

NCFM PR Director, Steven Svoboda, Esq., recommends reading *How to Talk to Men: The Geisha & the Gorilla*

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How to Talk to Men: The Geisha & the Gorilla. By Mia Sage. Honolulu: Miamar Productions, 2012. 295 pages. www.miasage.com and www.amazon.com. No price listed on book but available on amazon for \$30. Review by J. Steven Svoboda.

Mia Sage, a young coach and trainer from Berlin who is currently living in Spain, has produced one of the finest volumes I have had the privilege of reviewing ever since I started writing book reviews nearly two full decades ago. “How to Talk to *Men*: The Geisha & the Gorilla” is so outstanding that its scope greatly exceeds its title, which in any event only describes a small portion of its topic of how women can maximize the effectiveness of their lives and their relationships. Sage’s achievement inspires the reader and points us the way to improving ourselves and to thereby helping make the world a

better place. At first it may seem surprising, but ultimately it is inevitable, that her book will be one with which no reader will fully agree.

First of all, it must be admitted, this book is written primarily for women yet I, a man, am reviewing it. No doubt some women will be put off by this book, at least initially. The author is not afraid to say what she thinks, and many of her opinions run against prevailing political winds and well-worn ruts of accepted thinking.

Sage could not have a more appropriate last name, and shows it through numerous bon mots that she tosses off with a seeming lack of effort: “To find and keep a man, you have to see the partnership game through his eyes. It’s not easy being a man in today’s world.” “When your love heals a man, he responds with deep gratitude and with a special love that flows out from the vulnerability that men habitually hide.” “If you have involuntarily brought a man down, you are the only person that can win him back. Make him a winner. Give him unconditional respect. Watch how he transforms into a loving mate.”

The author most definitely is not a starry eyed mystic who has lost touch with the sometime ugly reality of daily life. Far from it. Talking about honesty, she observes:

Men lie. That isn't necessarily a bad thing. They tell you how good you look, even when you don't....

Women lie too. Thinking we are better or different only makes us set impossible standards.

Sage believes that a woman will be in closer touch with nature than her male partner, and that ultimately, the woman should decide where the couple is to live and the man should go where she wants to go. "Don't worry about where your man wants to live. You are his link to nature. When Momma is happy, everybody's happy."

Why do I consider this truly amazing book, which is virtually guaranteed to both deeply charm and at times infuriate its readers, so important? It openly confronts received wisdom, fearlessly battling for a higher truth that will enable us all to shine as profoundly as we can. "Partnership only works when you can hold your vision of the man no matter how many times he falls down." Later she expands a bit, "My man is innocent in my eyes—no matter what. I know that he is always motivated by sweet, gentle love. By seeing that quality, I am creating it."

The same principle is true for women as well, as Sage shows us using mythology. She tells the captivating story of an old hag to whom King Arthur had to promise his knight in marriage before she would save the king from great danger. After the wedding, the hag appeared to her husband as a great beauty, telling him she could be beautiful either by day or night, as he commanded. He told her, "It is your life and your body, so you choose," and she answered him, "Because you honor my sovereignty, I choose to be beautiful both day and night."

Another myth that the author retells shows an island man paying eight cows in exchange for a plain, skinny, hunched over girl who probably could have been obtained for two or at most three cows. The author concludes the story as follows: "In her birth village, Serita was a normal girl. In the village of her husband, she blossomed into a beautiful woman. She became an eight-cow wife."

Any book this courageous is bound to include ideas that any given reviewer is likely to see as imperfections. For example, I have a Master's Degree in physics and have never for the life of me been able to have any sympathy for the alleged teachings of astrology, to which the author devotes a few pages in her chapter on the different typologies of people. While I follow her general thinking about overuse of alcohol and drugs, I can't agree that necessarily, "The man that needs two drinks is a drunk." Along the same lines, Sage's discussion of water crystals in differently labeled beakers strains my credulity well past the breaking point:

The water that carried degrading labels, such as STUPID or BAD froze into ugly, grotesque shapes. But the water that carried loving messages such as BEAUTY and KINDNESS froze into exquisite, symmetrical shapes.

Finally, I found the chapter on training a bit much, and I could say the same for some sections on stages of psychological problems and later on "the four stages of inner theater."

However, all this is fine and in fact is in line with the author's agenda to stretch the reader and to introduce a wealth of new ideas and new energies. Inevitably only some will stick. Just don't make the mistake of discarding the whole because you find some points with which to differ. The author has ever so much to offer.

Obvious though it may be, Sage is not loath to underscore the crucial importance to men of a vibrant, healthy sex life. "How much a man loves depends on the intensity and frequency of his sex life. How long he remains in a marriage depends on the constancy and consistency of enthusiastic lovemaking." Presumably "remaining in the marriage" is mentioned in both a literal and figurative sense

The author adds that this is an easy point for women to fail to grasp: "Until a woman understands and accepts gender differences, she can easily underestimate the importance of sex for men. Many relationships die because women fail to comprehend the male sex drive." Sage is also right on the money in noting, "If you have a good man, he will want to please you more than anything else. So let him."

Sage is so correct when she notes the uselessness of women worrying about how they look to their men. "When a man loves a woman, he doesn't see the flaws. He takes small images—the look of your skirt on your thigh,

that little movement you make when you are turned on, and that look on your face when you laugh. A loving man forms a mental collage of his ideal you.”

The author believes, “Both men and women need constant, continuous appreciation for the different roles they play.” Moreover, “People are programmed to believe that love is the most important thing. But money is equally as important.” Sage notes the yin-yang complementarity of these two elements to security, writing, “Love is the feminine [not necessarily female, as Sage notes elsewhere] sensation of total trust. Cash is the masculine contribution. Sex is the bridge.”

Sage believes, “Most men are damaged in some way or another.... Better to find a slightly screwed up decent man that needs your love to find his way.... Even the finest specimens harbor hidden flaws.” She notes the profound benefits that can flow from such an approach. “[Y]ou would be amazed how much an injured man will appreciate you for your willingness to salvage what is left of his heart and soul.” One could even argue that such synergy is a key to our survival and success. Fortunately, “most men are only a bit daft. Even many of the happily married men you know are a bit quirky behind the scenes. Their wives protect them and bring out their best qualities.” How right she is!

Another topic on which the author achieves trenchant levels of profundity is a discussion of how “men are the weaker sex.” She writes in explanation, “Studies show that relationship issues get to men more than we ever realized. After a fight, for example, men seethe and simmer much longer than we do. Their health suffers.... Conflict hurts you, but it leaves your guy reeling.” I certainly find this to be deeply accurate in my own life.

How should women handle this reality? Sage has a great answer: “You are more attractive to men when they feel your feminine compassion. When you realize how things are for men, it is easier to empathize.” Not unrelated is the author’s point that “Women frequently complain that their men won’t talk to them. What they mean is that men don’t talk to them like women do.”

The author states that men are more or less simple creatures. The solution to many issues with men may be to approach them warmly and softly: “Harsh tones transform a man into a mad beast that sees you as the enemy. Warm tones transform him into a man who will eagerly take on any challenge on your behalf. You can transform your man into the person with whom you want to spend your life. Just remember to soften your heart and release those kind healing tones before you speak.

Wow, is this author courageous or what? She comes right out and provocatively suggests, “women are meaner than men—and men are dumber than they think.” I do not find myself agreeing with her claims that “[m]en secretly believe that women are stupid” and that women are smarter than men. Again, this doesn’t matter, or better yet, agreement with our provocateur author is not the point. Self-questioning and self-improvement and even self-love are the points

I have been relentlessly quoting Mia Sage throughout this review and I will close with a few of her statements that most profoundly resonated with me. First, she really gets the importance to men of good coaches (whatever that term may mean for a particular man:

If you ask [a high performance] man if he ever had a coach that brought out the best in him, he will look at you carefully to see if you are serious. If he senses sincerity, his face will change as he puts aside his social mask. Then he will tell you a story about the time he played for a man that not only made him a better player but also made him a better man. Believe me when I say that you want to be that coach.

If you learn nothing else from this book or this review, remember this golden nugget: “Ideas and emotions are separate elements. Mixing them is a recipe for disaster.... I have learned that there is little or no connection between my feelings and the actual events around me.”

I choose not to be offended when Sage talks about different types of men as analogous to different breeds of dogs. Being offended would be insane. The woman obviously loves men. And in the end, I believe she is right that men are simple, devoted, and come in many varieties, all of which is also true of canines.

Finally, I will leave the reader with one more gem: “Men are crying for appreciation. They will give their lives or end their lives for a little of this precious substance. You are rich with the stuff. You can afford to be generous.”

Do not miss this amazing, potentially life-changing book! If you do, it will truly be your loss! I have probably never ended any of my nearly 200 previous book reviews with three sentences ending in exclamation points, but be sure to make the right choice when you balance 30 bucks and a few hours of your time against the opportunity for some new perspectives that can transform many parts of your relationship, your career, and even your reality!