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The Yummy Daddys – or, the “Dummy’s”

It was only a matter of time before the London yummy mummy (the trendy latte-sipping – Blackberry holding – designer clad mums) found their male counterpart. No longer content with being the new men, the flexible father or the home heroes, the men who like to look after the children have a new label: the yummy daddy. The fathers in London, who are repositioning themselves as the more desirable “yummy daddy”, are looking to role models such as Jude Law, Brad Pitt.

Not only are the yummy daddies expected to be fit and attractive, but also dress appropriately – this means a “uniform” of stubble (no time to shave), satchel (a cooler and male nappy changing bag), and designer jeans (casual but smart). Oh, and a pair of dark sunglasses to hide the bags under the eyes (they get up in the night to feed baby with a bottle). As Rafeal Behr pointed out in the Observer recently, “Unkempt by choice, the yummy daddy wants people to think that he spends so much energy caring for his child that there’s none left for himself.”

Even the British government are picking up on the trend, and proposing things such as special fathers-only parent evenings at schools, and are going to offer courses designed to help them in their role as fathers (especially where the parents are separated).

But however glamorously, exclusive and trendy you try to package and present them, beyond the fancy labelling the reality is that such fathers are still complaining about being shunned at the kindergartens, scoffed at in the organic supermarket, and treated with suspicion at the playground. As Dan, a trendy 40 year old builder and father of one says, “when I go to the playground with my daughter in Notting Hill, the mothers stare suspiciously at growing number of yummy daddies that are there with their children.”

Not surprising then that the yummy daddies have been dubbed the “Dummys” (from Daddy + Yummy and which means Trottel in German) by some critics. As Dan says, men are getting increasingly depressed about their role in life –as they do not feel respected as fathers nor wage earners by women. “Most of my customers for building work and renovation are women” he says, “they have the spending power and make the decisions, and men are increasingly emasculated.” Surveys also show that men are in their 30s and

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40s are increasingly frustrated about their circumstances. As one writer recently said, "Women require their partners to be more involved in domestic life, to play an active part in child rearing, and keep the bank at bay. And we have to be Olympic standard lovers too."

Meanwhile a growing number of counselling and therapy centres are opening up to deal exclusively with men. Noticing a gap in the market to help these "Dummys", Dan is also planning to retrain as a counsellor for men.

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