

Foreign Affairs Advice



Former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi is in hot water with women in general and his wife in particular, but don't feel too sorry for him. He's

got 25 million Italian men behind him, plus a large majority of Latin males throughout the world. As some of you may have read, Berlusconi's wife of 20 years and mother of three of his five children has publicly demanded an apology from him for chatting up other women. By chatting up, I mean flirting in public with ladies and paying them compliments. Mrs. Berlusconi wrote an open letter to the left-leaning *La Repubblica* newspaper, which was published on the front page. In choosing this particular paper, Veronica Berlusconi was quite naughty. *La Repubblica* has been her husband's severest critic: the paper has treated him not unlike the *Washington Post* treated President Richard Nixon a generation ago.

Needless to say, Europe's cheesy tabloids have had a field day. They've quoted Berlusconi ad nauseam, including his corny lines like "If I wasn't married I'd marry you straight away," and "I have 70 billion dollars and don't know how to spend it." (The latter, I admit, somewhat of a no-no, but extremely effective under any and all circumstances.)

Berlusconi, a man I've never met but approve of very much, is no chauvinist pig. Like all Italians, he loves women, and flirting with a woman is considered every red-blooded Italian male's birthright. By dallying with any *bel-ladonna* in sight, an Italian thinks he is doing womankind a favor. Yet Berlusconi's wife thought that his amiable flattery was "damaging to [her] dignity." (She must have American friends to be so touchy.) It was not meant to. Nothing

in Italian eyes should be taken too seriously. The secret of *la dolce vita* and *la bella figura* is that of form over substance. History, from Roman times until the present, has taught the Italians to steer clear of getting in too deep.

Anglo-Saxon mothers teach their children discipline; Jewish mothers teach guilt. But Latin mothers offer undiluted love and support. Italian men live with their mothers even after they're married, so they tend to remain somewhat childish. I know what I'm talking about. I stayed with my parents until late in life, with the predictable results. But back to flirting.

About three years ago, I was rung up by Rachel Johnson, an English writer who was researching her novel, *Notting Hell*, about a rich London borough where a lot of hanky-panky takes place. She asked for my advice, and I gave her my ten commandments about having one's cake and eating it too. She shaped her novel using my ten tips as a guide. (It became an instant bestseller.) Here they are, and I hope all loyal *TAC* readers put them to good use:

1. Always remind your wife that you love her and will never leave her for anyone else, ever.
2. Always remind your prospective lover that, if she gives in, you will never leave her and that you love her more than your wife.
3. Always promise marriage. Promising marriage has served me well these last 50 years, although if one is past 60—or 70 like me—he should also promise that his last will and

testament will look very kindly upon anyone who has had carnal knowledge of the soon-to-be deceased.

4. Never raise your voice or show anger. Always fake jealousy with both your wife and your lovers.
5. Deny, deny, deny. Never admit the slightest indiscretion. Confessions are for amateur adulterers and devout Catholics.
6. Be very generous before and after the affair. Women talk, and word that one is generous gets around quicker than bad news.
7. Marry a beautiful woman, preferably upper class and sure of herself, and cuckold her with lesser, uglier beings. She won't mind, and they will be flattered to cuckold someone superior to them.
8. Be romantic. Whisper, write notes to both the wife and the lover.
9. Make love to everyone concerned regularly. Well-serviced women do not go looking for trouble.
10. Always be in a good mood, and always make women laugh. Show me a man who makes the fairer sex laugh, and I will show you a man who scores a lot.

There is, of course, a word of warning. In Italy, Greece, and in South America, flirting and seduction may be considered masculine virtues, but they are also considered feminine vices. We have been petted and flattered for much too long by our mamas to give equal rights to our wives. Only gringos are capable of that. Anyway, if you are so inclined, feel free to use Taki's top tips, but if you get caught and taken to the cleaners, do not expect any compensation from yours truly or this magazine. ■



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