



# Real men need wives

By Robin Friedman

## Men love their freedom.

For many guys, the very thought of making a commitment to one woman for the rest of their lives is enough to send them running for the hills. The dreaded “M-word” implies loss of independence, sexual boredom, and financial devastation.

But several studies show lasting marriage has profound benefits for men.

Surprised? Don't be. Here's why.

### Health.

A 2001 study of 30,000 men by Harvard University's School of Public Health showed nine out of ten married men who are alive at 48 will make it to 65 compared to only six out of ten single men.

According to statisticians Bernard Cohen and I-Sing Lee, being married lowers a man's risk of dying from cancer as much as being in an age category ten years younger.

In fact, while heart disease reduces a man's life expectancy by six years, being unmarried reduces a man's life expectancy by ten years.

Dr. James Coan, a psychologist in the departments of psychology and neuroscience at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, conducted a 2005 study in which he slid married volunteers inside the jaws of MRI machines.

When husbands and wives held hands, the part of their brains that registers the anticipation of pain “turned off.” The hand-holding also reduced agitation in the hypothalamus, the area of the brain that controls the release of stress hormones, which decrease our immune functions.

“We can't see what our spouses are doing to our brains and emotions until a stressful event arises, but it's going on all the time,” says Coan. “When a wife holds or caresses her husband, she is really reaching into the deepest parts of his brain, calming down the neural-threat response.”

In a 2006 study at the University of California at San Diego, coronary-bypass patients whose wives visited them early and often in the intensive-care unit required less pain medication and recovered more quickly than men without a spouse.

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