

Girl Game: Issue A Challenge

The Red Pill Room | 7 August, 2013 | by Ian Ironwood

I've taken a good chunk of the summer off from the blog to write and conduct Field Work, and I'll be getting back to regular posts shortly. Until then, here's a little something I've been working on I thought y'all might get something out of. It's another Girl Game post, but it's equally useful for men to use on women, slightly tweaked for gender differences.



One of my long-time readers came to me with a problem: after working with her husband to overcome some BETA issues and ALPHA him up a bit to generally good effect, the dude back-slid after an argument into nearly full Blue Pill BETA supplicant mode, much to her dismay and mild disgust. But as she is committed to the relationship, she wanted to know how to repair that damage.

So I discussed it with Mrs. Ironwood for a while and she pointed out that it can be difficult to be assertive from a submissive position without coming across as the typical "bossy bottom" (a term borrowed from Lambdaworld to describe the submissive partner in the relationship who is actually in charge, usually through a multitude of passive-aggressive and emotionally manipulative actions). *No one* likes a bossy bottom.

But that doesn't mean a wife is powerless to affect change in a nascent Red Pill relationship, nor is she automatically at the mercy of her husband's whim. **When a Red Pill husband accidentally shifts into reverse, a Red Pill wife has a chance to give him a way back, if she is bold enough.** You don't do that by bitching, nagging, whining, or pleading. You do that by *issuing a challenge*.



Just like a woman in a relationship can *impel* a man toward the Red Pill and a more dominant presentation by [Extending an Invitation](#), when a Red Pill dude really screws up, instead of letting him twist in the wind while he figures out where he went wrong, **it is often in a wife's best interest to forget the issue that started the argument/crisis and focus on building a way to repair it.** You do that by Issuing a Challenge.

Now, every man wants to feel like a heroic knight in shining armor in his relationship, and while that implies plenty of dreary damsel rescueage, it *also* implies a dedication to a quasi-mystical quest. So when things are amiss in the usual ALPHA-BETA, Male/Female equation to the point where your dude starts whining or moping instead of manfully handling his business, not only do you as a Red Pill wife and First Officer have a responsibility to the ship to point it out in a respectful way, but you have an agency to restore that equilibrium.

Just as you can Extend an Invitation to give him a nudge in the right direction, creating the space to impel him toward a more ALPHA presentation, when he fucks up you can give him a way back by Issuing A Challenge.

Now, you have to be careful about this, because it has the possibility of blowing up on you if you aren't.

You must make your dude understand that this isn't just an ordinary hysterical shit-test, it's a very deliberate and calculated Shit Test. Indeed, it isn't a classical Shit Test by virtue of its restorative power.

Traditionally, by acceding to the Shit Test you lose no matter what: **even if you do what she wants, she loses respect for you for caving in when you really should have stood your ground.**

Issuing a Challenge is more involved. First, it should be well-established just WHY you are issuing the challenge in the first place. Let's pretend, for example, that Mrs. Ironwood and I had a fight, and instead of being all ALPHA like she wants me to be, I caved in and go into obsequious BETA mode until she's ready to strangle me. The first part of Issuing the Challenge revolves around **identifying the behavior you wish to correct.**



"Ian, you're being a spineless bastard. I'm sick of this BETA attitude of yours, and I'm calling a flag on that play." Okay, so she really wouldn't talk like that, but I've reduced a twenty-minute conversation to the headline. **"I really don't feel as attracted to you when you're like this, and I'm not happy about it."** She doesn't need to add the insulting **"Man Up!"** because that's, well, *insulting* when it comes from a woman. **"I'm not happy about it" is sufficient to demonstrate the limits of his behavior.**

Second, once you've established WHY, you need to establish HOW. "Ian, I know you didn't mean to go all Blue Pill Beta on me, so I'm going to *assume* you just had a bad day and got sand in your panties.

However, you *did* hurt my feelings, and yeah, I'm a woman, so that's important. I need to feel like you're in charge again, or we're going to start fighting again. So . . . I'm going to give you a week to think about it, and while you're thinking, perhaps you could do something to demonstrate both your contrition at being a pussy and your devotion to your own masculinity. If you can't come up with something creative in a week . . . well, let's not dwell on such an unpleasant possibility."

(Again, *severely* reducing the convo.)

When setting the goal of the Quest, it is important to keep it a) achievable and b) challenging. I'm a writer. If Mrs. I challenged me to write . . . well, pretty much *anything*, that wouldn't be much challenge. The English language is *my bitch*. I've written everything from menus to major novels. Poetry? In my sleep.

But if she challenged me to, say, sing her a song in front of a crowd that would stretch my meager vocal talent to the limit . . . and be an impressive feat if I could actually follow up on it with less than four beers in me.

Don't make the Quest about tangible gain or reward ("I want an emerald bracelet!") because that is both unimaginative and ignoble; the point of the exercise is to *get your dude's creative juices flowing in a positive direction*. You want to *inspire* him, not *discourage* him. Reducing the challenge to his ability to shell out cash is banal and pointless. "I want an emerald bracelet . . . that you design and build yourself, down to mining and cutting the gemstones" is an achievable and challenging goal.

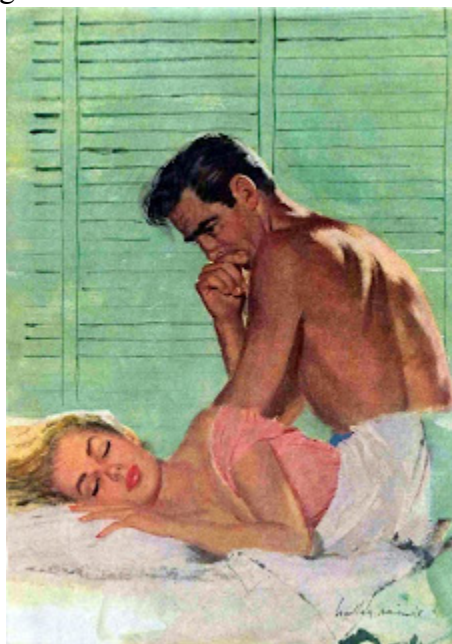
A week and a Quest, as well as some parameters: both manly AND contrite. And, I know up front, the more it references my devotion to her and my family, the crazier the reward when I'm done. The woman issuing the challenge must understand that **the juice has to be worth the squeeze**, i.e. Herculean effort

deserves Dionysian reward. If you're gonna be ballsy enough to issue a challenge to your man, ***you'd better be woman enough to fulfill the reward appropriately.***



Once you've established What you want changed, and given him some idea of How you'd like to see it . . . *step back*. Don't harp on it. If possible, do something or establish something that is a visible, silent reminder of the challenge, but don't mention it again. The Mission has been given. The Quest has begun. The Challenge has been issued. A simple reminder, a token of that ongoing mission, is helpful to keep the matter present in both of your minds without it becoming a point of contention.

To that end, don't let him talk about it with you. That *spoils* it. Part of the magic of this is that after you have set the parameters, your biggest role in this should be that of observer and audience. You've given him an opportunity, now it is up to his masculine whiles to fulfill it. If he consults with you, asks your advice, etc. then he's falling prey to Solomon's Dilemma, and you should politely feign not understanding what the hell he's talking about. If he needs clarification, that's one thing, but the point of the exercise is to give him an opportunity to impress you, and if you're holding his hand the whole way, that ain't gonna happen. The token should be enough reminder of what he needs to do.



Then *give him a while*. It might be a long while. You might find it hard to cultivate patience. But don't give up hope, not until he admits defeat. That should be a crushing blow to his ego, and if he truly cannot

rise to your challenge after giving it his best, then either the challenge was too hard or the man was too soft. Re-think it, re-issue it, and give him another shot.

The goal here isn't to make your dude into a limp-diked Beta. The goal is to give him something tangible to aspire to, a quest to perform, a mission to accomplish.

Here's an example: A few years ago, Mrs. Ironwood was standing in front of her highly-disorganized closet trying to get ready for work, and despite the cubic miles of fine textiles on display for her, she declared that she couldn't find anything to wear . . . and blamed her shitty closet.

"I would give just about anything to have a decent closet!" she declared.

"*Anything?*" my penis asked.

"What do you think?" she asked, her eyes narrowing. It was a casual mention, and she briefly told me what her ideal would be like, but that was the extent of her direction.

Challenge *accepted*.

I let her forget about the conversation for a few weeks, made some secret sketches and preparations, and then the next time she went out of town on business I descended on Lowe's like an avenging horde. I put all three kids to work, and spent all weekend completely gutting and redesigning her closet. There was a light inside, a shoe rack, three tiers of clothes racks (one full one for dresses, two demis for tops and pants), lingerie drawer, baskets for dry-clean only and delicates, hooks for bras, the works. I didn't have to tear out any walls or doors, but when she got home for the reveal, well, she was impressed.



Impressed enough to do *Anything*.

At the time it wasn't a conscious thing, but the whole idea of issuing challenges became a part of our marital culture. Most recently, as **Mrs. Ironwood has taken up her new role as stay-at-home-wife-and-mother (!)**, I've turned the tables on her a bit, issuing a few challenges of my own.

She's been doing almost all of the cooking, which is a HUGE departure for us both. I've been cooking for twenty years, and approach the subject as an art. She's far more literal, has little natural talent or intuition with cooking, and approaches the matter as a science. So asking her to cook anything is a Big Deal.

But I wanted to encourage her pursuit, as reluctant as she was, without being either condescending (which would sap her confidence) or preachy (which would piss her off). She's done magnificently, thus far, and can now turn an omelette as well as the children. But I wanted to give her something a little more confidence-building than bacon-and-eggs. So I issued her a Challenge.

I didn't expect a quick turn-around, but since our anniversary (22 years) rolled around August 1, she decided to act on it. My challenge was for her to cook me *lumpias*, a kind of Filipino fried egg-roll I became enamored with, due to a strange series of circumstances involving moonshine and a huge cast-iron kettle and a cute little Filipino woman, back in the mists of time. I've only had them a half-dozen times, but they're exquisite. Papa Ironwood still recalls his first experience with them at Subic Bay fondly after 40 years, although he never fails to mention that the ones he tried likely had monkey meat instead of pork.



If you've never had them, they're a treat. They're somewhat like traditional Chinese egg rolls, but instead of a lot of cabbage or bok choy, *lumpias* are often made with pork and sweet potatoes or carrots. It's not a difficult dish, exactly, but it is time-consuming, takes a lot of prep work, and involves a deep fryer. It was, in other words, a worthy Challenge to my wife's nascent cooking abilities.

She surprised me Anniversary night when I got home with a whole assembly-line of *lumpias*. I hadn't given her more than "I'd really love it if you'd learn how to make *lumpias*", and she ran with it. And yes, I was impressed, so impressed that I broke out the Third Anniversary Present that night, made us both cry, and proceeded to the more sweaty and sticky portion of the evening.

Ladies, if your dude is lagging, then consider Issuing him a Challenge. It's an opportunity for him to impress you, surprise you, delight you and astound you . . . without you chewing him out for screwing anything up. It gives him the opportunity to demonstrate his competence and ingenuity. And it gives him a tangible, achievable goal toward which to work. And sometimes that's all we need to get us out of our own heads.



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