



## Nagging wives? More like lazy-arse husbands.

In a spectacular display of misogyny, [a headline in today's Telegraph](#) informs us that '[n]agging could cost the lives of hundreds of men'.

Yes, you read that right. Before I go any further, let's just unpick that sentence. 'Nagging' is defined as 'constantly harassing someone to do something' but, let's be clear here, it is a slur which is used against women - indeed, the OED gives an example of the word's usage as "a nagging wife". The Telegraph's headline refers to the lives of 'men' only, which suggests that women are the wrongdoers and men are the victims. The implication is that women are nagging 'hundreds' of men to death. As hyperbolic statements go, that takes some beating.

Delve further into The Telegraph's piece (if you can stand to) and you would no doubt be astounded to find that 'around 315 extra deaths per 100,000 people per year could be caused by spousal demands and worries' with 'men tend[ing] to respond to stress with higher levels of the hormone cortisol which is known to be linked to poor health'. Women, so the report says, are 'immune to nagging'. It is poor, put-upon men who are apparently dying in droves as a result of being 'subjected to 'nagging', constant demands and worries from their partners'.

From a feminist perspective, 'nagging' is a misogynistic term because it is used pejoratively and more or less exclusively against women. The 'nagging wife' is the subject of ridicule and disgust. If a man complains to his friends or family that his female partner is 'nagging' him, he will expect - and more than likely receive - sympathy. No-one thinks to question why his female partner is 'nagging' him. Why would a woman 'nag'? Why would she 'constantly harass someone to do something'? If we remove the term 'nag' and replace it with 'protestation at being used as a slave', that brings us closer to the nub of the problem. Could it be that women, responsible for the bulk of childcare and household chores, just want the men in their lives to get off their lazy fucking arses and actually help out?

Of course, male socialisation and male entitlement contribute massively to male lazyitis. From a young age, many girls are expected to help out around the house in a way that boys are not. Girls are taught from an early age that housework is Our Job. Research carried out by the Institute for [Public Policy Research](#) shows that just one in ten of married men does an equal amount of cleaning and washing as his wife. This is appalling. Do men somehow produce 90% less mess than women? Do they eat 90% less? Obviously not. Why, then, are they leaving their female partners to do the vast majority of meal-planning, cooking, washing, ironing, cleaning, and the looking after of children? Why do men expect their female partners to clean up the vast majority of the mess they create? I don't think it is a stretch to describe this as slave labour. Radical feminists have long propounded the view that marriage enslaves women - given these statistics, is it any wonder? It is difficult to argue otherwise.

Articles such as this one in The Telegraph are damaging because of the inherent implication that women should just shut up and get on with the household chores. It normalises inequality within heterosexual relationships. It says: housework is a woman's work, a wifely duty. If she objects, if she dares to even voice her dissent, she risks driving her male partner to an early



grave. What a burden to place upon a woman!

The Telegraph goes on to say that 'poor habits such as eating junk food and lack of exercise... exacerbate the problem'. Ah. So, of these 'hundreds' of men who are dying each year due to 'nagging', an undisclosed number of those would have died anyway because they never move off the sofa. I suppose woman should be blamed for that as well, eh? Your hubby's a fat, lazy bastard? You've compounded the problem by Hoovering around him! You should have asked him to move! It's all your fault!

As Germaine Greer says:

The universal 'division of labour' between the sexes was in fact the apportioning of daily drudgery to the female, so that the male could indulge his appetite for sport, play, dreaming, ritual, religion and artistic expression.' (The Whole Woman)

The problem, again as Greer points out, is that:

Men resent having to work and harbour a positive ambition to do nothing... Men regard weekends as time off [whilst] working women use weekends to catch up with the tasks left over from an exhausting week.

The truth of this cannot be emphasised enough. How many times have you heard a female friend or colleague say that her male partner is 'babysitting' tonight? In some cases, the act of a man looking after his own children appears to be so rare that one wonders why he is being praised for stepping up to the mark for once (presumably after some 'nagging') instead of being challenged over his dereliction of duty. A mother would never be described as 'babysitting' her own children - looking after them is her job and hers alone, see?

A 'nagging' woman is a woman who refuses to keep quiet when faced with the drudgery of housework and the huge responsibility of childcare. A 'nagging' woman is a woman who recognises the unfairness of her situation, who gets angry about the unfairness of her situation and who tries to persuade her male partner to be doing the things he should already be doing. This Telegraph article is blaming women ('you nagging harridan!') for voicing their dissatisfaction at being a man's slave. Ask yourself: in a relationship where women do 90% of the household chores, who is the real victim?