the scrotum, a sac located right beneath the penis.

They are separated into right and left regions, produce the male hormone, testosterone, and are a passageway by which sperm cells travel in their mission to fertilize the female egg in reproduction.

Have you ever experienced a pain, swelling or hardness in one of your testicles?

Have you had a heaviness in your scrotum or even a slight pain in your groin?

Have you felt a painless lump on your testicle? Or, have you ever awakened in the morning and experienced a tenderness in your breast and wondered what was going on? Well my brothers, these are symptoms of testicular cancer.

There is no definite way to determine who gets testicular cancer and who doesn't, but doctors have determined that men between the ages of 15-35 are most at risk.

White men are four times as likely to get diagnosed with testicular cancer than Black men. This can be primarily attributed to the fact that black men aren't as diligent about seeking regular medical check-ups.

Men who work as miners, oil and gas workers, food and beverage processing workers, leather workers, and utility and janitorial workers are at risk.

Researchers say it could be the high level of chemicals these workers deal with that initiates the development of this type of cancer. Also men with HIV, especially those with the AIDS virus are high at risk as well.

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Moreover, men with a history of testicular cancer in their family should be on alert too because their likelihood for development is high.

Most specifically though, doctors point out that those who are the most seriously at risk are men who have a conditions known as cryptorchidism (*promounced kriptor-chidizm*).

This happens during the time the male child is being formed in the womb. While still a fetus, testicles of the male normally form inside the abdomen and descend into the scrotum. But, sometimes during this process the testicles get stuck in the groin area and don't descend into the sac. Men with this happening to them are more likely to get testicular cancer.

Once cancer is detected, doctors begin chemotherapy and radiation treatments which can wipe out the man's ability to produce sperm.

In worst case scenarios, doctors may remove the affected testicles altogether in a procedure called an orchitectomy (*pro-nounced or kee-ek-to-mee*).

I can imagine by now, you are assaying that this is some pretty serious stuff!

But all is not lost fellas. You can wipe the sweat from your brow and crawl out from your ball of fear because testicular cancer is highly curable if detected early.

According to the American Cancer Society, although there is no known way to prevent it, the overall cure rate for testicular cancer is 90 percent.

Whew!!!

They also recommend that just as women do monthly self-examinations of their breast, men do monthly self-examinations of their testicles and surrounding areas.

It could save your life?

Many men are unaware of a cancer that mean so much in producing life. That's why we brothers have to stay on guard and educate each other about this disease that the enemy uses and will continually keep trying to use, along with other sicknesses and diseases, in an attempt to cut us off and to kill our seed.

If you want more information about Testicular Cancer call the American Cancer Society at 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit their website at <http://www.cancer.org>.

How To Do A Testicular Self-Examination

Testicular cancer is among the easiest to cure when detected early. A simple monthly self-examination can help catch it before it starts.

Become familiar with the normal size, shape and weight of your testicles to detect any changes.

It's best to examine yourself during a shower or bath, at that time the scrotal skin is relaxed.

First:

Examine your TESTICLES. Slowly rolling each between the thumb and fingers. Try to find any hard, non-sensitive lumps.

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Second:

Examine the EPIDIDYMIS for lumps. It is a crescent-shaped cord behind each testicle. This area is tender so do not be alarmed.

Third:

Examine the VAS (the sperm-carrying tube which extends from the epididymis) of each testicle.

Symptoms

Early on, testicular cancer can be symptomless. When symptoms do occur, they include:

- Lump on testicular cancer, epididymis or vas that may feel like a kernel of uncooked rice or a small hard pea.
- Enlargement of a testicle.
- Heavy sensation and/or dull ache in the testicles, groin or abdomen area.

Report any of these findings to a doctor. Other conditions produce similar symptoms.

Fatherless Homes Breed Violence

According to a new publication called Getting Men Involved: The Newsletter of the Bay Area Male Involvement Network, Spring 1997:

Begin quote:

63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes (Source: U.S. D.H.H.S., Bureau of the Census.

90% of all homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes

85% of all children that exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes (Source: Center for Disease Control)

80% of rapists motivated with displaced anger come from fatherless homes (Source: Criminal Justice & Behavior, Vol. 14, p. 403-26, 1978)

71% of all high school dropouts come from fatherless homes (Source: National Principles Association Report on the State of High Schools.)

75% of all adolescent patients in chemical abuse centers come from fatherless homes (Source: Rainbows for all God's Children.)

70% of juveniles in state-operated institutions come from fatherless homes (Source: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Special Report, Sept 1988)

85% of all youths sitting in prisons grew up in a fatherless home (Source: Fulton Co. Georgia jail populations, Texas Dept. of Corrections 1992

(Because only a portion of each age group grew up in a fatherless home,) these statistics translate to mean that children from fatherless homes are:

- 5 times more likely to commit suicide
- 32 times more likely to run away
- 20 times more likely to have behavioral disorders

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- 14 times more likely to commit rape
- 9 times more likely to drop out of high school
- 10 times more likely to abuse chemical substances
- 9 times more likely to end up in a state-operated institution
- 20 times more likely to end up in prison.

Why Are Men Like This?

Men learn from an early age not to feel. It starts at six years old or sooner. Don't cry. Don't complain. Downplay any feelings of pain. Play even when you're hurt. Never show you're scared. Ignore the messages your body is telling you short of needing to go to the hospital!

So when a woman asks her husband to pay attention to the relatively small and subtle feelings she's feeling that are signaling to her that their relationship is in trouble – and, worse yet, insists that he pay attention to and express his own small, subtle, heartfelt feelings – no wonder he goes nuts.

We got it at the movies. John Wayne, James Bond, Clint Eastwood, Rambo. "Real" men are cool, tough, independent and unfettered. Single-handedly killing 250 bad guys, or being a multi-million-dollar football player, is the role model our culture gives boys for how to be a man. Being a loving father and community member isn't.

We get it at work. It's a very lucky man, working in a very unusual field or company, who manages to climb the career ladder without being pressured to ignore his own inner voices.

Men get rewarded for being cool, competent, thinking linearly and strategically, and working overtime to "win." Of course, there are often a lot of very satisfying, fulfilling and useful things about this.

But along with the good things, men learn that success comes from "playing the game" – a game whose rules include, "Don't speak your mind," "Don't be honest," "Don't let your (ugh) feelings get in the way," "Suck up to the boss" and "Tell people what they want to hear."

"Playing the game," especially this game, is the very opposite of being genuine. And being genuine is the most important skill for being in a relationship.

Women get many of these same pressures at work too, of course. But since women's identities and self-esteem are usually not as bound up in their work as men's are, they have less on the line. They're more capable of filtering out the craziness and switching roles when they get home. All their lives they've been trained to be more than just workers. But men haven't been.

Daddy's from Mars, Mommy's from Venus. Often, some truly wonderful partnerships begin to go awry only after the children start arriving. Our society makes it enormously difficult for people to arrange their work commitments in a way that allows them to be equally breadwinners and caregivers. So instead, one partner (usually the man) takes the role of primary breadwinner, stepping up his work commitment, while the other (usually the woman) becomes the primary caregiver, either quitting work altogether for a number of years or else working at a

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less demanding job that leave her more energy and flexible time for the family. Soon, Mom and Dad are living on separate planets, made worse by the sheer noise – and distribution-level created by children. They get caught up in playing the roles of Mommy and Daddy and literally lose touch with each other.

The situation is even worse if a man hasn't found his true vocation before his children come along. Then he can feel utterly trapped by the responsibility of his role, and drained by the soul-destroying quality of his worklife. He becomes jealous of what he perceives is his wife's "freedom," being home all day with the kids. Not surprisingly, his wife, who has just spent her entire day with a couple of preschoolers, furiously resents this. The last thing she wants to hear at the end of her exhausting day is how miserable her husband is at work. She definitely doesn't want him upsetting the fragile economic appletart that maintains their home and family. His pain becomes forbidden territory. Soon their marriage is in trouble.

We don't lose our hearts all at once. They leak out over time. Often men get so rewarded at work they have no idea that in other ways they've gone dry. They don't have the skills to pay attention to what's going on in their hearts, and they've learned that doing so would somehow be families, men disconnect more and more from what's going on inside them. Gone are their youthful ambitions, dreams and passions. Even as they get what they've been working so hard for, they don't really

enjoy it that much. Life becomes duller and flatter.

Why don't men care? That's the way it seems to women, when it comes to how men act about their marriages. After all, marriages are like houses. Even the ones with the strongest foundations need regular maintenance. But, strangely enough, men who wouldn't dream of ignoring a leaky faucet, clogged down spouts or a weedy lawn will ignore the signs of a frayed or "leaky" relationship until the roof is about to cave in.

It's not because men don't care, it's because they don't know what to do. What they think will work is often the wrong thing. So, often they give up.

Most men want more than practically anything in the world for their wives to be happy. So much so that many, if not most, men, when their wives criticize them, go a little bit crazy, becoming either extremely defensive or withdrawing.

Their wives, faced with defensiveness and withdrawal, become even more miserable and demanding, causing the men to defend or withdraw even more. It's a vicious circle.

Just as men have learned to ignore and disconnect from what's going on inside them, in the same way they ignore all the little events – the fights, misunderstandings, little lies or cruelties – that make couples disconnect from one another – especially wives from their husbands. And their marriages become duller, flatter, less alive.

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The good news is, men don't have to stay this way! In your 30s, 40s, 50s and older (or sometimes younger) you can look all that old programming in the face and challenge it. Is it really smart and manly to act independent and unfettered – or is it smarter to connect? Do you really want to spend the rest of your life following just your head – or do you want to have more of your heart? Do you want your home life to be a war zone or a “demilitarize” zone – or do you want to make exuberant love?

FINANCIAL FREEDOM

You Can Have It!

Personal debt, managed properly, can help you buy financial assets such as a home, which otherwise would be out of reach for most people. However, unbridled and undisciplined, credit can destroy the greatest of personal dreams.

Achieving financial freedom is a long-term project. It takes patience and persistence to complete. Get started today:

1. Recognize your responsibility. No one has greater power to control the financial destiny of your future than you do. Decide where you want to be 10, 20 years from today. Take a serious look at your excuses and remember that every obstacle is an opportunity.

2. Itemize your assets. Your greatest asset: YOU. Next: your freedom of living in America, your access to an incredible amount of free education, and groups that offer many programs and educational activities. Finally, take inventory of your dollars.

3. Visualize your objectives. Be specific about your goals. Once you have your financial goals you need to commit yourself to them.

4. Prioritize your spending. Write down where you spend all your money. Beware of “little” expenditures that add up to big dollars (gourmet coffee every day, snacks, eating out at lunchtime – even at fast-food places). Patch those holes in your pockets. Cost –compare everything and buy for the best value.

5. Earn more – or want less. Bring your values in line with your belief, then bring your spending in line with your values. Consider taking on part-time jobs, or expanding your education if it will increase your earning potential.

6. Overcome your obstacles – one at a time. Don't see your debt problem as one huge, impossible, insurmountable problem. Break it down into a number of small challenges and make the impossible possible. Get rid of your credit cards, stay away from temptation (boat shows, malls, home shopping shows). Forget about measuring up to the neighbors, relatives, or friends.

7. Make your money work for you. Pay off highest interest debt first. Establish an emergency savings account to cover a sudden layoff or illness. Adequate health insurance, for you and your family, is not a luxury – it is a necessity.

8. Organize your network. You do not have to solve all your financial problems alone. Seek the help of non-profit counseling centers, utilize employee-sponsored savings accounts (savings are

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automatically deducted from your paycheck), join investment clubs, or work with financial planners.

9. Capitalize on your experiences. Learn from your financial mistakes. The easiest ways to make mistakes are borrowing too much for something you don't need just because the credit is available; borrowing from friends without a clear understanding of the financial responsibilities; and assuming that money left in a bank account will grow in value. Beware of lenders who want to increase your life of credit, or offer you a home equity loan.

10. Maximize your returns. Invest money in stocks, mutual funds, bonds, or real estate, and let your money work for you.

MALE SEXUALITY QUIZ

How well do you understand male sexuality?

Read the following statements and decide whether you believe them to be true or false.

1. More men than women have experienced unwanted intercourse.
T or F
2. More "very religious men" cheat on their wives than non-religious men.
T or F
3. Just as fat in the bloodstream can block arteries in the heart, so it starts to block arteries in the penis preventing adequate erection.
T or F

4. Men also experience a male menopause.
T or F

5. After marriage most men stop masturbating.
T or F

6. According to some sex therapists, what most men complain about is not getting enough oral sex.
T or F

7. Getting married remedies all the problems men have with lust.
T or F

8. Boys who are sexually repressed while growing up are more likely to become obsessed with masturbation and pornography when they are grown up.
T or F

9. How often does the average, healthy male think about sex?
(a) once a month, (b) once a week
(c) once a day, (d) once an hour

10. How many men would complain that they don't get enough sex?
(a) 20%, (b) 35%, (c) 50%, (d) 70%

11. The average age at which the American male first has sex is
(a) 14, (b) 16, (c) 18, (d) 20

12. Where does the average young male learn most about sex?
(a) from the home; (b) from friends,
(c) from books, (d) from pornography

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ANSWERS

1. TRUE.

Contrary to what most people think, more men say they have felt forced into unwanted sex either to prove themselves or to comply with peer pressure.

2. TRUE.

The Janus Report provides data to support the idea that “very religious” men are at greater risk for cheating than “just religious” men. It could well be that they repress their sexuality more and thus do not acknowledge their true sexual feelings.

3. TRUE.

The same cholesterol that blocks heart arteries can shut off blood to the penis and inhibit full erections. (Reference: Men’s Health, Sept./Oct. 1992, 42)

4. FALSE.

Men do not experience menopause. While hormones decline gradually, the majority of men remain sexually active into their seventies, eighties, or beyond. Frequency does decline, however.

5. FALSE.

Many men may at first reduce the frequency of their masturbation, but return to it later. Those men that learn during adolescence how to masturbate to pornography find it difficult to break the habit later.

6. TRUE.

Men in our culture easily become obsessed with oral sex – giving it and receiving it. No satisfactory theory for this has yet been put forward; most experts believe it is not abnormal. However, some health risks do exist and many women find it repugnant!

7. FALSE.

When men get married, lust does not subside. Men have to learn how to redirect their arousal back to their appropriate partners. Lust, when uncontrolled, creates many unpleasant situations including inappropriate sexual harassment.

8. TRUE

A sexually repressive upbringing creates excessive guilt about sexual feelings and this sets up the obsessive need for masturbation.

9. (D)

Most men think about sex at least several times a day or an hour. Younger men, under age thirty-five, think about it even more often. Interestingly, after age thirty-five the frequency remains about the same.

10. (D)

According to other major studies: 70 percent of men complain that they don’t get enough sex. Interestingly, 58 percent of women make the same complaint.

11. (B)

The average American male has his first sexual encounter at age sixteen.

12. (D)

Most young males have their sexual beliefs and attitudes shaped by pornography. Exposure often begins at age thirteen. This distorts their views of how women feel about sex and what can reasonably be expected from sex, and it sets them up for disappointment in the real world. Real women cannot possibly

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measure up to the air-brushed, color-enhanced, glossy photographs that become the standards of reference for most males.

We hope this Male Sexuality Quiz has been informative and helpful. It was adapted from the book, *The Sexual Man* by Dr. Archibald D. Hart. A book you should read.

HEAL THE WOUNDS OF MARRIAGE BREAKUPS

The breakup of a marriage is almost always traumatic. The ripple effect goes out in all directions as family members and friends stand on the sidelines in despair. At the center is the relationship between the former husband and wife. If they can resolve issues, then there is a strong inclination that others will be able to deal with the situation in a positive manner.

To those single parents who want to resolve an adversarial relationship with former spouses, consider these suggestions:

- Don't use the children as spies, means of manipulation, or message carriers for negative issues. This is cruel to them and only causes greater friction and disharmony. The children's best interests need to be foremost in both parents' minds.
- If legal arrangements have been made – and broken – use the proper channels to correct the situation. Seldom can ex-spouses discuss things rationally and come

to an agreeable solution on legal matters, particularly when an adversarial situation exists between them. Work through the court system where changes in the original legal documents can be filed and handled properly by an attorney.

- Use a mediator if both parties can agree to do so. A pastor, Christian counselor, or church elder might be considered to act in a mediation role.

Do not criticize, belittle, or talk negatively about ex-spouses, especially in front of the children. This is often the hardest guideline to follow. Verbal bashing and accusatory ridicule in front of the children might feel good at the moment, but it only hurts the children and can cause irreparable scars which they'll carry into adulthood and into their future relationships.

- Frequently remind the children that the divorce is not their fault. Children need to be encouraged to talk about their feeling especially in the months following the family breakup. The one issue common among children is their belief that they caused the divorce by their behaviors, attitudes, or shortcomings.
- Learn to forgive. This the greatest healer, especially in adversarial situations. Holding on to your anger and bitterness does more to destroy your life than to remedy the wrongs that may have been done to you.

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- Accept whatever responsibility you may have had in the marriage breakup. Reflecting upon personal shortcomings might help your healing as you look forward to future, healthier relationships.
- Live one day at a time. You cannot change your ex-spouse, but you can change, or have responsibility for, your own attitude. Realize that the greatest hope is knowing that you have a Creator God who will stick by you and offer hope forever.
- Remember that professional Christian counseling or therapy might be advisable in the initial stages of divorce. Part of this counseling should focus on the specific tools for dealing with the adversarial ex-spouse.
- Attend worships, seminars, or read material on building a positive self-image. Learning the appropriate places to look for love and self-validation are important.

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MALE BREAST CANCER

Although it occurs infrequently, breast cancer can affect men as well as women. In many ways the disease appears similar in the two sexes. However, because male

breast cancer is so uncommon, it has been difficult for researchers to accumulate extensive data, and several aspects of the disease have been the subjects of disagreement. In general, men tend to be somewhat older than women at the time of diagnosis, and the disease is often at a more advanced state. Like woman, men are commonly treated with surgery for primary disease. For advanced disease, they usually receive some kind of hormone therapy, which is even more effective in men than in woman. Men are less likely than women to develop cancer subsequently in the opposite breast, but more likely to have, or to have had, a second type of cancer. In the past, men were thought to have a poorer prognosis are slight. The critical factors are prompt diagnosis and treatment.

Incidence

In the United States male breast cancer accounts for 1 of every 100 cases of breast cancer, and it represents about 0.2 percent of all malignancies in men. (In women, breast cancer represents 26 percent of all cancers.) In 1984, approximately 900 in this country will be diagnosed with the disease, and about 300 will die of breast cancer.

In certain parts of the world male breast cancer is more common than in the United States.

The Male Breast

The breast of the adult male is similar to the breast of a preadolescent girl. It consists primarily of a few branching ducts lined by flattened cells and surrounded by connective tissue. In girls

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these cells and ducts develop in response to hormones secreted during puberty.

In males, too, breast tissues are capable of responding to hormonal stimulation. Enlargement of the male breast due to growth of the ducts and supporting tissues is known as gynecomastia. Approximately 40 percent of all adolescent boys experience temporary breast enlargement, probably in response to hormones being secreted by the testes. Adolescent gynecomastia typically disappears within a year or two.

Cancer of the Male Breast

All of the types of breast cancer seen in women can occur in men, although some are quite rare. Not surprisingly, lobular carcinomas are very unusual, because lobules are normally absent from the male breast.

Almost all breast cancers in men, like more breast cancers in women, are carcinomas. The most common kind is infiltrating ductal carcinomas, which accounts for 73 percent of the cancers in men. Men can also develop Paget's disease and inflammatory carcinoma. Various sarcomas may occur, too, although they are uncommon.

Symptoms of Male Breast Cancer

A painless lump, usually discovered by the patient himself, is by far the most common first symptom of male breast cancer. Typically the lump appears beneath the areola, where breast tissue is concentrated.

However, a lump is seldom the only symptom. Men are more likely than women to have nipple discharge (sometimes bloody) and sign of local spread, including nipple retraction, fixation to the skin or the underlying tissues, and skin ulceration. About half the men with breast cancer have palpable axillary lymph nodes.

Most male breast cancers are not large. One study that reviewed a large number of cases found that 51 percent of the tumors were less than 3 centimeters in diameter. The largest, however, measured 28 by 16 centimeters.

Delayed Diagnosis

The fact that breast cancer in men has often spread locally before it is diagnosed – even though the small male breast should facilitate early diagnosis – has been attributed to several factors. Indeed, the very smallness of the male breast could be a factor. Lacking the bulk of the typical female breast, even a small carcinoma in a male lies close to the skin above it and the tissues of the chest wall beneath it. Consequently, the cancer can more readily invade these nearby structures. It has also been suggested that the location of male tumors, centered around the areola as most of them are, may facilitate the spread of cancer. Such centrally located tumors are thought by some to have easy access to internal mammary lymph pathways.

However, many people are unaware that men can develop breast cancer, and neither individual men themselves nor their physicians regularly examine men's breasts. Furthermore, when men discover signs of breast cancer they tend to delay before seeing a physician. A 1972 review

of cases diagnosed since 1900 showed that men waited 18 months, on the average, before seeking medical advice; for men diagnosed since 1951, this dropped to 10 months, 9 such a delay may in part occur because some men perceive breast cancer as a flaw in their masculinity and are reluctant to acknowledge its presence.

Risk Factors in Male Breast Cancer

Age

The incidence of breast cancer in men, like breast cancer in women, increases with increasing age. Although it has been reported in a 5-year-old boy, it is rare before age 35. The average of men at diagnosis is close to 65, about 5 years older than the average age for women.

Diagnosis of Male Cancer

The same procedures used to diagnose breast cancer in women can be used to diagnose breast cancer in men. These include medical history, physical examination, mammography, and thermography. As always, a definitive diagnosis can be made only by biopsy. Karyotyping, a technique used to determine a patient's chromosome pattern, might be used if a disorder like Klinefelter's syndrome is suspected. Studies to evaluate estrogen excretion patterns might also be performed.

In examining a man for breast cancer, a physician must distinguish between a malignant breast tumor and benign conditions, primarily gynecomastia, as well as cancers from other sites that have metastasized to the breast. Metastases to the breast from other types of cancer call for treatment of the primary cancer, whatever it is. Primary breast cancer, in

contrast, is potentially curable through surgery and, perhaps, adjuvant therapy.

10 Things Dads Can do to Look Like a Hero To Their Kids Father Know A Secret

Fathers know a deep, dark secret about their side of parenting. Being a father is confusing and often frightening. Bill Cosby once wrote, "If God had troubling children, what makes you think it would be a piece of cake for you?" (Cosby was referring to Adam and Eve and their disobedience in the garden.) To make our task even more challenging, somewhere along the way our children develop the firm conviction that Dad never even lived in the real world or his brain is stuck in a malfunction mode! The real clincher is found in the common belief that all world problems are overstatement, but notice how dads are most often portrayed on TV – dumb, out to lunch, mean...). It all adds up to quite a challenge.

Most men want to succeed as fathers. They think they are taking their role seriously. Though many men wouldn't admit it, they are eager for something that will enhance their effectiveness as a father. Dads can become heroes to their children. It takes a lot of work, patience and love, but it's possible. What follows are some suggestions that will help you fight the misperceptions of fathers in your own family by doing some right things with your children.

1. Be Around

Few things are as important as your presence. Dads often make lots of excuses.

There is work, there is this project or that. There's the civic club, the golf game, the tickets to the ball game or the hunting trip. Twenty years from now your kids won't care about any of that and neither will you. You'll be wondering what happened to the relationship. Your kids need you. Be there.

2. Learn How to Encourage

Parents, by nature, tend toward the negative. "Don't" and "can't" are necessary tools. They help keep the kids out of the first and help them understand it's not good to eat the whole jar of peanut butter at once. But, kids need to know what they can do. Validate their abilities by telling them when they do something well. It will give them courage to do ever better.

3. Admit Your Faults

If you don't admit your faults, you'll be the only one ignoring them. Admit faults and be man enough to apologize. It will make you more sensitive about how you handle your children's faults. It will also make it easier for your kids to forgive you when you need it.

4. Make Trust a Priority

Trust comes two ways. One is earned through dependability and consistency. The only way is a gift. Children need to learn both. Show children they can trust you. Earn their trust. Teach them they must earn trust as well. However, there comes a time when you extend trust as a gift. When you do, you will tap into your child's increasing maturity.

5. Show Tenderness

Too many American fathers grew up with the "macho-man" idea. Be strong, be tough, be hard, be busy. That's fine if you're a character in a Clint Eastwood cowboy movie, but it doesn't do much for relationships with kids. Children need to see that Dad is touched by some things, that there are emotions inside, and not just angry ones. Little boys and girls need hugs and kisses from big Dads. Many grownups cry because they never heard Dad say, "I love you," or felt a loving embrace from strong arms.

6. Love Your Wife

The single best source of input regarding marriage is from one's parent. Respect your kid's Mom. Be kind to her. Demand that your children respect her as well. Your response to your wife develops a sense of security in your children. Give your kids the security of a loving marriage.

7. Respect Authority

Most fathers want to fill the role of authority. However, if you want your children to respect authority they must see it in you. Show respect for your own parents, if they are still living, or speak of them in ways that show respect if they are no longer around. Your example will instill the right attitude in your children's minds.

8. Be A Christian

Take the lead in spiritually nurturing your children. Plant spiritual values in your children's hearts. Teach them about God, Christ and His Church. Show them it's important. Talk about one death and

eternal matters, but illustrate the importance by your own life. God will become important to children when God is important to Dad.

9. Teach The Bible To Your Children

Fathers spend thousands of dollars educating children for a job. They often spend little educating them for a life. The Bible will help your kids know how to live. You should be the primary instructor. One simple way to do this is to get a children's Bible and read one story a night with your children when they are young. As they grow older, simply go to more grown up Bible stories until you are actually reading the Bible with them, or discussing what they have read in Scripture on their own.

10. Be Fun

There are plenty of times for seriousness. Your kids need to know that you can laugh and have fun. Lighten up! Everything is not earth-shatteringly important. Laugh at jokes, mistakes and yourself. Let some things happen with a smile instead of a frown. Your kids will think that you're great fun to be with. Bet you'd like that, wouldn't you?