

Why parents will never approve of your partner: They instinctively want someone who will tend to their daughter's every need

- **Parents want someone to take over responsibility for caring for their child**

By [Fiona Macrae](#), Daily Mail September 18th 2013

It is an all-too-common scenario – she thinks he is wonderful but her parents simply don't approve.

Now scientists believe they have discovered why mothers and fathers rarely think their daughter's boyfriend is good enough for her.

The belief stems from a deep evolutionary instinct to see her settle with someone who will look after her and provide for her every need.



'He is bad for you': Scientists have found the reason why fathers and mothers never think their daughter's partner is good enough

The research, conducted by British and Dutch scientists, suggests that parents are pre-programmed to make sure their children end up with love, support and money.

And they would prefer their daughter to find a caring, sharing chap to take some of the load.

Daughters can exploit this wish, however, by settling for a man who isn't a good provider – confident in the knowledge that their parents will compensate for his shortcomings.

Dr Tim Fawcett, from Bristol University, said parents' disapproving behaviour appears to be connected to the way we have evolved.



In other words, parents who disapprove of their daughter's choice can't help it – they are simply acting the way nature intended.

Working with scientists at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, Dr Fawcett created a computer program to investigate why the two generations disagree on the definition of a suitable man.

This revealed that the biggest bone of contention for parents was the level of support their daughter's choice of mate could offer.

Typically, parents would prefer a son-in-law who is more caring and supportive than their daughter would choose. As a result, the two generations will be looking for a different type of man.

Dr Fawcett said: 'Parents want all their daughters to end up with the same level of support, so to achieve this they give more to daughters who have less from their partner.'

'But this leads to conflict over mate choice because daughters can afford to choose an unsupportive partner in the knowledge their parents will pick up the slack.'

He added: 'The conflict over parental resources is central to understanding why parents and children disagree in mate choice.'

Dr Fawcett's research, which has been published in the journal *Evolution and Human Behaviour*, only looked at daughters.

However he believes that the theory could also explain why many parents are unhappy with their son's choice of partner.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2424136/Why-parents-approve-partner-They-instinctively-want-tend-daughters-need.html#ixzz2hDgy9Wec>

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