

**GET-SLIM**  
bonus issue

# Woman's World

THE WOMAN'S  
WEEKLY

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0 796028 4 2  
October 19, 1993  
\$1.19 \$1.59 Canada

# TOPIC OF THE WEEK

**T**oni just couldn't seem to help herself. Gripe, gripe, gripe—at least twice a week, she'd get together with her girlfriends and complain about men.

"We'd talk about how our husbands and boyfriends could never talk about their feelings, about how everything was always done on their terms," says the Arvada, Colorado, businesswoman. "I have to admit, we got pretty bitter. It was as if there was nothing good about them."

Judging from today's daytime TV talk shows, some women like nothing better than getting together with a bunch of girlfriends and complaining, kvetching and basically ripping men to shreds.

And at home, sometimes there's nothing better than calling up a girlfriend to grumble about—what else—what's wrong with men.

It's probably a time-honored tradition. But has it gotten out of hand?

Some say yes—that male bashing, fueled by



## Men bashing!

the women's movement and the media, has practically become a political cause. "Women started to feel justified putting men down," says therapist Carolyn Bushong, author of *Loving Him Without Losing You* and a former male basher herself.

This was true for Toni. A number of bad relationships had left her feeling angry and frustrated. Her former boyfriend constantly criticized her while touting his own intelligence. The relationship left Toni drained of any self-confidence.

"Whenever I complained to my girlfriends, they shared the same feelings, and we all got emotional support," she says.

It probably also fueled their anger. In a recent survey, two thirds of the women polled said they're more critical of men now than they were five years ago.

But according to many

**There is something really satisfying about getting together with girlfriends to complain about men. But do men today really deserve the abuse?**

therapists and feminists, the time has come to stop. "Male bashing is abusive," says Anne Mahoney, director of women's stud-

**'Male bashing is abusive. It's stereotyping and blaming men for our problems'**

—Anne Mahoney



ies at the University of Denver. "It's stereotyping and blaming men for our problems."

And these days, with men increasingly helping with child care and housework, they often don't

even deserve the abuse.

When Laura Peters started having problems with her husband Don, it was easy for her to turn to her girlfriends. They were always eager to listen and to side with her.

But she didn't discuss it with the one person who could actually fix the situation: Don.

"When you male bash with your girlfriends, you've switched allegiance from your mate to your friends," Carolyn Bushong says.

"Stopping is the only way to really feel close to your husband," she adds.

To Laura's surprise, Don



if men bashing with friends is your favorite pastime, stop! It's abusive and unproductive, experts say.

bands for putting them in them," Bushong says.

"We blame them for not communicating with us," Mahoney notes. "But when we male bash, we're guilty of the same thing."

Toni has stopped male bashing. Not only was it getting her nowhere, it was also "eating me up inside," she says.

Through therapy, Toni realized that not all men are bad, but perhaps her choices had been, and now she has a steady beau.

"We started seeing each other after we were already friends," she says, "and it's been wonderful. Before this relationship, I could never imagine getting married. Now I can."

### He said, she said

**S**ometimes it seems like men and women are speaking a different language. But the difference really lies in their communication styles.

Misunderstandings may arise because:

● Women focus more on emotions, while men tend

to focus on taking action and solving problems.

● Women nurture by trying to please and cater to men; men show their care by giving advice.

● Women talk to figure out how they feel; men figure out how they feel and then they talk.