

# Pump Up D'Angelo

Wow! Has life changed for the better or what? Within the space of three days I discover the root of all my problems with women AND THEN I discover how to score chicks in a positive and New Man kind of way.

The month started pretty bad. Auckland student radio station 958FM held its annual radiothon and I wanted to do my bit. I generously offered myself as a "Celebrity Date" for them to auction off. Little did I realise that the place was being run by Lesbians, Gays and Left-leaning Liberals with no sense of humour.

Seems they didn't like some of the things I've said in this column and they were determined to suppress the screaming public desire for Nick D'Angelo. They claimed no-one wanted to buy a "Celebrity Date" with me, which I know is a total lie because I rang up myself using a false(etta) voice and bid \$100.

Actually, to their credit they did say I could join them at the Mexican Cafe for the Celebrity Dinner even though they hadn't managed to sell me, although really it was the least they could do considering they had charged me \$50 upfront to be a Celebrity Date in the first place. (I'm starting to wonder about that Kane bloke).

I thanked them for their offer, but the thought of sitting alone at a table set for two whilst all around me BFM celebrities basked in the glory of their respective fans (some of whom had paid over a \$100 to eat with their favourite BFM personality) was more than my broken heart could bear.

Then I realised I could probably order two dinners if I just told the

waitress my date was in the Powder Room, so I went after all. Besides, it would put me in the same room as Lisa Van Der Aarde. Just to be near her would be worth the humiliation of dining solo at this culinary love-fest.

Gorging myself on my fifth chicken enchilada I suddenly collapsed. The doctors explained later that my stomach was so full of rice and refried beans that the enchiladas were stuck in my throat unable to go any further, depriving my brain of oxygen, and causing me to black out. Pretty gross, eh?

As I lay in my hospital bed I pondered my future. There had to be better ways of attracting women other than macho displays of power-eating. Exactly what they were I had no idea. All I knew was that it didn't seem to matter how many times I went through the Drive-thru, no-one was taking my order.

It occurred to me that my problems with women resulted from a maladjusted childhood. During my formative years I didn't have access to girly magazines like the other boys in class. Sure, I tried to be like the other boys, trading a weeks worth of lunch money for someone else's Playboy (swiped from beneath their fathers' bed). But every time my mother caught me and clipped me around the ear. And you wondered how I got these ears?

Forced to seek out the underwear ads in my mothers *Womans Weekly*, and reading the racier letters in *Cleo*, it was no wonder I'm a mess. Back in those days *Cleo* had centrefolds of nude MEN for gods sake! It took me years to figure out what those handy, flexible, 7-inch vibrating facial massagers advertised at the back were really for.

I mentioned this to Bob, the only male nurse on my ward (and very handy with a warm flannel) during one of our manly discussions. The female nurses were alright but they had sort of turned on me when I made a genuinely witty joke about the Matron who had just told everyone she was pregnant. (This stuff sort of gets around the ward y'know?). She must've had PMS or something because when I made a crack about the dangers of pregnancy at her age she went purple. Christ, you'd wouldn't think anyone who indulged in unprotected sex with multiple partners could be so sensitive. How did I know she didn't know who the father was?

Anyway Bob said I really needed to go back to my adolescence and confront my fears about the opposite sex. He explained that men today were confused about their gender roles. The 'Womens Movement' had left men wondering how to behave and that during the 80's as we all strove to become caring, sharing, sensitive partners for our women folk we had instead become wimps.

His friend Brenard was running a workshop assisting today's men to rediscover the 'Manimal Within' and become a New Man. I'd heard about this poncey crap in *Time Magazine*, evidently it was all the rage in America. Men go out to the woods and hug trees, which sounded like a frolic in Fairy Land to me. But the brochure did promise "...erotica without guilt" and mentioned "surrogate partners," which sounded like sex to me so I duly plonked down my \$400 and signed up for a 3-day Weekend Workshop with Brenard.

Meeting in the Rumpus Room of Brenard's Mt Eden home (described in the brochure as a sumptuous Conference Facility) we began the workshop by drinking Lion Red and getting to know each other. There were nine of us which Brenard said was just the right number, he wouldn't allow any more to enrol in "our" course.

Brenard instructed us to drink more

Lion Red. We had to savour its flavour, it was the taste of a working man's brew. During the 80's we had all become trapped in the mire of Boutique Beer, he said. We had forgotten how to enjoy the drink of our forefathers, it was time to put down our imported beers and return to the amber elixir that had once made this country great.

After finishing our six-packs Brenard had each of us stand up and read from *The Collected Poems of Rodney Rude*. They were dirty little limericks, the sort you could never repeat in the fancy pubs of Auckland for fear of offending the ladies present. But they were funny (or seemed so at the time) and we laughed uproariously and clapped each other on the back in a manly sort of way.

After each finishing our second six-pack the ice was broken — we were well and truly mates. We proved this by calling each other Mate at every opportunity. Brenard said it was now time to get in our cars and drive up to the Powerstation. Sure, we were pissed, but it was only a short distance and we had to prove that we could triumph over adversity. Besides, were we really *that* drunk? "NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!" we all replied manfully.

Brenard had selected the Powerstation because Bjorn Again were playing. They are an Australian band who think they are the reincarnation of Swedish 70's supergroup ABBA. Brenard explained that we were of the ABBA generation, that all our problems came from our sexual repression as children brought on by not knowing how to deal with sexy Swedes in short skirts.

I couldn't believe it. Where once there was darkness now there was light. Brenard was a bush burning in the desert, from that point on he became my adoptive guru. He was sooo right! As a child I had joined the other boys behind the bikesheds at playtime (it was only later that we learnt to call it interval) and boasted of our knowledge of naked women.

It was there that we traded second-hand Playboys and dreamed of getting our hands on the real stuff. Hard-core Swedish Porn! We didn't know what it was but we'd heard they showed *everything*. (At the time we didn't realise there wasn't any anatomy left to show). We knew also that in Sweden pornography was legal and that children as young as us could watch XXXX rated films if we wanted to. We wanted to alright!

But this was New Zealand in the 70's. We didn't have the array of saucy titles you find on the top shelf of any local dairy today. All we had were ABBA. Two sexy chicks in short skirts who made pert little bouncy movements and stared down the barrel of the camera as if they were looking at you. The other boys seemed to think Agnetha was best because she was blonde, but I preferred Anni-Frid.

Whatever this Swedish porn stuff was, I figured it couldn't get much better than Frida. There was something about her demeanour, something about that look in her eye. You just knew she was down and dirty, that she was probably the type of girl who swallowed happily. Watching Bjorn Again the memories of my repressed childhood came flooding back.

Brenard encouraged us to drink more Lion Red and express our repressed inner selves. In a practice similar to rebirthing we had to go back to childhood and say the sorts of things we had wanted to back then, but couldn't. Only then could we begin to grow into healthy adult males.

The Powerstation staff threw us out, refusing to accept that our cries of "Show us your Breasts!" was cathartic. Brenard said not to worry, he was well pleased with our progress. Being only midnight it was too early for the mysterious next stage (Brenard wouldn't say what it was) so we went back to the sumptuous Conference Facility for more Lion Red.

This time Brenard made us drink out of bottles from a natty old wooden crate in the middle of the floor. Having

weaned us from poncey cans to big brown bottles Brenard urged us to accept the final test of our mettle — and promptly threw the bottle opener out the window. With a special (almost primeval) joy we discovered the masculine pleasures of opening bottles on a bench top, or by using another bottle. Steve from Roskill elicited hearty applause when he opened one with his teeth.

Two and half crates later, at about 2 am, Brenard said it was time for the final lesson of the evening: "Erotica without Guilt." With broad grins and drunken cheers we piled back into our cars and headed up to the Velvet Crotch on K'Road. Handing my \$30 to a fat sweaty Samoan (gender unknown) I ordered the Sultan's Feast.

The following morning I was rudely awoken by Brenard banging on a pot and telling us it was breakfast. It was 8 am Saturday for Christ's sake and I could still feel Bjorn Again's kick drum pounding inside my brain. It got worse — we were all expected to tuck into a traditional kiwi breakfast of cold toast and soggy weetbix from Brenard's wood-veneer breakfast nook.

Then it got worse — Brenard dropped a bombshell. Everything we had done the night before was wrong, he told us. It had been an exercise to purge the Old Man from within us. Our mind numbing hangovers were testament to the folly of our misguided gender responses. I thought it had been pretty good fun.

Pouring us each a tall glass of Spirulina he went on to tell us that before the weekend was out we would all become New Men. Today we would be going to the Hunua for a barbecue of Kumara and Ginseng. We would gather in a circle and discover the fine and ancient arts of sexual surrogacy, thereby freeing ourselves from genetic desire to subjugate women in a physical manner.

"You mean we'll sit in the bush and wank our dicks?" I said before leaving. NICK D'ANGELO

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