

OPINION PACKAGES

Our VIEW

The price of peace

Northern Ireland accord is a lesson for everyone

After almost 30 years of violence, failed cease fires and extinguished peace accords, diligence finally paid off for those committed to a lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

Many Americans misunderstand the conflict in the British-ruled province north of the Republic of Ireland. Though more of an economic rather than religious fight, the dispute pitted the mainly Protestant majority unionists against the primarily Catholic minority nationalists over a variety of issues, especially over who would rule the province.

It may have been a mere political debate had the long-held hatred not been so intense and the refusal to negotiate so strong. For the past three decades, it has been a conflict punctuated by violence.

On Friday, there was hope.

A peace accord was signed by England and Ireland's prime ministers and leaders of the nationalist and unionist parties in Northern Ireland. Many people in Northern Ireland are skeptical of the agreement, as peace has always been just a delusion to them.

But before they reject it, the citizens of Northern Ireland — and of the world at large — must see something in the document before they toss it out. And then they must learn from it before they decide to accept or reject its proposal.

It is important for the world to learn from how Northern Ireland handled this long, slow crawl through a marathon. It's even important for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to learn how opposition must come together for compromise and how they can't do that in a half-hour lunch meeting or a fluffy and vague condemnation buried in a handbook.

The peace accord is 67 pages and more than 10,000 words long. It breaks issues down into specifics. It is not afraid to address the controversial issues. It came upon a lot of roadblocks, but it didn't take a permanent detour.

What it took was 22 months of debate and patience with everyone's concerns and demands. It didn't try to come up with blanket statements, and it didn't claim to know every answer for the future.

And its most important feature was compromise. The unionists wanted a British-ruled province, and the nationalists wanted to be part of the Republic of Ireland. The agreement creates a Northern Ireland Assembly, creating a formal link between Northern Ireland and the Republic but remaining under British jurisdiction.

The details are numerous, as they should be. And while the document's prominence is for the province, it should be a lesson to everyone trying to solve a conflict whether in Northern Ireland, North Dakota or north Lincoln.

No one gets everything he wants, but at least everyone gets something.
Peace.

Haney's VIEW



Sexual smarts

Higher IQs can't help men understand women



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Last semester I learned a valuable piece of information. I learned that men are smarter than women.

Before all of the women out there start digging out their rustiest pair of scissors and looking up my address, allow me to explain that statement.

Last semester I was sitting in my social psychology class when this statement was made.

My professor told us that there are more men in the highest IQ bracket than women. If men are smarter than women then why do we act like such idiots around them?

The answer to that question was being narrowed down by my professor.

"While men may have more of a representation in the higher end of the intelligence deviation, men and women average out at the same intelligence."

OK, so on average, we're just as smart as women, but that still doesn't explain male behavior. My professor finally dropped the bomb that cleared everything up for me.

"While there are more men in the higher end of intelligence, there are also more men who are mentally retarded."

My professor was stating facts that have statistical backing. I'm stating opinion, and I have only my own experiences and observations to back me up.

Men have excelled in physics, engineering, architecture, psychology, English, mathematics and chemistry. Research and studying have allowed men to make enormous

strides in these areas and advance the amount of knowledge in this world.

The one subject that men have been studying longer than any of these is women. After all of the studying on the subject of women, men are probably five steps further back than they started.

Men can listen to women, we can empathize with them, we can even act like gentlemen to them, but we will never be able to understand them. We can pretend like mothers, but the true understanding will always be beyond our grasp.

A man's life is simple. He hides his feelings, thinks about sex, drinks a beer, plays sports and thinks about sex.

At the age of 13 girls and boys are separated and shown a film about puberty. Women learn about menstruation, feelings, physical development and issues of maturity.

Men see a film about a guy drinking beer in a recliner while watching the Chicago Bears play football. Oh yeah, there's also a copy of Playboy on the coffee table.

Women have access to a wealth of emotions and feelings that give them an unfair advantage in the world of dating and relationships. They have the ability of knowing their opponent and his weakness. Let me show you an example of the advantage that women possess over men.

(Dramatic scene change) We are at a dance club. Men and women dance to the flashing lights and the pounding base of a Snoop Dogg song. At the completion of the song a young man stops dancing with his friends and the ladies they are with.

He's tired and thirsty and leaves to get a drink. On his way off the dance floor, a very attractive young lady stops him.

"Why are you leaving the dance floor?"

"I'm going to get a drink and to catch my breath."

"That's too bad; this is a really good song. It's great to dance to."

"Would you like to dance?"

"With you?"

"Yes."

"No."

With this last word, the woman turns around and walks away. A laugh resembling Satan's is heard echoing through the club.

The man in that story was me and the woman, she was evil.

Women control social interactions. A woman is the final word in a situation as basic as flirting. She determines which men get to speak, how long they get to speak and what the end of the conversation leads to. Why is that?

To quote from a guide to flirting I found on the World Wide Web, "It is the woman who is the gatekeeper of each escalation point, so to speak. For a variety of reasons (which I will be happy to explore elsewhere), it is the female side of the flirting couple who determines what the appropriate response to each overture will be."

The reasons to be explored elsewhere never were. Maybe there is a secret connecting site that only women know about.

We are supposed to be smarter than women; why can't we take the upper hand in this situation? Why does the presence of a woman change a man's IQ level?

Are all of you guys ready for the answer? Well, so am I.

I think we are going to be waiting for a long time. I'm guessing it has something to do with sex, but I'm sure I'll never know.

For those of you out there who think I'm neglecting the issue of power involved in male-female relationships, let me say one thing.

Men do have a physical superiority to most women. Men who use this advantage for rape or spouse abuse are not real men, and they don't deserve to ever know the beauty a woman can possess. That said, on to the conclusion.

This column has been entirely opinionated with no real facts to back it up, and I know this.

How can I make such huge generalizations about men and women? I'm a guy, and I don't know better.

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