What Not to Say to a Menopausal Woman

by AFRA WILLMORE

Choose Your Words Carefully

It would be possibly a lot faster to write about what you can say to a menopausal woman. If you want to avoid injury, that is.

If my own personal experience is anything to go by, you should probably treat menopausal women a little bit like wild dogs. They look harmless and might be just that — but they could also be ready to snarl and bite with barely any provocation.

If you have someone approaching menopause in your life you might be thinking you have nothing to fear. After all, you've survived PMS and possibly even the hell of pregnancy hormones and post-baby blues. It can't be worse than that right?

Wrong.

When you look at a menopausal woman you probably see someone in the prime of their life, with years of wisdom and experience behind them and years more fun and memory making ahead of them.

What is actually standing before you is a whirling mass of hormones that are wheeling and diving like frenzied seagulls, leaving the person in their control experiencing a whole gamut of exhausting new emotions and physical symptoms.

They are possibly feeling old, a bit insecure about their looks and doubtful of their purpose in the circle of life, now their child-bearing days are over — and yes, this can even affect women who never had nor wanted children.

With that in mind, take note of the following examples of what not to say to a menopausal woman.

Topics to Avoid

Fertility

It would not be wise to remind them that their womb is now a useless dried up husk, or that their sadness for their loss of fertility may be remedied by the imminent birth of grandchildren. You might as well call them a barren old hag and their fury will be something to behold.

Grey Hair, Wrinkles

You might think you are being helpful pointing out grey hairs and new wrinkles, but believe me — suggestions of new skincare regimes or hair dye are much better coming from faceless experts like the those writing here than someone like you, who can be injured by flying straighteners.

Next Page: Weight, Diet & Exercise Promises and What To Say

Topics to Avoid

Weight

Another side effect of the menopause can be weight gain. Experts vary in their opinions for the reason for this with many believing it is down to a change in lifestyle rather than hormones or Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT).

Women find their abdomen in particular may become bloated, or their waistline thicker. Add to that the general sagging that often comes with advancing age and you are left with someone who might be feeling less than attractive.

This is good to bear in mind when your usually confident partner or friend asks if their outfit makes them, or a part of their body look fat.

The answer, my friend, is always a swift and unequivocal “no,” even if you then follow up with some tactful comments about how you thought the outfit they wore last week made them look even slimmer, or made their boobs or rear end look amazing. You do this in the hope that it inspires them to change out of the dress that is currently making them look like a lumpy sack of potatoes and into the aforementioned flattering outfit.

Having said that, if you are in a fitting room of a clothes store, honesty is the best policy. Maybe consider setting up a safe word system, much like the characters in the cheeky novel *50 Shades of Grey*.

In my group of friends and within my family we have chosen the simple phrase, “Back away,” as code for, “OMG what ARE you thinking woman?!”

Used in conjunction with the rule I set for myself that states I must never buy anything now that I wore the first time it was in fashion (patterned leggings, leg warmers, dungarees and layered skirts to name just a few) this system works very well.

Diet and Exercise Promises

It is also not wise to remind the menopausal woman of her vowed intent to diet just after she has ordered the onion flower or chocolate brownies at the restaurant. Remember, there are sharp implements in the form of cutlery at hand and you don’t want to lose an eye.

The same goes for reminding her about her planned new exercise regime as she settles onto the couch for a movie marathon accompanied by popcorn and soda.

Instead, why not pick a calm moment to suggest you buddy up with her and work on improving diet and fitness together, whilst allowing for hormone-controlled carb loading moments of weakness. Your relationship will be all the better for some spousal solidarity.

What To Say

What you could say to help ease menopausal misery is that since she is saving lots of money on overpriced sanitary protection she no longer needs every month, she can take some of that extra cash and treat herself to something that will make her feel happy.

If your suggestion of guilt-free shopping for fripperies finds favor and she buys a new book, nail polish, shoes or even that anti-winkle cream you didn’t dare suggest, you will be in her good books for a little while — at least until you forget to load the dishwasher and the hormone dragon rears its ugly and vicious head once more.