

On Dr. Toni Grant
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A couple of weeks ago, I guess it was, the memory of a radio show I listened to just about daily many years ago popped into my mind, seemingly out of the blue. This was in Los Angeles, a local station, and it was 1979, which is getting to be forty years ago, my gosh. I was in LA for six months—part of a sabbatical year from the university, where I was a professor.

People would call into this radio show with their personal problems, and a psychologist—woman, sounded to be in youngish mid-life, 35, in there, around my age at the time, calm, confident, melodious voice—would figure out what was going on with the caller's issue and dispense advice. I was highly impressed, both by this woman's words of wisdom and by the woman herself, who though I couldn't see her sounded really attractive, and that was very much appreciated in my life at that time, which was notably deficient in attractive women.

But what was her name? that didn't come up right away. And then there it was—Dr, Toni Grant. Yes, Dr. Toni Grant. How was I able to bring that up after all this time? I have no idea, but it is remarkable to me how that happened.

And why did this radio show host appear in my consciousness in the first place? I can't see anything that prompted it; I wasn't thinking about that time in LA, anything like that. I have noticed that when I take the time to get into things that come into my head seemingly out of nowhere like this Dr. Toni Grant memory, they turn out of be about something significant in my life now, and that it's worth the effort to go with where these thoughts and feelings take me. It tells me what's going on with me and what I ought to do about it. It's as though there is a part of me beneath the level of my conscious awareness that knows what I ought to be thinking about, and it ships it up to me and says, here,

make sense out of this. I've done that with the Dr. Toni Grant recollection, and this is a report of what's come out of it.

I never knew what Dr. Grant looked like—I always thought of her as Dr. Grant, never as Toni--her just being on the radio, but I had a picture I'd conjured up in my mind of what she looked like. In my imagination, she was slim, almost boyish looking, about 35, short dark hair parted on the side and combed straight over, straight features, understated make-up, colorless nail polish, dark-rimmed glasses she wore to read her notes for the show, conservatively dressed, perhaps a patterned buttoned cotton blouse and a dark sport coat she set to the side while she was doing the show, and a smallish, professional-but-feminine watch.

Writing out this description just now, it hits me that I had Dr. Toni Grant looking like a girl I had a big fawning crush on in high school, who had zero time for me except for a bemused annoyance and disdain. Like Dr. Grant, she had what sounded like a man's first name (which I won't divulge). She became a dermatologist, which is a doctor too now that I think about it.

I decided to Google Dr. Grant's Wikipedia page. From her pictures, she didn't look at all like I thought she would. Big hair, lightened by the stylist who had twirled it into a grand concoction on top of her head, big smile, maybe a little too eager to please, good-looking but in a painted-face "real housewives" reality show kind of way.

I guessed her age right. She was born in 1942, which would have made her 37 when I was listening to her show. She died in 2016. How ironic her cause of death: this obviously very bright, very vital woman died of dementia. It's all in the luck of the draw; she's gone and I'm still here. But my time is coming right up. You can't be 39-years-old listening to radio shows before the dawn of 1980 without the door marked exit being just a very short stretch down the line.

In 1987, Dr. Grant was a guest on "Hour Magazine, an afternoon talk show hosted by Gary Collins that's on YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t6N867JjTPY> Dr. Grant—

should I refer to her as Toni? or to her real name, which I found out from Google, Toni Glickman?--was promoting a book she had just written, her first she said, entitled *Being a Woman: Fulfilling Your Femininity and Finding Love*.

In the “Hour Magazine” segment, Toni—I’ll call her Toni--was charming, upbeat, and, it seemed to me, a tad self-conscious, vulnerable, and eager to please--not composed and on-top-of-it as she came off on the radio. She looked a tick thinner than someone would be if they didn’t have an issue with eating and weight. My radio Toni Grant (or future dermatologist) wouldn’t have an eating problem.

What’s the point of all this pondering I’m doing? That subjective reality—the reality inside our heads, yours and mine—very often doesn’t square with objective reality, the way things actually are in the external world. We need to keep that in mind as we go through life.

The book Toni talked about on “Hour Magazine,” is out of print, but it’s available used on Amazon for a reasonable price, so I ordered a copy and read it. The book’s dust cover blurb gives a sense of the approach it takes:

Being a Woman will change the lives and thinking of many women today. Suggesting a way to live that is balanced between the adaptive attitude of the homemaker of the fifties and the aggressive woman of the eighties. *Being a Woman* reveals why so many contemporary women are frustrated in their intimate lives. It explores the unfulfilled promises of liberation and the personal disappointments many women have suffered in their quests for independence. It shows today’s woman how to embrace her femininity and how to expand her capacity for love and for bonding. It challenges today’s woman to reclaim the peace, joy, and serenity unique to the female sex: *the power of the feminine*, inherent in woman’s basic nature.

Being a Woman was directed at women, but I found it worth my time as a man. I particularly picked up on a categorization

scheme Toni had put together inspired by Jungian archetypes (Carl Jung--1875-1961) that delineates the four basic qualities, or attributes, of a woman. I used it to help men figure out what was going on in their relationships with the women in their lives. Toni had four categories, which I found conceptually muddy. I switched things around some, and took the categories down to three. I kept labels she used, though now, after I had done my tinkering with her ideas, they don't have quite the same meanings as hers do.

I came up with three aspects of a woman--or qualities, or roles, or personas (synonyms are coming to mind)—that she brings, or could bring, or should bring, to a relationship with a man: the Amazon, the Madonna, and the Courtesan.

Amazon. Assertive, self-referenced, autonomous, goal directed, informed, opinionated. Relates to the man in her life as a companion, friend, co-worker, partner, help-mate, talk-mate, spar-mate, and/or competitor. Today's feminist ideal, which is not to imply it is all bad. To the contrary, as one aspect of a total relationship, it has worth.

Madonna. Embodies the quintessential feminine virtues of patience, kindness, softness, and gentleness. Loving, peaceful, joyous, serene, flowing, graceful. Virtuous, decent, generous, patient, and tolerant. Embodies and imparts human-centered standards, values, and ideals. Home creator. Nurturer. Enhancer, inspirer. Respects, affirms, believes in, and supports her man in his quest for fulfillment. A woman and proud of it, not an emulator of men, not a pseudo-man. A complement to her man, not a mirror image of him.

Courtesan. Emotionally, bodily, connected to her man. In close harmony with him, intimate with him. Fully present, attentive, for him. Affirming of her man as a sexual being. Devoted to sexually attracting, pleasing, affirming, and satisfying her man.

My premise is that these three aspects of a woman as I've defined them are *the* basic elements in a man-woman relationship from the man's side of it. If the relationship is in good shape in these three areas—Amazon, Madonna, and Courtesan—a man is probably having a favorable experience with this woman; and if it isn't in good shape in any or all of these areas, he isn't.

We need to keep in mind that a woman may not be able to bring one or more of these aspects to a relationship with a man to the extent that he would prefer; for one reason or another, she's not up to it. Also, she may be capable of it but doesn't want to. For whatever reason, he isn't her man in that domain or domains, either because of something he does that doesn't work for her (which he might be able to change), or, more fundamentally, and more irreversibly, he is simply not her man in this area, these areas—the biology, call it that, just isn't there for her as a woman.

How about if you read over those three aspects and get familiar with them and play around with them, analyze them, extrapolate from them, think creatively about them?

What do we as men—I assume you reading this are a man--do with these three qualities, or categories, or personas, or roles? (I'm not sure yet what to call them.)

We could employ them as criteria or standards when deciding whether or not to commit to a particular woman. How is she as an Amazon, Madonna, and Courtesan--does she make the grade? Of course, this requires us to get clear about what we mean exactly by "making the grade" in these three areas.

As you are weighing things, you might think, "She's not great in the Courtesan area (or in the Amazon area as an intellectual companion, whatever it is), but over time I think I can bring her around." Personally, I'm not big on the prospects of being successful with that. If she doesn't, say, turn on to you physically, or if she doesn't like the serious fiction you prefer to read and discuss, don't count on that changing up the line in any meaningful way. But then again, every case is unique.

These three areas could be used to get a handle on what's not working in an existing relationship. You could take stock of how it's going for you in the Amazon, Madonna, and Courtesan dimensions of the relationship and see if you can pinpoint specific problems.

Once you've identified what isn't going right, the question becomes what to do about it. You have to figure out what should be done and could be done in this particular situation with the capabilities and resources you have at your disposal, and with your woman being as she is. That's a problem-solving job.

Perhaps you are willing to try make things better for yourself and for the woman in your life—you can bet that if you aren't happy with what's going on, she isn't either. You can see whether she is willing to share this work with you. If she isn't, don't get your hopes up about being successful.

You might conclude that there's no hope of things getting better in the Amazon, Madonna, and/or Courtesan area(s), that it's a lost cause. Then the choice comes down to whether it is best for you to stay in the relationship and bear up with what's going on because there are enough good things in the relationship to compensate for it, your prospects for anyone better aren't bright, or you don't like the idea of being alone; or you can make the call to hit the road.