



# Are you man enough for a “Man Shower”?

The gender that brought us the stag party and paint ball proposes yet another way to celebrate By Jason Brand

From the cradle to the grave, we’ve got celebrations: birthdays, graduations, and of course the time-honored bachelor party. And yet we’ve left becoming a father out of the pantheon of rites of passage ceremonies. It is arguably the biggest event in a man’s life, yet he’s left to play sniff-the-baby-food-in-the-diaper at the co-ed baby shower or wait alone watching sports until he gets the bootie call (to pick up the presents) after his wife’s shower.

This tragic oversight leaves the dad-to-be standing at the precipice of parenthood with no guidance, no support, nary a goofy toast! I propose that we fill this gaping hole that lies between the stag party and the retirement shindig, and heretofore, it shall be referred to as the Man Shower.

## Sounds good on paper...

The problem is, men don’t know how to do the Man Shower. Sure, we can pull out the obligatory cigar, but that’s fleeting and frankly out of step with our current definitions of fatherhood. The men

who handed out stogies in hospital waiting rooms 50 years ago knew nothing about wearing a baby carrier and even less about the lonely adventures of changing 2 a.m. diapers. Future fathers need to hear from those of us who know the ropes, and they need to know that a community of good friends surrounds them. Sound corny? Whatever.

Shawn Sears is a veteran of the Man Shower having attended three such events and most recently hosting one for his friend Jeremy, which he dubbed “BabyPower,” “I hosted the BabyPower, put out an Evite, and asked people to bring food,” he says. “[The invitation] mocked what we were doing, saying ‘We’ll have a guys night and do guy stuff,’ but it was a very real experience where we did away with stuff like what color to paint the baby’s room or what to buy the baby. We got down to what life is really about.”

Enter the era of the Man Shower. Bring it on! High five!

But wait...it’s not that simple.



### There's no playbook

Turns out, planning a Man Shower has its complications and not surprisingly, it comes down to the same old problem: Men always find a way to strip the intimacy out of any male-only outing, and we have the perception that an activity that does completely not revolve around shot glasses and bar stools is just not...manly.

The Man Shower has this problem at its core, because without staring at women and pounding booze, we don't know what to do with ourselves. Add to that the fear (and sometimes reality) that male friendships will be over after the baby comes and the problems multiply. Does this mean that the Man Shower is doomed? Are the male stereotypes and the fears of intimacy and loss too great a force? Not necessarily, but it will take some effort and some highly evolved men to get it off the ground.

The first step is making the commitment to celebrate. This means getting the ball rolling either for you or for a friend. So don't feel shy about calling a buddy and asking him to make the event happen for you.

The second step is getting over the fear of intimacy, because this is too important a time to fall back on old insecurities. The truth is, being a father is complicated, and this is an all-hands-on-deck time in your life. Whether the get-together helps you remember what it felt like before the responsibilities of family put everything into hyper-speed, or it allows you to learn the not-so-ancient ninja art of soothing a baby without a set of boobs, by not creating this place to share the info and reaffirm solidarity, we're left to read the books or defer to our wives. That's fine, but is that how we really want it?

The third step is a bit more complicated and begs the question:



## The Man Shower Code

1. Commit to celebrate
2. Get over the fear
3. Keep it simple
5. Make room for the ceremony
6. What happens at the Man Shower stays at the Man Shower

What should the Man Shower be about? Sears attributes the success of BabyPower to keeping it simple. “Do things that are going to make everyone comfortable. From having a drink to going to play golf, do [the ceremony] as part of the event, and don’t put guys on the spot.”

The Man Shower might take a bit of work but the reward goes far beyond a night out with the boys: It makes a statement about the importance of keeping up our friendships even as life changes, it takes some of the mystery out of how to be a good father, and it allows us to have our own time and place to celebrate the biggest of milestones.

Step up and have a Man Shower, or suffer the emasculation of having to suck beer out of a baby bottle at the next co-ed shower. 🍷

**Jason Brand** is a family therapist with a technology background who specializes in bridging the screen divide between analog parents and digital kids.