

## The Return of the Lady

In a previous post, I opined about the lack of manly men on television and the big screen and how I longed to see the return of manly characteristics in real life and how we should raise our sons to exemplify these traits. I also promised to pick on the ladies about ladylike traits, so it's our turn.

The rise of the schlumpy male on screen corresponds with the rise of the "strong" female character. Problem is, "strong" is usually interpreted in a negative light, i.e. that strength is not drawn from femininity but merely imitating the masculine. Or the female is career-oriented and not excessively feminine or lovable but hardened and sarcastic.

And then there's reality. With more marriages ending in divorce, we have more single mothers raising children on their own, working full time, and filling more roles – you have to be strong to do this! And more women are making a life for themselves versus just waiting around for a man to marry because not everyone wants the house with the white picket fence and 2.5 kids and a dog. But we don't have to be hardened and sarcastic. We don't have to be a tough survivor verses a power feminine personality. Part of being strong is showing your flaws. That's what makes us even more desirable.

I know I'm not the only gal who wishes to see more strong females who aren't stereotypical. *Downton Abbey* does an excellent job at portraying strong women who are flawed. But what about reality? What characteristics can we exemplify to show the world our feminine qualities and be a good example to the next generation of women?

Let's start with:

Enjoying our femininity

Being trustworthy

Encouraging others

Avoiding nagging, nitpicking, complaining and gossip

Being proactive versus manipulative

Being tactful in the face of sexism

Being assertive without harshness

Embracing emotions without being ruled by them

Enjoying life and not moping about what we don't have

Not leading men on just to stroke our egos

Not playing games with men

Being honest with ourselves about our abilities and limitations

That's quite a list but it's a start. So let's bring being a lady back into style.

Not that it ever really went out.