

DETROIT

NATIVE SUN

What about the men?

By Ma'at Seba
SUN COLUMNIST



WHAT ABOUT THE MEN?

In light of the recent violent events around the country such as the death of Jacob Blake, George Floyd, Michael Brown and the seemingly never ending list of black men at the hands of out of control law enforcement, black men of all ages have started to feel a heightened sense of anger, tension and even fear wondering everyday as they leave their home if they will be the next target. It has to be extremely unsettling to be a black man in the United States given this countries track record of the disproportionate number of arrests in urban communities. Coupled with the everyday pressures of society, mainstream media has proven itself to be proficient at painting negative, fearful images and perceptions of black men; but how and when do these men get to express their concerns? Their hurt? Their Fear? Their anger? WHAT ABOUT THE MEN?

There are a multitude of groups, classes and meetings where women can go to talk about their challenges, hurts and fears, but have you ever wondered where the men go

for spiritual, mental & emotional support? Where do they go to talk and process their emotions when they lose or can't find decent employment but still have a mate &/or a family to answer to? Where do they go when they are disrespected at work or followed around a store suspected of stealing something and it angers them? Where do they go to release the fear they carry everyday they leave out of their door knowing there is a invisible bull's eye on their forehead and back by some trigger happy racist or police? Where do they go to vent about a societal structure that was created and set up for their demise? Where do they go to express the rage that they have for the "father" that left them or that they never knew while they struggle to be a father figure to their own child? Where do they go to attempt to understand the woman in their life who they just can't seem to make happy? Where do they go to connect with the divinity that they know is laying latent inside of them waiting to burst forward? again I say, WHAT ABOUT THE MEN?

Ma'at Seba is the founder and facilitator of RELATIONSHIP FIRST AID, a program which uses spiritual principles as the tools to identify and resolve the causes of unhealthy, toxic or stressful relationships, whether it is with your mate, children, friends, co-workers as well as yourself. Ma'at can be reached for speaking engagements, classes or lectures at: Relationshipfirstaid@yahoo.com or Maatseba@gmail.com

Think beyond the tie: Five fun Father's Day gift ideas



(StatePoint) Father's Day is just around the corner and if you've given Dad one too many ties in previous years, let this cool and creative gift guide inspire you to think a bit differently this time around:

1. Better Coffee: Is Dad's coffee or tea always either too hot or too cold? Give him a perpetual Goldilocks "just right" effect with Nextmug, a temperature-controlled, self-heating mug that he can use at home or in the workplace. Perfect for busy people, it maintains the contents of the 14-ounce mug to the user's specified temperature setting, whether that's warm, (130 degrees F) hot, (140 degrees F) or piping, (150 degrees F). The Nextmug comes with a docking coaster for easy charging and a spill-resistant lid. The stylish and ergonomically-designed mug is available in colors ranging from burgundy to sage to black, so you'll be sure to find an option that suits your dad's style. Visit <https://nextmug.com> for more information.

2. Campfires On-the-Go: If Dad loves the great outdoors, ghost stories or s'mores, a Portable Campfire may be just the thing for him. This totable firepit is made from recycled soy wax and paper for sustainability, and is easy to light and put out. Involving a lot less mess and smoke than a traditional campfire, it's a great addition to any tail-

gate, backpacking trip or beach or backyard sing-a-long.

3. Pampering: It's not always acknowledged, but men deserve to be pampered, too. Consider gifting Dad a personal care kit full of top-notch beard oils, colognes and shaving cream. Not sure where to start? Opt for a subscription box this year. This will allow him to try out different brands and products over time. Then, next year, you can craft a gift basket based on his favorite selections.

4. Just for Fun: If you opt for an entirely useless object, make sure that it's one-of-a-kind. Upload your favorite picture of your dad to mycustombobbleheads.com and they'll deliver a pint-sized, bobblehead version of him to your doorstep. your dad will be both flattered and amused by this quirky gift.

5. Lifelong Learning: Is Dad a lifelong learner? Support his quest for knowledge with membership to an online education subscription platform. From soft skills like leadership and poetic thinking to hard skills like web development and photography, your dad will have a world of information straight from the experts in the palm of his hands.

This Father's Day, bring a smile to Dad's face with gifts that will make his life easier, and more relaxed, interesting and fun.

The DeMarco Project Speaks Celebrating Jim Santangelo

By Kim J. Clark Aka Expanding Love
SUN COLUMNIST

This month, I have the honor of celebrating Jim Santangelo. He is the husband of Major (Retired) Laverne Santangelo, Michigan Army National Guard. To his credit, Jim is a strong, confident man who supported his wife's choice to make a career of serving our nation in the military.

Jim and Laverne were high school sweethearts who continued to date through college, married, and survived Laverne's 23-year military career. This couple will be celebrating 35 years of marriage next year. Their love and commitment to one another is as strong as ever.

This writer is in awe of this military husband and father. Jim understood his wife's career was as important to her as his career was to him. He did not try to change her mind or control her choices. This "dynamic duo" figured out how to make it work so that each party achieved their personal goals. Theirs is not the typical American story. In fact, in America, "The average length of a first marriage that ends in divorce is roughly eight years—7.8 years for men, 7.9 for women.

In my opinion, what makes this interview special is that Jim always supported and continues to support Laverne's career choices. From high school until now, this phenomenal couple has remained best friends. The average marriage would not be able to survive all that comes with military life. And the divorce rate is exceedingly high for female military personnel. Together, Jim and Laverne have beaten the odds. "According to Military.com, data provided by the Pentagon revealed that female troop members experienced almost three times as many divorces as males in 2019." Military divorce rates compared to national averages (sadorceattorney.com)

In the article entitled "Celebrating a Phenomenal Veteran, Mother, and Community Partner Major (Retired) Laverne Santangelo, MA, LPC" (also featured in this publication); this writer mentioned that Laverne was deployed to Germany when her second child was only eight months old. Not included in the article is the fact that Laverne deployed a few days before Christmas in December.

Due to Laverne's military career, in the early years of their marriage, Jim took on the non-traditional role of primary caregiver to their young children. He had to step up and become "Super Dad." He worked full-time, advancing his career, and was a caregiver to their two sons. Let me ask, "How many 29-year-old men do you know would honor such a difficult commitment?"

Luckily for the young couple, their families helped. In our interview, Jim did express gratitude for his grandparents, father and stepmother, Laverne's parents, and her sister-in-law.

To be clear, the military has programs available to support military families. Jim acknowledged that Selfridge Airforce Base did have breakout groups. He received a packet with phone numbers and a couple of calls. However, the husbands of females who serve do not necessarily feel supported or feel the need to seek support. As we know, men and women are "wired" differently. Women seek help and utilize resources, including support, to

solve problems. Men are accustomed to solving problems independently and do not necessarily look or ask for help managing challenges.

It was essential to find out for the reader how he and Laverne's relationship survived and stayed strong through the difficult times when she deployed. According to Jim, they were able to speak on the telephone periodically. They didn't spend time crying, "I miss you," they focused on "This is what is going on..." He believes this approach made things a bit easier. When Laverne served in the military, phone calls were expensive, and internet access was not as readily available today. So, time spent on the telephone was precious. By 2003, communication was better because of cell phones. When she was overseas, they only had one visit. When she was stationed in Washington, D.C., they could visit more frequently.

Jim provided a few keys that he attributed to a successful marriage as a military spouse.

Trust - Be mature enough to trust the worst scenario in your head; it's probably not happening. Take a breath and relax; basically, get out of your head—just pause. Whatever is going on in your head is probably not even happening.

Communication - Keep the lines of communication open. Your spouse is your life partner, your best friend. Let your friend know what is on your mind. Remember, what is important to you is essential to your spouse.

Listening - You don't always need to talk. Maybe there's nothing you can say, but at least you're sitting there listening and giving the support.

Be supportive- Your spouse is not just somebody dressing up in a uniform and playing soldier. It's serious business. Military training is essential. They're being prepared to be mobilized in the event something "pops off," and they have to get deployed. You can't be dismissive. So, there's a lot that "you have to be" to be prepared to be very supportive. Women in the military do have a more challenging time than men.

For more tips visit, Military Marriage Advice | Military OneSource

This writer feels Jim's story is of paramount importance for several reasons. Initially, The DeMarco Project focused on serving Veterans. However, over the years, we have learned that to help Veterans truly, we must support Veteran families, as well. Husbands and boyfriends are often forgotten. We want the male partners of female active duty and female Veterans to know they, too, are supported. We want them to be assured they can have a life-loving, committed, loving relationship that does not have to end in divorce.

Kim is the mother of a Veteran who loved his country and was willing to lay his life down for the freedoms he believed in. She is the Founder and Executive Director of The DeMarco Project, a non-profit organization. Her mission is to save Veteran lives and improve the quality of life for traumatized military service persons. If you want to support her in this work, please donate via the website www.TheDeMarcoProject.org. Please like us on Facebook and Instagram at The DeMarco Project 4 Vets.