

You don't get a break from being the Oak

August 24, 2019 | 175 upvotes | by [RP_PO](#)

I haven't put this out here on MRP, because I frankly didn't want the pity or the small loss to anonymity, but I now want to put it out there because it may help somebody understand AWALT. And because it's pussy shit to not put it out there. I've taken from this place for months, and I want to give back. I know a couple of you other guys on here have gone through some similar shit, and have the scars to prove it.

So here it is: my son died at a little under a year old last year. He spent a little over a month in the ICU with meningitis, and I could see how poor his hospital course was going. I could see how the seizures were progressively getting worse even on the Phenobarbital. I saw how awful his most recent head MRI was. I saw how my wife was pretty much clueless that we would come to a point where we would have to make a decision to remove care or not. So I slowly prepared her for it. Eventually the time came. The outlook for him was awful. We chose to withdraw care and let him have his peace, and I know we made the right choice.

So I planned the funeral. I wrote his eulogy. I stood up in front of family and friends, and delivered the eulogy. I cremated my boy. I did all of that without shedding a tear in front of a soul. When alone, I screamed at God and the universe. I sobbed and bitched and screeched. I did it right, by my own standards. Until I didn't do it right....

In December of last year, my wife and I were on a trip together for my work, and it all hit me. All at once. I got low as shit. AND I LET IT SHOW. I got quiet and overtly sad as shit, and I let my sweet, loving, unicorn of a wife see it. I thought that somehow she would be there for me, as I had been there for her. Guess again, fucker: AWALT.

Here's how she handled it: She wanted to get a plane ticket, and leave me there for my work trip. She framed it as giving me the space I needed, but she literally had no idea how to handle a "man" who was acting like that. She couldn't know how to handle it. She was so clueless and repulsed that she wanted to buy a fucking ticket to get away from me. And I can't blame her. I had been strong and stoic through it all, but I slipped one fucking time and she wanted to bail. This is what eventually opened my eyes and led me to this haven of faggots and Wise men (and the fact that we had been heading to a dead bedroom for years). This is what eventually led me to the promise to myself that nobody will ever see me cry again.

This is what you are up against if you think your wife is some kind of unicorn. This shit is as real as it gets. You don't get a break for the worst thing that could ever happen to you. Ask [u/johneyapocalypse](#). If you think your sweet wife will be there for you through thick and thin, you better damn sure be the Oak during those times of thick and thin. She will travel through miles of shit to be there with you, if you have the value she craves. She will also travel through miles of shit to get away from your sorry ass if you slip, even one time. But understand that it doesn't matter if the direction is down the shit stream, or up the shit stream: You're alone. Anything else is a compliment to your awesome or shitty life. Might as well make it an awesome life. Be the prize, be your own source of happiness, and live out your mission and vision.

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Comments

The_Litz • 118 points • 24 August, 2019 09:13 AM

You are 100% right, you don't get a break from being an oak, but on the flipside, there are some events in life that break oaks.

This is such an event. Fuck that, you get to cry over your loss. If your wife can't handle it, it is her problem to overcome. As they say in the classics: It is what it is.

Right now she is scared, she doesn't know how much this has affected you. She doesn't know what to do and what you will be like going forward. She fled because she simply didn't know what to do.

You are starting a new phase in your life, life after the little man. Your relationship is reset to zero. Gains/losses are all back to nothing. What you do from here going forward is all that matters.

Strong's brother.

RP_PO[S] • 23 points • 24 August, 2019 10:57 AM

Good insight, brother. She acted in that moment how 99% of women would. I don't fault her. It was a very eye opening experience for me to see her reaction. I was still a couple of months away from crawling out of the matrix, so it left me very confused and hurt. Now that I see the truth, it's almost comical to me how normal her reaction was.

witty-username 1 points 24 August, 2019 08:07 PM **[recovered]**

Just throwing this out there, but have you asked her for what you need? To comfort you in your vulnerability? It sounds like this isn't something you've shown her before so before you fault her for not knowing what you need, consider telling her. Asking for what you need is not weak and neither is being a human being with feelings.

RicoDunne • 2 points • 24 August, 2019 10:37 PM

..... um..... No. Listen to the RP guys herein this post.

JudgeDoom69 • 14 points • 26 August, 2019 12:50 PM

Fuck that, you get to cry over your loss

u/RP_PO you have unresolved grief issues over the loss of your boy. It is definitely going to come out at times when your frame is already under stress (travelling, when you have a few drinks, etc.).

Promising yourself never to cry again is just bottling it up tighter. This is not the answer.

Consider getting into grief counselling so you have a safe outlet to explore and resolve your grief.

Otherwise it will continue to spill out when you don't want it to.

I have been in your situation and I am speaking from experience.

DuffBude • 8 points • 26 August, 2019 06:39 PM

If not counseling, at least some good MALE friends you can talk to about it. You don't have to bottle your feelings in. You also don't have to rely on your wife with them.

SteelToeShitKicker • 13 points • 29 August, 2019 05:09 PM

If your wife can't handle it, it is her problem to overcome. As they say in the classics: It is what it is.

I'm sorry, if you make it through all that shit, and finally get to a point where you let things slip a bit, and your wife is ready to buy a plane ticket and bail, fuck her. That's not AWALT. There do exist just plain terrible human beings, OP is married to one.

I think here we often excuse any bad behavior as AWALT, denying women any agency at all in their lives. Women have urges, just like men, these act as general guides, but just because we missed lunch and haven't started to make dinner yet doesn't mean we are going to butcher the family dog because we need some meat. People have hamsters, but we all also have agency. If we are so weak that when the hamster whispers you are hungry and that Rusty is looking plump and tender, we grab the knives, that's all on you.

We all make our choices, this is the wife that OP chose. I'd be willing to bet that he overlooked many red flags to make this person his wife. Don't excuse this by saying "AWALT."

EmotionalChicken • 2 points • 21 September, 2019 05:56 PM

100% red pill doesn't = emotionless

NMMNG_1 • 1 point • 5 September, 2019 03:44 PM

Gains/losses are all back to nothing. What you do from here going forward is all that matters.

"Reset every day".

On point.

dilberryhoundog • 21 points • 24 August, 2019 11:21 AM*

A woman with others depending on her (her children) automatically becomes a dependent herself. Meaning your wife will be in a dependent relationship with you if she has your children. This simple dependency hierarchy is the basis of married redpill praxeology. The saying "men love women, women love children and children love puppies" is a direct result of this dependency hierarchy... love is easily felt towards those whom depend on you, but love is seldom felt from those whom are dependent upon you (it is usually adoration and affection that is returned to the lover). I could expand on this much more but will move on with how this may help you.

"Be the Oak" means *be the one who can be depended upon, be dependable*. This is sage advice because dependency can only flow one way, but the moment it is reversed it becomes very toxic. You cannot depend on your wife, she cannot (or not be allowed) to depend on her children and so forth. Codependent is the term for this reversal.

"I thought that somehow she would **BE THERE** for me, as I had been there for her."

You reversed the dependency, your relationship became codependent in that moment. To the dependent (your wife) this is very hard to handle, in essence, it is a signal to the dependant that you can no longer be depended upon and their well being is under significant threat. Your wife removed herself, so as to remove your dependency upon her, in the hope that the normal dependency hierarchy will resume, given some time. Deep down this "reversal" will be stored in a mind vault that will affect her relationship with you (how affectionate (sexual) she is with you) given how many other reversal examples are also stored in the mind vault at any one time. What your wife did was perfectly normal.

"promise to myself that nobody will ever see me cry again."

You don't have to do this. It is perfectly healthy to feel emotion, in fact the more intense and immediate it is, the more healthier it gets. You must NOT however **share** / **transfer** / **direct** that emotion to any of your dependants, this is where you fucked up. If you do get sad etc in front of your wife, you will get an immediate shit test incoming, "are you ok honey?" "whats the matter?", DO NOT ENGAGE, STFU, they are your emotions, not hers. Your emotions are what move you to new places or return you back to familiar territory (motion = move) . Rian Stone's quote on youtube "Lean into the pain" is still resonating like a bell in my head. Feel them, use them, but don't share them with anybody who depends upon you.

I had, what I call "emotional diabetes" for 39 years (my whole life essentially). A repression or "flattening" of the intensity and a prolonging of the duration of my emotional responses. (*The same as what happens to your insulin response when you become type 2 diabetic. Both emotional and insulin are responses to stressors)* This was the basis for nearly all my mental / life struggles. "Emotional diabetes" is the foundation for depression, addiction, feeling numb/empty/worthless, no productivity, poor assertiveness and many other negative behaviours. I really recommend not taking the repression route with emotions.

Edit: I think I have ADHD actually, of wich emotional diabetes is a huge part.

RP_PO[S] • 17 points • 24 August, 2019 11:33 AM

That's the thing. I had been healthy about it, in that I would go for drives to get it out. I would rage for hours in my anger phase of losing him. When I felt it, I would cry. I did lean into it. My mistake was talking about my despair with her when it hit me again. I will always allow myself to feel. But I stand by it: nobody will ever see me cry again. Me crying was for me and my own health. I made the mistake of trying to share that with her. Rookie mistake. I can vent/feelz/etc to my brothers/friends. They get me like that.

Edit: I'm agreeing with you. I think.



dilberryhoundog • 20 points • 24 August, 2019 01:40 PM*

Yep, I think we agree. Your mistake was to flip the relationship dependency. Venting to non dependents (brothers, friends, random internet bro's) is fine, the worst they'll do is not be interested.

I reached out to you, because I picked up that you thought the problem was feeling emotions infront of your wife, when I think the true manifestation of the problem was that you **transferred** your emotions to your wife (dependant).

And also because the emotional event is tied to your wife aswell, she went through the same loss. I think that your emotions will want to surface in her presence (this is indicated by your eventual meltdown on the work trip with her, after a long time keeping your emotions out of sight). As incredibly difficult as it may be, to fully resolve, you may have to "be the Oak" she blows against (help her not repress and get out her emotions). Bend in the wind from the gale (be emotional, both from your pain and her pain, in front of her), but do not break or uproot (don't flip the dependency/frame back onto her). Essentially you will have to "show" her that this can be overcome and "how" to overcome it.

You're the captain, the last person on the deck, in the driving rain and the howling wind, guiding the ship through the storm, everybody else is below in the cabins, waiting, watching you crash through the monster waves. You and only you can do this, because you are a man and you are the captain. Your first mate needs you, but you don't need the first mate, you need your courage and strength.

RP_PO[S] • 5 points • 25 August, 2019 12:38 AM

Man that's a good take on it. I'm learning how to show emotion in a masculine way, and lead her at the same time. I have years of poor mental models to break and discard to get there, but I wont stop

or slow down.

redwall92 • 4 points • 27 August, 2019 12:34 PM

Thanks for putting the time in on this and your other comment. This is an eye-opening thought trail for me - both as a husband and as a father (and any other relationship). This is the value I look for at MRP.

pencilinamango • 3 points • 24 August, 2019 11:41 PM

This is an interesting take... thanks for the perspective... solid.

StimulusPackageOne • 2 points • 24 August, 2019 03:51 PM

Yes. Emotions on deck is a kind of inferenced dependence on others. If I can add to your comment about being a captain, I would add not being a survivor... The last meaning you let the outside decide for you what the outcome would be.

adam-l • 7 points • 24 August, 2019 02:59 PM

Sorry about your loss, buddy.

Sure, AWALT, but with most women you get one or two off. If she's incapable to provide you comfort even *once*, she is not wife material, in my book. You are taking up her part of the blame. It is both too much for you, and unwarranted.

StimulusPackageOne • 5 points • 24 August, 2019 03:46 PM

Very well said. If anyone around you (you think close) can't take a single moment of potential weakness.... they are not relationship material. As I've heard before, it easy to be around someone when everything goes well, it's another when shit hits the fan.

FoxShitNasty83 • 2 points • 24 August, 2019 12:54 PM

Mind blown!

FereallyRed • 2 points • 4 September, 2019 01:16 PM

Polish this up and make a standalone post. nice work.

[deleted] • 22 points • 24 August, 2019 12:10 PM

Thanks for sharing... it was hard to read since it brought back some terrible memories of my son dying from the brain cancer.

The good news is you had one slip up... I went into a 2 year depression. Found this place, got me better. That plus therapy.

But coming back to your post - AWALT. My wife didn't know how to handle it and eventually overtly came out and told me "you have to deal with this on your own, I can't help you". And she was right. At the time I hated her for it - couldn't she see I was hurting? He was my son too - not just hers. I had no good friends at the time - no outlet except her.

It may have destroyed our marriage (jury still out on that one). Now the roles reversed and I see her as needing help and leading her to get it (thanks to several of you guys).

I still yell when alone. I still break down and cry at random times when something reminds me of him. Hell - I watched an episode of a show and the guy's son died and a tested up.

You can show emotion. What you cannot ever do is put your emotions in HER hands.

And fuck those people who change the subject when I bring up our son because it's uncomfortable for them. He was an awesome kid - I'm going to tell you about him.

RP_PO[S] • 4 points • 25 August, 2019 12:11 AM

Man I'm so sorry for your loss. I remember seeing you post about this before, and had you in mind when I wrote this post....just couldn't remember your username.

Yes, fuck anybody who gets uncomfortable. I won't stop talking about him. He was easily our sweetest child, loved him some cuddles, and was stubborn as shit just like his old man. I do things from my frame, but now that he's gone my frame includes him, if that makes sense. I enveloped his memory in my frame, and consider his legacy as well as my own as I go through life. Life is still beautiful. In many ways, more beautiful after losing him because of the lens I now use to view the world. He taught me alot about myself, and about life in general. I'm sure your precious boy did the same for you. Go with strength, bother, and feel free to PM me. We're a part of a shitty club together.

[deleted] • 6 points • 25 August, 2019 03:20 AM

Same to you... I hope you're in a good place now. I know I am. I've finally accepted what happened. Those dark days are still tough to think about - I can without breaking down but I don't like to. I was the one was his nurse at home. I cleaned his IV, gave him meds. Near the end, I administered morphing to keep him comfortable. I carried his lifeless body to the stretcher the funeral home brought. I covered him up with his Superman blanket. Like you I arranged the funeral. And then - then when it was all over is when I broke. When there wasn't anything left to do... when it was just me and my thoughts.

It was simply existing - not living but just getting through the day to get to the next one.

Now I want to live again. And I will. My wife isn't there yet. I hope I'm able to get her the help she needs but who knows at this point.

I went to see my parents, brother, sister in law and nephew who is 3 months this weekend Wife didn't want to come (and was pissed I was going). Kids wanted to stay with her. I'll tell you what - this quick trip reminds me how to live - have fun and enjoy it. At the end of the day - you get to choose to be happy or not. No one and nothing else. So it's really simple - everyday I try and choose to be happy. Sometimes I fail. But that's the mindset - I choose to be happy. (And I'm the prize).

I came to MRP for sex... little did I know it would give me something even more valuable - my truest, happiest self.

kolob0k • 4 points • 25 August, 2019 03:56 AM

The Superman blanket .. Many of us here that have kids could see themselves cuddling their kids in their favorite superhero blanket. I do it every night. Thank you for sharing. I didn't loose my son, but I lost my dad and I can imagine the tenfold pain of loosing your child. Hope you find that peace and light and help your wife do the same. Cheers.

Reasonably_Honest • 2 points • 26 August, 2019 08:22 AM

Yes, absolutely. Your son is a part of you, you carry his greatness and ensure it lives on.

pencilinamango • 1 point • 24 August, 2019 11:42 PM

That plus therapy.

Many people (men) don't realize that getting a little help to sort your life out is both very beneficial and

expedites the process immensely.

Way to get your life sorted out... and so sorry for your loss.

[deleted] • 1 point • 25 August, 2019 03:29 AM

The key is to find the right therapist who holds similar values. Find one who is most interested in getting YOU Healthy. The approach from her is - my goal is to make sure YOU, not your wife, not your kids, not your parents, not anyone else are in a good place.

It's another tool in the toolbox. I'm not shy about it.

pencilinamango • 1 point • 25 August, 2019 05:23 AM

Good on ya for it.

The wife and I got through a bunch of our rough times specifically because of a great therapist. She has an incredible ability to call both of us on our shit when needed. Some sessions she'd look at me and call me on my shit, while the next week it may be the wife's turn.

Of course, just to be "like that" I called her a marriage coach instead of a therapist, but same as you, I'm not shy about it, and I actually encourage friends/couples to seek out a coach for their relationships. (MRP can be a great place too;)

weakandsensitive • 16 points • 24 August, 2019 03:02 PM

The topic of how to show vulnerability as a man is advanced as shit.

In essence, it boils down to being controlled in your emotions. And framed as the expectation that's she's special for being allowed to see them. And if she can't handle them, you can shut her out.

It puts the onus on her to appreciate how special she is that you are showing her a greater part of your core.

But that gets to your point --

but she literally had no idea how to handle a "man" who was acting like that.

You have to give her the guidance on how you expect her to respond to your purest self.

I get babied when I'm sick, because if I don't -- I tell my wife to fuck off, take care of everything myself, and remove from her the ability to be a value add.

primordialawe • 7 points • 24 August, 2019 07:09 PM

I like how you bring up value add. It's a cool way to look at the role a woman can fill in life and can fit in many multiple containers.

In essence, it boils down to being controlled in your emotions. And framed as the expectation that's she's special for being allowed to see them. And if she can't handle them, you can shut her out.

The "middle path" approach you have to this is very insightful. I do not agree with the premise of the OP IF what he is saying is to bottle it up, don't let anyone see you have an emotion and then let it all out when you're alone or only with bros. That, in itself, is inauthentic and something that could be executed to such an extent that one turns into an autistic rock about it. You're doing things for other people and on their terms. Someone, anyone, thinks poorly of a guy that sheds a tear reading his own kid's eulogy? In my world those people can do me a favor and identify themselves. Then fuck right off out of my life. Don't care it's my wife, parent, brother, friend, whatever.

The way I view this, the initial mistake came way before the emotional vomit. OP says he was "strong and

stoic" and "did it right" by not shedding a tear, but truth is, he was not. He *acted* stoic in front of and FOR other people. Then broke down and yelled at god privately. Not real stoicism and not a real "oak". Oak with no roots when the storm came. A real oak has the strength to move with the wind of a hurricane, break a few branches, but hold strong and steady.

There's a ton we read here about emotion and how women respond to emotion. Why would this situation be any different? There's a balance required to keep yourself above water and a difference between having an emotion and people knowing it and being an emotional wet blanket that needs its problems solved for it. It's possible to be there for someone as the stronger person, be the oak, and at the same time feel a feeling.

I'd even say showing authentic emotion in the right way when things are really rough can be a benefit. Like many things in life, shit happens. We've all seen the people that act tough til shit hits the fan. Then they crumble. However, seeing someone take a hit, know they took a hit, but stand up and keep going, those are the real motherfuckers. "Yeah, OK, I can tell he's processing this and feels it. He's here with me and for me." There may be better terms for it, but I'll say a mix of the alpha and beta. You're not asking anyone to fix it or make it all OK like a little kid, but you're owning your feelings. This is all predicated on you having a solid frame to begin with. But when you act like you're OK and then fully collapse when you can't deal, it's not a blip on the radar that she knows she can help you through. It was a house of cards she'd been leaning on all along. There never was an oak. It was all a ruse. She's alone now.

I'm open to seeing how my view on this could be corrected or polished up.

And, to OP, regardless of all the pill colors and all the stuff we do here, it sucks you had to go through that. It looks like your mindset has changed a lot through this experience and I hope you and your wife come through this all stronger than before. Before I had kids, an older guy once told me "My only wish in life is that I won't have to bury my own kids." When I had kids I fully understood what he said.

RP_PO[S] • 3 points • 25 August, 2019 12:15 AM

I like this alot. Great perspective. I think that's how i've fucked up in the past: i would just jump straight to the "fuck you, I'll do it myself" mentality and never give her a chance to add her value. But not from an abundance framework, more from an angry, vulnerable wounded dog framework. The more I change for the better, the more I think I can incorporate masculine vulnerability as a gift to her, so she can choose to add value and help her man. Thanks alot for your input.

[deleted] • 1 point • 25 August, 2019 03:48 PM

so are you saying that girls will want to help, or see your emotions or whatever the thing is.

IF she gets the vibe that you can take or leave her support. IF she gets the vibe that you don't NEED her support or help but IF she wants to help it's appreciated.

that kind of thing?

so it really comes down to never leaning on her basically?

weakandsensitive • 3 points • 26 August, 2019 02:59 AM

it's not a bunch of levers to pull.

simbarlion • 13 points • 24 August, 2019 10:32 AM

Sorry to hear about this, I can't imagine. But if your wife is even half a woman, don't run her aground because she didn't know what to do when you took your hand off the tiller for a moment.

RP_PO[S] • 13 points • 24 August, 2019 11:03 AM

She's a good woman. She is definitely welcome aboard my ship, and it's journey and destination are 100% mine now (always was mine, but now I own it) Her not knowing what to do is natural for a woman in that position. Can't fault her for that.

Im so grateful to have found this place, because it gave me the tools to be the type of man to weather this storm and live a good life for my boy.

[deleted] • 11 points • 24 August, 2019 12:26 PM

"Im so grateful to have found this place, because it gave me the tools to be the type of man to weather this storm and live a good life for my boy."

I know I would have never found this place without that storm. I would have just continued going on floating in life and it wouldn't be a good one. Despite all the shit I'm shoveling I've never been in a better place mentally that I can remember. I've had severe mental issues with anxiety since I was 14... now I don't.

StimulusPackageOne • 5 points • 24 August, 2019 03:58 PM

And still you'll find many say this and similar places are toxic; nonsense. I was profoundly touched by your story and we are all here to help and support man in similar situations. Many years ago I was and it helped me tremendously. Cheers.

jacksarmy • 12 points • 24 August, 2019 10:48 AM

Sorry for your loss.

Drummerboy860 • 10 points • 24 August, 2019 03:01 PM

Not to sound like a jerk, but my wife has seen me in dire moments like that, even in tears - and she supported me.

There's also a man from my church who is *very* physically fit, has zero fear of public speaking, will sing at services, you name it. He once had a moment of doubt and sadness so severe he sat in his car for almost 3 hours - but his wife sat next to him and helped him through it while it passed.

Forgive me for saying so, but it sounds to me like your wife is immature and spiritually weak for not even simply talking to you and letting you vent about your own flesh-and-freaking-blood's early death. Shit like that is absolutely traumatizing, and there are some grown men who never, ever recover from something like that.

dilberryhoundog • 12 points • 24 August, 2019 03:27 PM

You are possibly forgetting that OP's wife went through the same trauma, as tough as it is for him, it is for her, maybe even tougher because women seem to be very attached to young children.

Drummerboy860 • 6 points • 24 August, 2019 03:33 PM

That is true. I mainly typed my comment out of anger, honestly. Poor OP has been through the freaking wringer, and the last thing he needs is to not even have the support of his wife in his time of need.

RP_PO[S] • 7 points • 24 August, 2019 03:41 PM

I've made peace with it brother. We talk about adding value all the time....and the truth is, I add tons more value to my life than my wife adds to my life. Including finding my way through this, comforting myself, and finding my new normal.

Iammrp2 • 5 points • 24 August, 2019 03:32 PM

Yeah she can't support him if she need support herself. Women are capable of supporting a man temporarily. Sometimes a child will comfort a parent but it can't be an on going thing. It's not normal. Someone has to be the parent and the rock. Men are naturally more stoic for this purpose.

tap0988534 • 11 points • 24 August, 2019 05:53 PM

Heavy fucking words.

Lingering upon them, I feel like this harbinger the need for close male friendships. Even 100 years ago, male friendships were viewed as the ultimate human relationship, but somewhere between faggotry and feminism, we lost this sense. Male friendships are the place for us to compete, lament, and be challenged to do better. We need them to replenish our masculine energy and right our course through life's treacherous storms. AWALT can never be our soulmate, friend, or closest companion.

Daddie0 • 9 points • 26 August, 2019 01:19 PM

Regardless, sorry to read about the loss of your son.

I saw this years ago and have copy and pasted this into reddit threads quite a few times already.

*What Brown also discovered in the course of her research is that, contrary to her early assumptions, **men's shame is not primarily inflicted by other men. Instead, it is the women in their lives who tend to be repelled when men show the chinks in their armor.***

"Most women pledge allegiance to this idea that women can explore their emotions, break down, fall apart—and it's healthy," Brown said. "But guys are not allowed to fall apart." Ironically, she explained, **men are often pressured to open up and talk about their feelings, and they are criticized for being emotionally walled-off; but if they get too real, they are met with revulsion.** She recalled the first time she realized that she had been complicit in the shaming: "Holy Shit!" she said. "I am the patriarchy!"

Brené Brown did a TED Talk on Shame, google it and then go to 15:30 in.

Here is also a quote from her in a Redbook article on the subject

"Men walk this tightrope where any sign of weakness illicit shame, and so they're afraid to make themselves vulnerable for fear of looking weak. But if you can't be vulnerable, then you can't truly grow and be your best self. Women can either embrace and help men walk across the tightrope, or we can be the ones who push them off."

Just like Brené Brown states in her video "For men, shame is not a bunch of competing, conflicting expectations. Shame is one, do not be perceived as what? Weak. I did not interview men for the first four years of my study. It wasn't until a man looked at me after a book signing, and said, "I love what say about shame, I'm curious why you didn't mention men." And I said, "I don't study men." And he said, "That's convenient."

And I said, "Why?" And he said, "Because **you say to reach out, tell our story, be vulnerable.** But you see those books you just signed for my wife and my three daughters?" I said, "Yeah." "They'd rather me die on top of my white horse than watch me fall down. **When we reach out and be vulnerable, we get the shit beat out of us. And don't tell me it's from the guys and the coaches and the dads. Because the women in my life are harder on me than anyone else.**"

"So I started interviewing men and asking questions. And what I learned is this: **You show me a woman who can actually sit with a man in real vulnerability and fear,** I'll show you a woman who's done incredible work."

*"Men are smart. They hear us asking for their vulnerability, **but are also very aware that we may act scared or resentful when they show their vulnerable side.** You wouldn't believe how often men tell me, "I pretend to be vulnerable, but I keep in under control," or "I give her enough to believe I'm being open because if I were totally*

truthful about how afraid or out of control I feel, she would judge me." Underneath the pretending lies hurt, disappointment, and shame."

SKRedPill • 7 points • 24 August, 2019 12:18 PM

Sorry for your loss buddy. It's devastating for a parent to lose a child -- you also die in part when this happens. For anyone with unresolved pain, I'd always advise reading and following Eckhart Tolle (Power of Now) - I got out of my anger phase after 3-4 episodes of freeing up a lot of trapped pain and tension in my system -- his method of awareness is in my opinion the masculine method of dealing with pain, by allowing it space to dissolve in awareness. Death or any form of dying is a moment to snap us awake to the realities which we aren't ready to address till then.

I'm not advocating you become a believer of NDEs and all that either, but do read a few so that at least emotionally (emotions are not logical, but they need to be addressed), it gives you a new frame to look at these things. It needs you to completely bring acceptance to the unacceptable so that something new can begin where the old is gone. Do not resist the dying of the old and it will burn up to give way for the new. Your son, wherever he's gone, is at peace now. You are actually grieving for yourself for the part of you that died. Understand it. Somewhere down the long road, you too will have to face the only thing we all can be certain of in life, so when it comes, die in awareness and acceptance. Your life is mortal, live it well, do not live it poisoning yourself in pain, anger and just drowning it away.

Sad that your woman feels like bailing simply because she can't even wrap a hand on your shoulder and do nothing except just being there - but that's part inexperience and part incapability. Just remember, as a man, one thing I do observe is that people are exceptionally sensitive to the energy you put out, and women especially so. It is ok, do not develop oneitis even here.

And stuff like this is why you need good male friends - they'll have your back when you fall.

pencilinamango • 4 points • 24 August, 2019 11:39 PM

First off... that sucks, and I'm sorry, no one should have to go through the loss of a child. Hang in there.

Second, My wife (and perhaps AWALT) tends to hate these kinds of "surprises."

Good surprises? Sure. Unexpected breakdowns/drama... not so much.

My wife and I are at the place where I can pre-pave something like this. Example. "Look honey, I've got this handled. Even though it's killing me inside. At some point in the future, it may all come flooding out, but for now I'm building a dam so I can get on with our lives and do what needs to get done. It doesn't mean I don't care and I'm not hurt, I'm just doing what needs to get done. When the time comes and the dam gives way (and I have no idea when/if that'll ever happen), then we'll deal with that then.

Horrible situation dude, and none of us is prepared for something like that to happen, there's no way to know how people will react.

Stay strong, bro.

HitTheWall88 • 3 points • 24 August, 2019 11:46 AM

Sorry about your son. I hope you can find peace. Remember, even oaks break in the strongest of storms.

StimulusPackageOne • 3 points • 24 August, 2019 03:36 PM*

How many times have women told me : you're a robot.... And I always replied that I'm no robot but in control of my emotions because that's how a man deals with tough times... Most if not every time, these same women have stuck around until I decided they weren't inline with my goals and life's mission.

All this to say, being and remaining in control is work, it's hard and requires tremendous discipline. But in the end, you're ultimately seen as strong.

Go lift, get better at what you love and move forward even in the toughest of times.

[deleted] • 3 points • 25 August, 2019 01:56 AM

I'm sorry for your loss.

Blarg_Risen • 3 points • 4 September, 2019 11:06 AM

Look, ill preface by saying im fucking sorry you had to go through losing a son. That fucking sucks. But, and im going out on an oak limb here, you're wrong.

I'm late to the party here so you may be the only one who benefits from this reply. But you're wrong. Your wife was raised, as most women, most people are, that someone else will be there to help them and be someone to lean on when they hurt. It was her parents first, teachers, society, and now it's you. That's her view. But it's a *flawed* view.

Go read my post on a successful marriage. It's the same idea. Women were raised with that flaw. So when she sees you losing it as her protector, her wall, her oak, yeah she is going to recoil, because that doesn't fit her mental model. Do you know what you do then? No, you don't go into her frame, her idea of life where you always have to be the oak, and live in suffering for her benefit...no...instead you say "Hey, that's not fucking OK. I understand you see me as the man. And I've built myself up to be your wall when you need me. But I'm not emotionless. And this fucking hurts me too. I'm gonna ~~say no~~ cry here, and I'm not going to feel guilty about it. If you can't live with that, there's the door."

And you actually say that. Verbally. Clearly communicating without any chance of misinterpretation. So she can't claim some type of mental plausible deniability for misunderstanding.

A few times within the past year I've been knocked down. Not for the count, I was able to get back up, but I saw my wife step in for me when it was needed. And not an ounce of love was lost from it.

What kind of 1st mate do you want? One where if the captain gets his arm cut off while raiding a ship the first mate mutinies? Or the one who steers the ship while you stop the bleed in your cabin, and when asked about the captain she proclaims he is absolutely fine.

When you tell her how shit will run, how you choose to not kill your emotions to save her like some nice guy martyr, she can either choose to understand those words and change, and the 1000ft rope becomes more taut, or she can deny that and continue living in her matrix, and call you a wimpy faggot. You get your choice. She gets hers. That's marriage in a nutshell.

Or you can keep changing yourself so she has a comfy stable life. Dance monkey dance. Your choice.

RP_PO[S] • 1 point • 9 September, 2019 02:36 PM

You're right about telling her how it should go down. It's not all black and white, I just wasn't there yet to set a boundary for how she should act around my vulnerability. Where I messed up was showing that vulnerability to her as a covert contract thinking she would comfort me. In my frame now, if I show vulnerability, it will be as my gift to her: to let her see the true me that feels pain. Like you said, it will be my

choice, and her privilege to be a part of that. Or her choice to turn her back and damage that bridge with me.

Blarg_Risen • 1 point • 16 September, 2019 11:32 PM

I'm gonna be picky here. And I really did like this reply so don't get me wrong. But it's so fucking close I gotta drop this nugget.

In my post on a successful marriage I said that true bonding vibe (love, openness, or whatever you call it) happens when you give and receive freely. Now I know there's a mantra here that you are a gift to her. You are the prize. And that kind of thought turns men from a doormat, into someone who values themselves.

But it's *still* a buffer. Stay with me here: Does it, or does it not seem idiotic to say "my vulnerability is a prize to her"? You thinking your weaknesses are a gift to her is buffering you from just admitting to yourself that you have the capacity to be weak. It's not valuable to her to be weak. But it's **O.K.** to be weak at hard times. And then she has the choice, as you said, to respect that or not.

Once again feeling like your weakness is a prize to her is simply a mask to hide your own shame for feeling weak. It's a cover because for once in you're life, you are giving nothing. You are a void. You give no gift. But what you have is an opportunity for *her* to give *her* gift. To show *her* value. And I swear to god when she does it's amazing.

Everything else you said is accurate. The covert contract. Her choice. And you missing the boundary. I feel like once you are able to come face to face with your true self will you be most at peace.

Over60_FireTempered3 • 5 points • 24 August, 2019 01:33 PM

So sorry for the loss of your child.

I'm not the hardest core RP, or the smartest RP here, but I'm probably the oldest. Saying that I'll offer you my experience here.

Of all the couples that lost a child that I have known, and I can think of a dozen right now, and I know there were more, only one couple is still together.

It wasn't easy for them to stay together, but they did. Maybe they were exceptional, but I do know they talked about splitting up along the way to staying together.

My simple advice is to take your time and give YOURSELF the space you need to navigate this. Don't forget, she doesn't have to come along for the ride, but she has to CHOSE it.

[deleted] • 3 points • 24 August, 2019 10:39 PM

I think the stat I've seen is around 80% split up. The theory on this is that losing a kid destroys both people and they each become someone else. They then effectively start the process over in the relationship.

This may be true in a few cases but I disagree overall with the premise. The cause that I think is more likely is them becoming so absorbed in dealing with the pain however they can that they simply lose any connection to each other. Keep in mind both people are dealing with the greatest tragedy that can befall them - the goal for months or even years is to just make it to the next day. You both are going through the suck (and at a different pace).

The man can't lead his wife because he's devastated. The woman can't lean on her man since he's devastated.

RP_PO[S] • 2 points • 25 August, 2019 12:19 AM

For sure. It's almost universally destructive to a marriage.

Over60_FireTempered3 • 1 point • 25 August, 2019 12:40 AM

I'm not too concerned with the why, so much as my personal observations of what happened. To your point>

The man can't lead his wife because he's devastated. The woman can't lean on her man since he's devastated.

I agree with your take of it, thus my (abbreviated and minimally stated) advice that seems to need more expansion:

...(OP) take your time and give YOURSELF the space you need to navigate this.

Once he puts on his oxygen mask, he can then attend to her.

Don't forget, she doesn't have to come along for the ride, but she has to CHOSE it.

She has to make her own choices and he needs to let that happen.

When your close blood relations die, as I have experienced many times now, your first obligation is to yourself. Ignore that and everyone around you suffers more.

[deleted] • 2 points • 25 August, 2019 03:02 AM

When your close blood relations die, as I have experienced many times now, your first obligation is to yourself.

Your first obligation is always to yourself. But the death of a close relative (brother, sister, mom, dad, wife) or friend is different than your kid.

For me, the strain was too much. I broke. Between trying to be strong for my wife, my other kids, my parents I fucked up because I broke. Then I was there for no one - and since everyone else was hurting no one could be there for me.

I think we are saying the same thing - you have to say fuck everyone else until you get your head right. Then you can start being the oak again.

Over60_FireTempered3 • 1 point • 25 August, 2019 07:48 PM

First, I have lost a child. That's all you get about that.

Secondly, yes to your last sentence. You catch on quick.

Vegasman20002 • 2 points • 24 August, 2019 02:32 PM

Brutal story. Sorry to hear it.

TakeIIRP • 2 points • 24 August, 2019 05:16 PM

Personally, can't imagine going through that and it's something others have gone through.

Best of luck to you OP on your journey.

Aechzen • 2 points • 25 August, 2019 12:57 PM*

There's an old aphorism in politics, that "If you want a friend, get a dog." (it gets attributed to Truman; I have no idea whether he made it up)

It's not horrible advice when it comes to AWALT and male performance burden either.

Talking about things you need to talk about it not a horrible idea; you probably need to do it with literally

anybody but her. It's okay to hire a counselor for some sessions. It's okay to take a long walk in the woods and talk out loud. It's okay to talk to your best male friends about that stuff.

DrRoccoTano • 2 points • 26 August, 2019 12:12 PM

Others already wrote here in a way more eloquent manner than I'd be able to, connecting your story to some solid RP theory and so on. So I'll just add some anecdotal experience here.

You don't get a break from being the Oak I couldn't agree more with that. In the end of the day, when you put your head in the pillow, you're alone and it's up to you only to handle your shit. That's RP 101 and we all know that.

But oaks also break if an hurricane passes through. Do not use your beloved wife as a crutch, she doesn't even know how to be one. But don't hold this shit inside of your chest man, **THIS WILL KILL YOU**. It's no coincidence suicidal rates are so high and stress-related deaths (heart attack and such) are so common among men.

Look for your best friends, a support group, a therapist or whatever the fuck gets you comfortable to vent. Talking and crying helps you process it.

Talk to your wife. Don't cry in front of her if you don't want to, but you can't lead if you don't show yourself as an empathic emotional being (Jocko develops a lot better than me on that). Showing emotions doesn't mean to break down in front of her.

Stay strong brother.

BluepillProfessor • 2 points • 26 August, 2019 04:14 PM*

I thought that somehow she would be there for me, as I had been there for her. Guess again, fucker: **AWALT**.

Like a steel toed boot to the ribs. Your wife's AWALT was similar to my wife's AWALT but I made the mistake of going to grief therapy with her. Sobbing in front of you wife and a bunch of women is not the way to gain or maintain attraction. Your way is much better.

I hope you can cut you wife some slack and not be angry with her. It would literally be like being angry at a deer for darting away when you start to become threatening. These are deep, deep reflexes and the all consuming terror she felt at your meltdown must have been a shock and source of fear to the poor little (ahem) deer.

Finally, please consider grief therapy (without the wife knowing) because you know the canard about tamping down those bad feeling year after year. Tick...tick....tick. All the experts claim you have to let them out when tragedy strikes- and the death of a child is one of the greatest tragedy the mind can imagine.

/u/redpillcoach had a very recent video about how you are alone and the wife cannot be there for you when times are hard. The most she can do is STFU and get out of the way:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmRTUR4vwrc&t=585s>

BarracudaRP • 2 points • 30 August, 2019 10:59 AM

My wife had been begging me to talk to her, we can work it out, she's here to help, blah blah blah.

So I did an experiment: I talked to her about my stressful day, and my thoughts about life and goals and what I did at the gym. I was sure to pick the most vapid, shallow topics because I already knew the result.

As soon as I spoke of my struggles, I absolutely *watched* the look of disgust flash across her face. She hid it well though, because her voice and body language were sweet and her words sounded like friendly encouragement.

I was raised to believe that good men are in touch with their emotions, and that to do otherwise was to be an emotionally unavailable asshole. I still have to remind myself to not show weakness in front of my kids, because I used to be such an emotional tampon for everyone. My wife and kids don't want to see dad have a vulnerable moment of self rationalization, they want to make sure I'm not a pussy so that we'll all still be able to eat next week.

streaker2014 • 3 points • 24 August, 2019 06:50 PM*

Sorry. This is not an example of AWALT. Your wife was just being a shit human being. A wife who actually loved her husband wouldn't throw him under the bus like this. People are individuals. Women aren't monolithic. They all react differently. This is a symptom of a bigger problem within your marriage, not an excuse to show other men that women will ALWAYS throw them away. They won't. A weak and ungracious person is not made by their gender. The death of a child does strange things to a marriage. You couldn't possibly assume that all women will behave in the same manner as your wife in this situation. The pseudo scientific psychoanalytic bs in this sub can get a little out of hand. Don't get sucked into this blame game mentality. Individuals make choices in their best interest. End of story.

Iammrp2 • 1 point • 24 August, 2019 01:01 PM

So sorry for your loss. I'm glad you found this place. Welcome brother.

RP_PO[S] • 3 points • 25 August, 2019 12:21 AM

Glad to be here. One of the best lessons I've learned from MRP is that being vulnerable with other men is vastly more constructive and less destructive than being vulnerable to your spouse. It takes a frame stronger than mine to be vulnerable with your spouse in a constructive way.

Iammrp2 • 2 points • 25 August, 2019 12:47 AM

Yep. With men owning your shit + vulnerability = massive respect. It's the way we bond.

I don't believe women are capable of respecting men. To respect someone is to have some sort of desire to emulate them. Women do not want to emulate men, rightfully so.

I've been reading The Rational Male and he points out that men love women whereas they return adoration and affection. Adoration is kind of like respect but for those that are "higher status". Worship and veneration.

Non_Merger • 1 point • 25 August, 2019 09:29 PM

Very sorry for your loss. Very much appreciate you sharing your experience.

mrp_awakening • 1 point • 26 August, 2019 01:12 PM

Yeah... sexual dynamics can be shitty at times. Your wife wants to be able to turn to you for support. How can she do that if you're showing that you're beaten down yourself?

The alpha traits women are attracted to are protector traits. Protector includes both physical and emotional. That's why both lifting and frame are separately important... they compliment each other.

RP_PO[S] • 1 point • 20 September, 2019 09:55 AM

I agree with most of this. But It's not the vulnerability itself that is a gift to her. Like you said, that's a weakness/vulnerability either way. If I choose to show her that vulnerability, and thus my most "true self" or whatever the hell....i do consider that a gift to her, and to us combined. I screwed it up by showing it to her as a covert contract, which is a double whammy of weak. 1. The initial weakness of losing a son, which is

understandable, and 2. The weakness of how I deal with that, looking for cuddles from mommy. I'll never again show vulnerability from a position like that. That's my frame. Im open to being convinced otherwise on the matter of showing vulnerability as a gift.