

# **The Five Biggest Mistakes Women Make About Love**

by Carol McCluer

I learned from the philosophy, Aesthetic Realism, that our biggest purpose in life is to like the world through knowing it. Whether we are on the phone with a friend, listening to music, talking to our mother, or with a man, our deepest hope is to care more for the world through seeing meaning in it. We make our biggest mistakes about love because we use a man to be against the rest of the world instead of using him to know and like it more.

My gratitude for learning this is huge! After years of feeling I would never understand why I had so much pain as to love, I now have a passionate love for the man who became my husband, and a feeling of self-respect I didn't think was possible.

Aesthetic Realism is a great, wide education, true about the human mind and all reality. Eli Siegel, American poet and critic, and founder of Aesthetic Realism, is in my opinion the most important educator ever to live. He understood the central cause of pain in people's lives--the desire in every person to have contempt, which he defined as "the lessening of what is not oneself as a means of self-increase as one sees it."

## **1. THE BEGINNING MISTAKE**

The beginning mistake is for two people to be in a team to despise the rest of the world. When someone acted as if he adored me and everything else paled, I thought it was love, but it never succeeded; and one relationship after another ended--I was getting worn out and jaded. I wrote in my diary: "I don't listen in my classes...the people in [them] plus the teacher are so stupid...I would much rather think about Steve." I can remember being at a party with a man, our giving each other smoldering looks and mocking people; the next day I felt listless, had a pounding headache, and I remember thinking the streets looked ugly.

When you want to use someone to like the world, you want other people and things to mean more to you, not less. What a difference it is these days, for instance, to walk down the

street with Kevin. Sometimes we point things out to each other, like, “Look at the way the sunlight is hitting that building!” and I feel I like the world more, and I love him more, both at the same time.

## 2. **MISTAKE #2: WE FEEL WE'RE MADE OF FINER STUFF**

Women have a tendency to think their feelings are fine china and a man's are like paper plates. In other words, we think we're superior: we may need him, but he isn't worth really knowing. I was so lucky at 25 to begin my exciting study of Aesthetic Realism. It showed me that knowing another person is a big thing—bigger than knowing all the works of Shakespeare! The reason is, a person is indefinitely deep, and related to everything in the whole world. In one consultation I was asked: “Have you felt only women were too deep for words?” I did. And they asked: “Do you think you have an unquenchable desire to make fun of a man?...Your style is, “Don't ask too much of him, pity him, and have contempt.” This was so true! I didn't see how it had stopped me from really being able to care for someone.

## 3. **MISTAKE #3: WE WANT TO OWN A MAN**

In a 1950 lecture published in the international journal, *The Right of Aesthetic Realism to Be Known* #606, Eli Siegel says:

*What happens most often, is that through loving one person, we get to be less interested in people. We have a notion that since we've caged a person, our job of understanding other persons is over: we've got our choice, so why trouble ourselves any more?*

This describes a crucial mistake women make. Once I had “caged” a man, I saw him as personal property I could treat any way I wanted, and other people didn't matter. Wanting to own someone, resenting his having to do with anything else--people he works with, the baseball game he is watching, the book he is reading, his family, his friends--always leads to feeling suffocated, jealous and furious.

The one alternative is to see that a person comes from the world, and is as mysterious as reality itself: he has a whole past, hopes, fears, unknown possibilities. Aesthetic Realism teaches that, like reality itself, a man is a oneness of opposites such as toughness and tenderness, inside

and outside, energy and repose. Studying this, a woman feels proud and free as she sees a man is endlessly related to everything, including great art and everyday objects: a portrait by Van Gogh, a mountain, a rose.

#### **4. MISTAKE #4: WE WANT HIM TO BE WEAKER**

I learned the greatest suspicion men have of women is they want them to be weaker. One of the ways I tried to weaken men, and women do, is through using sex to have power, seeing men as easily fooled brutes. With all my victories, I loathed myself for this. Aesthetic Realism taught me the only purpose a woman will ever respect herself for having, as to sex or anything else, is good will: the hope that a person be as good as he can be. In an Aesthetic Realism consultation, my consultants said:

*A woman can have good will for a man through a kiss. [She can feel]...if I apply my lips to his, I'll make him stronger. Do you think when your lips have been close to the lips of a man, your desire has been to have him strong, clear, to like himself--or to be foolish over you?*

I answered, "To be foolish over me." "That," they explained, "is why things have been so murkily complicated."

#### **5. MISTAKE #5: WE THINK WE KNOW WHAT A MAN WANTS MOST**

Aesthetic Realism shows with kind logic that a person's biggest impulsion is not to have sex, but to know and like the world. In his great work, *Self and World*, Eli Siegel explains:

*Sex is the intense, inescapable, tremendous representative of the necessity of a person to complete himself by seeing that whatever else exists is related to him; and indeed is he. Sex, seen fully, is intellectual, has knowledge to it, is philosophic. It is the symbolic, joyful junction of two bodies or selves: symbolical of the joy there would be were a self to accept the world entirely and see its freedom on doing so.*

What a man wants most, I learned, is to be fair to things outside of himself, and to be known truly. He wants a woman close to him to be a means of his true strength and ease through

wanting him to be in the best relation to everything. When a woman sees how much a man wants criticism of where he can be better, and she wants to have good will by being an exacting, compassionate critic of herself and a man, there can be love--the real thing--which lasts and gets better as time goes on.



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