

# Relationship Editor POV: Women Need to Be More Delusional

THINK LIKE A MAN, DATE LIKE A WOMAN



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DASHA BUROBINA FOR PUREWOW

A few months ago, my best guy friend sent me a photo of himself in a tux. He was standing in front of a full-length mirror, perfectly posed, like he was about to host the Oscars. Beneath it, he wrote just one line: "I'm going to be the best-looking man at this wedding."

Not *one* of the best-looking. Not *probably* the best-looking. *The* best-looking man in the room—a fact, in his mind.

This is what I like to call male delusion. It's the same affliction that makes men (many of my [guy friends](#)) believe they could date [Emily Ratajkowski](#) if only their paths crossed at the right dive bar. It's a confidence that shrugs off rejection, glosses over shortcomings and ignores all known laws of probability. Meanwhile, we, women, rewrite our dating app bios five times and assume that five hours left on read means he's drafting a breakup speech.

It's high time we flip the script.

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## The Male-Female Delusion Paradox

This idea of ‘male delusion’ was the crux of my conversation with [Joe](#) and [Hannah Feminella](#) on the *First Rounds on Me* podcast. Joe summed it up best: “I heard Emily Ratajkowski moved to the West Village, and my first thought was, ‘If I run into her on the West Side Highway, maybe she’ll be into me.’” Again, his mentality wasn’t, “Wow, a supermodel moved to New York.” Or, “I wonder who she’s dating.” It was, “Yeah, if our paths cross, I think I could make that happen.”

But let’s apply that same scenario to women. Imagine you hear that [Timothée Chalamet](#) is in town filming for a movie. Do you immediately assume a first date with him is in the cards? Of course not. Instead, you fast-forward to all the reasons it would never happen: *He’s going to be distracted. He’s dating Kylie Jenner. Even if—by some miracle—we did meet, he’d never look my way.* The moment the thought arrives, it disappears; filed neatly under delusional fantasies rather than realistic possibilities.

Here’s the irony: women *are* delusional. Just in the opposite way. While men cast themselves as the leading character in Em Rata’s love story, women resign themselves as an extra on Timothée’s film set. We presuppose we’re not enough—especially when we have a crush—until self-doubt takes over completely. And it’s this obsessive awareness of how we’ll be perceived (“Don’t look desperate.” “Don’t be too eager.”) that causes us to shrink ourselves. Never making the first move, always second-guessing a text and [hesitating before flirting too boldly](#). (God forbid we’re rejected by another humdrum [investment banker](#)).

Yet, after my podcast conversation, I was left to wonder: What if “male delusion” is actually just unapologetic confidence? That, since men seem to be less concerned about rejection, they automatically assume success? Because, the way I see it, women’s so-called pragmatism isn’t serving us—it’s sabotaging us. And if delusion is a prerequisite for confidence, maybe it’s time women start being just as delusional as men...

## The Science Behind Delusional Dating

There’s actually a slew of research to back this up. Studies show that men consistently overestimate their own abilities and attractiveness, while women tend to underestimate theirs—a phenomenon researchers call “[The Confidence Gap](#).” It’s not that men are inherently more desirable; it’s that they think they are. And that belief, no matter how unfounded, changes how they move through the dating world. Think about how a man will walk into a bar, scan the room and assume every woman there is a potential match. Then think about how a woman will mentally disqualify herself from the conversation before it even starts. (*He probably has a girlfriend. I’m probably not his type.*)

Yet, the key to men’s dating success isn’t just about delusion—it’s about persistence. A 2008 study from the *Journal of Psychological Science* found that men handle rejection better simply because they expect it less—and they recover from it faster. Instead of taking a failed flirtation as proof they’re undateable, they chalk it up as a numbers game. The more shots they take, the more likely they are to score. But women? They’re far more likely to dwell on a single rejection, treating it as confirmation that they should stop trying altogether.

Here’s where the science really proved my point: [Researchers at UCLA](#) found that women who perceived themselves as a catch—whether or not others agreed—had more dating success. In this speed-dating experiment, men were far more likely to pursue women who *genuinely believed* they were desirable, even if their actual attractiveness ratings were average. Meanwhile, women with lower self-esteem—those who second-guessed their own appeal—were pursued less often, regardless of how they looked.

In other words, these findings confirmed what men have been doing since the dawn of time: assuming their own desirability, acting accordingly and reaping the benefits.

## The Bottom Line

Delusional dating isn't about acting crazy—though I could write an entirely separate article on how men, do in fact, love a “crazy” woman. Because confidence, however unhinged, is intoxicating. Maybe my guy friend wasn't the most objectively attractive man at that wedding, but the way he carried himself—like he *knew* he was—made it true. The same way Joe never paused to wonder if Emily Ratajkowski would consider him an option. He simply operated as if she already had.

All this to say, it's time for women to put an end to self-disqualification. The shrinking. The second-guessing. The automatic assumption that we're not enough—especially before we even give a guy the chance to disagree. If men can waltz into any room believing the odds are in their favor, why the hell shouldn't we?

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## The Conversation

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