

## **Mama's Boys Deserve Love Too!**

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Mama's boys get a bad rap. Did you know, though, whenever you find a mama's boy in a romantic relationship, you find a daddy's girl as his partner? These two can make their passionate love work in spite of the odds!

The picture of the traditional mama's boy isn't pretty! Imagine a soft male without much backbone who still answers to his mama whether he is twenty, thirty, or even older and there is the picture we find distasteful.

That is the caricature. In real life, mama's boys come in all shapes and sizes! A man who is charming and suave can turn out to be a mama's boy. One who is domineering, bullying, and macho can also be a mama's boy. Another who is confident and a little on the dismissive side can be a mama's boy. How does a woman know if her man is a mama's boy or not? She knows by how he makes her feel, particularly once they move out of the courting phase and into a level of commitment.

Beginning with his mother, a mama's boy believes he gets his power from the women in his life. He either pushes against or pulls on them to get a sense of his own power and worth. A woman can recognize the feeling of either being pulled on or pushed against. It doesn't feel good.

When children are born, the parent whose sphere of influence they first occupy is that of their mother. Both little girls and little boys venture out into the sphere of influence of their fathers as time goes on. There is one thing that creates a mama's boy. If in his early teen years, he did not receive an invitation to enter fully into his father's sphere of influence; or, if that invitation was thwarted and he remains in the sphere of influence of his mother, then he will be a mama's boy.

The invitation to the father's masculine sphere of influence is lacking when a father is physically or emotionally absent or if he isn't strong enough to compete with the mother's sphere of influence.

When a man doesn't get to enter fully into the sphere of influence of his father (also known as the masculine sphere), he doesn't learn how to ground himself in his own masculinity, deriving his power and potency from that place. Instead, he grows up believing that the women in his life, beginning with his mother, hold the key to his masculinity, his power, and his potency.

Daddy's girls have a similar experience growing up. When they are young, daddy's girls wander from their mothers' sphere of influence into their father's sphere of influence, never to return! Perhaps a girl's mother was emotionally or physically absent and so she tried to take her mother's place. Alternatively, her father could have been emotionally or physically absent and she tried to take his place, being the little man in mom's life!

Either way, she missed the invitation to the feminine sphere of influence that only her mother could extend.

When a woman doesn't get to enter fully into the sphere of influence of her mother (also known as the feminine sphere), she doesn't learn how to ground herself in her own femininity, deriving fulfillment from within herself. She seeks fulfillment outside herself through taking care of the men in her life. That can look like supportive and nurturing behaviors and words or challenging, even bullying behaviors and words.

So, what do you do if you recognize yourself as a mama's boy or daddy's girl and recognize your romantic partner as the other? If you can work at this together, that is excellent! However, you can make progress if only one of you is challenging his or her own mama's boy or daddy's girl tendencies.

Begin by observing yourself. How do you push against or pull on her to get a sense that you are doing ok as a man? What are the ways you take care of him as though he is a little boy instead of a grown man? Observe the ways you do and say things that put you in a power struggle. Then, look to yourself and begin to make changes (without pointing the finger at your partner).

I am a daddy's girl. My husband is a self-professed mama's boy. One time he could not get the electronic garage door to close when we were on our way out on a date. Even though I did not know one thing more about how to get that door to work than he did, everything inside me wanted to jump out of that car and take over!

I knew better than to do that! If I wanted the date to continue with me happily in the feminine sphere, I needed to let him handle the door. I sat on my hands and looked away to keep me from taking over. It worked! He got it fixed, we went on our date, and it was great!

For a while, Joseph picked up the habit of saying, "Help me remember..." He says it a lot. He has observed that this is a mama's boy thing. More than just being a way to make his own mental note about something, it does rather treat me like a personal assistant instead of as his lover! Now, he catches himself before he says it, laughs at himself, and the energy switches to it being just his way of making a mental note to himself.

We got to this sweet place of self-correction of the mama's boy/daddy's girl nuances by beginning with self-correction. We focus on our own selves, we sit in the discomfort of choosing new, unfamiliar, healthier behaviors and words, and we reap the benefits of a powerful man grounded in his masculinity and a powerful woman grounded in her femininity. It works! Try it!

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