

Much Of A Muchness Are Men To Women; Save For Intent...By Thobeka Conco

“Women nag, consistently and insistentlly” so say men and you know what...I agree, I really do! I humbly ask my sisters to give me the opportunity to explain before they start baying for my blood. Believe me it hurt me too to admit to myself that yes, we do nag...however my strong belief in that for every action there's a reaction prompted me to find reason in this maddening reaction...nagging. First let's look at the meaning of the word, shall we?

Nagging;

- a) To annoy by constant scolding, complaining, or urging.
- b) To torment persistently, as with anxiety or pain.

Attention is drawn to the fact that the meaning of this word is two-fold. The first meaning especially rang familiar, because if you asked any man who has a nagging woman in his life to elaborate on this, he would probably tell you that she complains non stop usually about the one and the same thing. I'll take the risk and assume that nagging is as a result of something hence I keep referring to this word as a reaction; purely because I refuse to believe that any sane person would just wake up one day and decide to nag. One can never react to nothing and repeating yourself is tedious at most therefore I doubt that anyone would voluntarily and happily engage in such an act.

For example; a female neighbour of mine had a problem with her man who would, without fail, drink himself to a near comma every weekend wherein he would either crash his car or loose a very expensive cell phone or his wallet...you see where I'm going with this. We won't focus on his apparent drinking problem as that is another topic all together, however she found herself having to deal with the aftermaths of his escapades on a continuous basis. In the beginning she would plead with him to be prudent as this was exerting heavy financial and emotional burden on their relationship and he would listen (*even if it were for a moment*) but then the vicious cycle would resume again. So what then transpired was that whenever he headed for the door on any given weekend, she would go off and “annoyingly complain and scold” him about his carelessness and insensitivity before he even had the chance to start drinking because she was well aware of what was to follow. What had begun as genuine concern for her man had by now

evolved into a verbal boxing match because she felt powerless over a situation that was slowly but effectively eating away at the very core of their relationship. The point of this borrowed story is that most often than not when a woman nags it **a)** starts off as genuine concern over a situation that she perceives as threatening either to her man or their relationship and **b)** this said concern takes on another form when the man continuously engages in the same transgression over and over again with little or no concern for his partner's feelings.

Last weekend I was going through my cupboards, doing a bit of cleaning when I came across a box that contained some of my old books. Whilst rummaging through it, excitedly discovering some old letters of mine that had somehow found their way in between some of my favorite passages (probably being hidden from my mother's prying eyes), I found tucked in the corner one of the first books that propelled me into the world of literature. *To Kill a Man's Pride* is a collection of short stories by South African writers. I especially loved The Suit; a story about a devoted husband (Philemon) who is alerted by a concerned neighbor that his wife (Tilly) has been "entertaining" a certain young man at their house whenever he's at work. He sets a trap and as the neighbour had said, finds the wife and the young man in bed together wherein upon his unexpected arrival the young man runs out the window half naked leaving his suit draped in the chair.

When Philemon discovered his wife's indiscretion, he decided that he would not live her but would instead *torment* her; whether this decision was a conscious or subconscious, one can only wonder. The suit that got left behind would now be a *constant* companion in their lives, so when they ate Tilly had to set up a plate for the guest (the suit draped in a chair as a constant reminder of her misdeeds). On certain occasions it was taken out for walks and even to the dry cleaners (*I assume he didn't want the dust to settle on it as this would symbolize that his anger was waning, he wanted his anger to be felt as intensely as if it were the first day he'd found them in bed hence the suit had to be immaculate at all times*), this was done to continuously humiliate his wife to no end.

This story brings me to the second meaning of the word/reaction nagging; *to torment persistently as with anxiety or pain*. Philemon's story is a typical example of a different breed of nags; men. Yes, that's exactly what I intended to say...men can possibly be the worst nags that ever walked the face of the earth! You see men are creatures of convenience; almost everything

they do or say is done purely on the premise that it suits them to do so. They can not handle inconvenient situations because there's a parasite that resides within them called the **EGO**. The ego renders them helpless therefore unable to accept extraordinary situations as just that...situations that need to be accepted and dealt with.

Ladies I'm sure you can think of an episode where you made a mistake or did something wrong. How long did it take for you and your man to resolve it? If you are lucky he will live you depending on the seriousness of the transgression, otherwise he will stay and torment you for months on end where you would be reminded of your "mistake" over and over again. When men nag, they do so with a dark intensity so ferocious that it lives through in its path.

It should be noted by both men and women that nagging in which ever form is unpleasant, however, it is clear that the difference between female nagging and male nagging lies in the end result expected from the said act. Women will nag with the hope that a particularly threatening situation will be avoided therefore the result of the nagging being a favourable one. Whereas men nag to exert a very intense form of pain/suffering and the end result expected being an unfavourable one.

Men and women are different in a number of ways however for the mere fact that we are of the same specie it can be boldly assumed that we are **no more than very similar...much of muchness** if you will...well except in our intent of course. So while I'm well aware that many may say I have brought a knife to gunfight, I say to them..."there I have said it, it's your move"

Ezithobayo ekaShay'mamba!