

Not perfect
BETTER



Better with your Partner

Tips and advice for better men

Why ‘Not Perfect, Better’?

In November of 2024, we began our #welisten campaign where we spoke to men and boys in a series of focus groups and interviews. The focus groups were made up of men from all different cultures, ages, classes and experiences, yet they had a common thread: many **men couldn't tell us what a “good man” or a “good relationship” looked like.**

A lot of them felt disconnected from the issue of violence against women – not because they didn't want to be part of the solution, but because they felt like they couldn't be. They questioned whether they could speak up if they knew they still had room to be better.

The answer to that is **yes** and it's why we started **Not Perfect, Better.**

Better with your Partner

Be a better partner and husband. And human.

Here's a little secret, fellas: women don't want emotionless tough guys who are angry and shut off from the world. Shocking right? **They want a partner with values, and a clear sense of self. A partner who is respectful, reliable and communicative.**

Despite what we're told a 'man' should be, and the way we should think and act, the reality of what women want in a partner is very different. And, if we're being honest, it's what we want for ourselves.

If you're like most men, you want to be the best partner you can be, but the pressure to be the perfect partner only sets us up for failure. There's also an ongoing attitude that a partner is just another thing to have in your life – whether that's to fit a picture of a perfect life, a person to help you with your bills, cleaning or life admin, or just a person to have sex with. None of this is healthy, or particularly fulfilling for either of you in the long term.

The good news is, you don't need to be perfect, just better. And with a low bar to start with in society, it doesn't take much to raise it.



Maximise your better-ness.

Yes, a lot of this advice might feel like common sense. But a little common sense can remind us that small changes will still make a really positive impact on our relationships.



Treat your partner as an equal

Your partner is her own person, as important as you are. You don't need to have all the power – make decisions with her, not for her. It's so much more fun to do life together, rather than seeing your partner as another problem to be dealt with or to 'make happy'.



Say how you feel

Don't bottle it up like so many guys do. Say how you feel. Share stuff, even the scary stuff. Talk about your worries and how you'd like things to turn out. Don't start with "You make me feel...", start sentences with "I feel", "This makes me feel..", "I'm struggling with..." Try to keep it in your perspective, without immediately complaining or blaming the other person.



Empathise with your partner

Imagine how it feels to be in her shoes, and if you can do something to make it better, then do it. Remember, they have their own perspective, their own upbringing, and their own goals and dreams. Doing life together is the point of a relationship, don't try to 'win' against each other all the time.



Tell her you love her

If you value your partner, verbalise it! Notice all the ways she improves your life and makes you a better person, and tell her. Tiny gestures go a long way to showing that you're still there for them, and you want to do better.

Better you. Better relationships.

When we're better, everything else gets better. The flow-on effect of levelling up touches every aspect of our lives, and no one feels the benefits more than your partner.

It starts with treating women as your equal and taking them seriously. This is the basis for a respectful relationship and makes it easier to manage any conflict without violence.

Being respectful also means changing what you do. When we challenge what it means to be a man, we get comfortable doing things like housework, cooking, and caring for others, especially our kids. When you value and share what women do, you'll be happy and healthier, and so will your relationship. True respect means showing up and doing the right thing – not endlessly being a cycle of stuffing up and then overly apologising afterwards or ignoring the problem.

Simple ways to be better-er at communicating:



Feeling is healing

Say how you feel, what worries you and what you'd like to see happen. Start by using the 'I' statements ("I feel..." etc), and try really hard not to be immediately defensive when they respond. It's like working out a muscle – it gets easier the more you practice and you'll become a more open and curious person as a result.



Ask for feedback

Your heart might be in the right place, but sometimes old habits can take over. Ask her what you can do to communicate better, and really take it on board. A lot of men think that women are mysterious creatures – but it's mostly because they're not really listening to the information that their partners are giving them. Don't be afraid to ask for clarity (yes, even if it annoys them at first!).



Really Listen

Ask her questions and value her views as much as you do your own. Think about what she has to say, and take her ideas on board.

Better with consent.

Better bedroom relations start with getting clear on consent. Before you start anything sexual, always ask first. Show your respect by not assuming you get to choose everything. Trust is sexy, so asking her if she's into it and respecting her reply is a good way to build a respectful relationship.

If you ask and she says "no", "maybe" or nothing, don't keep pressing. Sex isn't everything, and sometimes intimate connections need to start again through shared activities and conversations (about something other than sex!).

Keep it real.

News flash: **porn is not real life.**

It's entertainment, and has **nothing** to do with actual relationships.

Real relationships are between equals, who are enthusiastic about being together and spending time doing things other than getting in each others' pants. Be honest with yourself about whether you're treating the women in your life with respect, and that there's always enthusiastic consent.

Better you

Being better is not about aiming for perfection, just progress. It's about being the man you want to be, feeling all your feels, and taking responsibility when you mess up. Learn how to level up with some easy, effective things you can put in practice at home, work and out in public.

Want more Better Guides? Head back to **Not Perfect, Better** or stay up to date with upcoming resources by following us on **Facebook**, **Instagram** or **LinkedIn**.

