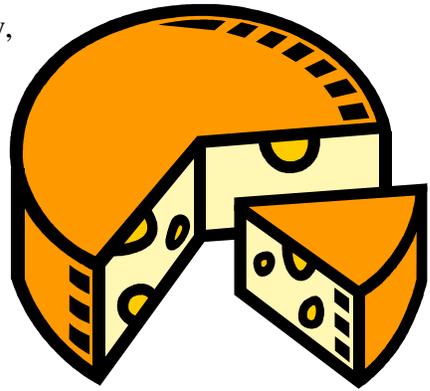


We'd be lost without our mates (28, 09, 13)

© by Mike Keenan

Compulsively opening the refrigerator door several times each day, this time I peer only briefly inside before shouting out to Miriam, “Do we have any cheese?” It’s standard male operating procedure. We do not require a written manual. We have evolved to rely on our mates to provide us with vital information retrieval in important areas that relate to our basic needs, namely hunger and thirst with perhaps some token acknowledgement to personal hygiene, but let’s not go overboard. For example, like seasoned playoff hockey players, we prefer that our facial hair suffer little restraint, almost as a direct reaction to the incremental loss of fickle follicles from on top.



Miriam is outstanding in this regard. When we were quite young, I would shamelessly show off her abilities on social occasions. She had immediate recall of household inventories. She mastered the fridge, laundry and bathroom inventories. At any given time, I might quiz her, “Miriam, how many rolls of toilet paper do we currently have allocated in each bathroom?” Immediately, she responded with accurate numbers. When we were first married, this startling feat blew away my male companions; however, their wives were strangely unimpressed.

Looking backwards, it is remarkable how we have made progress through our married life in the issues described above and role differentiation associated with sex.

I came at it tabula rosa. I had no grand goal when we first hooked up as to which tasks I would perfect. However, over the years, some tasks ultimately became associated more with me and less with Miriam.

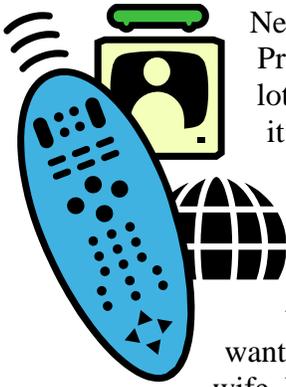
For example, anyone with an average IQ can operate a remote control TV device, but most men (again through evolution) rapidly perfect its myriad options such that they can run the gamut of seemingly an infinite multitude of choices with incredible efficiency and determine in lightning-quick speed, which might be the appropriate station to watch at any given moment.

Whenever I allow Miriam to use the remote, she dawdles for quite long durations at stations that I would dismiss in milliseconds. I can take one quick look at a station’s offering and without dialogue or action of any sort, make a bold decision to either move on or linger there for a few hours or more.

And no, it’s not just sports in case you were thinking that there’s little sophistication involved in my talent. Mere body language is enough for me to decide on whether or not the program has merit. The body language that I seem to prefer most is often associated with rather trim looking people of the opposite sex. Most men are attuned to this body language process and possess a simple desire to become more proficient in mastering all of its quaint colloquialisms.

I must confess here that without Miriam I would be lost – literally! The number of times I have asked her where my car keys are or where my glasses are, well let’s just say that it’s a large number.

Have you noticed that men possess deeper voices than women? This has nothing to do with testosterone or any other weird chemical floating through our bloodstream. It’s a consequence of shouting out to our mates from other rooms or even other floors in the house. “What should I wear?” I might scream from my bedroom, down the hallway and all the way to the downstairs kitchen. “Where’s my belt? My favourite socks? My toothbrush? My pills? My appointment schedule?” The list is endless.



New car makers invented the car beeper-locator device primarily for us men. Prior to its discovery, swarms of men would roam randomly about mall parking lots with puzzled looks on their faces. Which car did I drive? Where did I park it? Why am I even at this mall? I hate shopping. Is it her birthday? Our anniversary? Our children's birthday? These existential questions invaded our minds.

I intended that this column might act as an illustration of the vital teamwork that is required in modern marriages. I'm sure that the men will immediately want to send a copy to their sons after they acquire each son's address from their wife. Women really are incredible!