

Notes from the book Mars and Venus Together Forever by John Gray

Thank you to John Gray for his contribution to keeping couples together and keeping them happy. This is no small challenge.

Main goal of the book: How to satisfy your partner's emotional needs without sacrificing your own personal fulfillment.

He points out that marriage has changed several times in recent times.

At one point, survival was more important than romantic and emotional needs. ***Now that survival is pretty much assured, people are pursuing romantic needs and emotional fulfillment.*** That was never part of the marital understanding. Now, couples have to acquire skills and there is a shortage of people who teach those skills. Parents don't know them to teach their children and many spouses have no idea what they need to learn/teach.

He furthers that a *man's value used to be in providing and protecting.*

Not much more was expected of the man. He points out that the police and military now protect us and women are able to provide for themselves more often than not. The male job description has changed.

Women can please their man by letting him please her.

If she is dissatisfied, he turns off rather quickly. He gives up if he thinks he cannot make her happy or that he never does enough. When she is unhappy, he believes he is a failure.

*Try this: Teach him how to listen to you. Teach him what makes you happy.

Men used to see home as a comfort base. Now he is not comfortable and she is not able to comfort him because she is also overwhelmed with duties.

The tasks that used to be given all day to do (housework) she now must fit in 2-3 hours after she gets home from work and takes care of the food and children.

Additionally, most **women work in a fairly masculine environment.**

They are not men, so this **environment drains them, "it impoverishes the feminine soul,"** he writes.

Paid work does not nurture women the way it nurtures men. They are out of harmony and need to nurture their feminine side. Men can help with that.

Men need to stop telling her that she should do less and ***try supporting her more.*** She can give and give if she feels supported, just like he will sacrifice himself if he is **appreciated.**

*Try this: **Support her by listening, not giving advice. Help him by appreciating his sacrifice.**

When each partner *takes the other for granted*, saying things like, "But that's his job, he is supposed to do it," it hurts and de-motivates the partner. Support encourages and motivates more work.

She says, "if you loved me, I would not have to ask...You do not ask therefore I must not be worthy of your love." This is not the way the man tends to see it.

Listening (pp123-125, 130-136, 143-150 are worth the read)

Men, are you ready to do less and get more? **Listen actively, without advice or suggestions or doing other things.** She usually wants your **full attention** for a brief period of time, **not your shared attention.**

If you listen to her, she can articulate her problems and then set them aside.

4 Ps:

Pause- *"Is this a good time?"*

Prepare- *"I understand how hard it is to listen. You do not need to say anything. I just need 30 seconds of your time"*

Postpone *"I need to talk to you, is this a good time?"* If it is not, talk to others and ask him if he is ready.

Persist *Ask him to listen. Many men will not say they are ready to listen without prompting.* It does not come naturally. They are not actively avoiding or rejecting you. They play the talking game differently than women do, that's all. Frustrating for both of you.

If a man cannot figure his woman out, he gives up. It may not be a long attempt. Relationships go more smoothly if you can make it easy to figure you out.

***Try this:** Teach/prepare your man by saying, "You don't have to say anything. I am sure I will feel better if I can just talk about it," before you begin. *He needs to know how to listen* and process and not take it personally.

Communication nurtures her directly where appreciation directly nurtures him. Rather than mock it or hold it in contempt, use this information to improve the situation.

Listen to her and she will willingly do more. Accept his need for space and know that talking is stressful not stress reducing- for him. "Silence is a man's birthright," he writes.

***Try this:** "Here's how I want you to support me." "I would like your full attention on this" "I appreciate how hard it is to listen." "Is this a good time for us to talk about ..." "You don't have to change your mind, I just want you to consider my point of view" *These statements make it much easier for most men to listen.*

*****She needs to *nurture her feminine side after masculine communication at work. This means talking and receiving support. Her feelings change when she talks and sorts it out by talking. Anger and grudges change if she is allowed to talk.***

Always consider your audience- *are you speaking in a manner that can be heard by your audience.* If your audience is tuning you out, change your strategy.

Consider what your male audience is often thinking, "You have 30 seconds of my attention, not 5 minutes, so please make it count. Give me a reason to listen and a place to focus my attention. If you are telling me details and are not going to make a point, it will be excruciating to listen. I do need a goal or a focal point to listen to you."

Appreciation

If she is not happy to see her man, his desire to please her, protect and provide may be dampened. He hears that his hard work counts for nothing.

Her happiness signals to him that he is loved. Your happiness washes away his stress. Yes, he wants you to be happy, he simply is not sure how to do it.

A subcategory of appreciation is fixing. Men do not like people to fix them, especially if they are not broken. ***Any attempt to change a man will be met with fierce resistance.***

When a woman "corrects" a man, he heads back to his comfort zone. That is not good for communication. He is telling you to accept him as he is. Interesting that when you accept him for who he is, he is more likely to make the necessary change.

Alone time

Leave me alone to cope. It is akin to fire gazing. I look into the fire after a tough day. ***I do not sit with other guys and talk about the vulnerability. I try to forget my problems so talking would be the exact opposite of what I need!***

When a man loves you, at times he will pull away, and go to his cave...recuperate, forget his problems and gradually connect with his loving feelings. *Once he feels better, he automatically comes out and is available. Do not rush it. Do not make him wrong for being a man and doing it differently than you do it. Do not go into the cave. Consider this perspective: Imagine him expecting you to change the way you connect and saying that you are wrong for not changing.*

Ask him if he is in his cave, if he is not listening really well.

Ask if he is in the mood to talk and respect it. *If he is not in the mood to talk, taking it personally is a mistake. She may think that can ONLY mean he does not love her.*

She feels rejected when he does not want to talk, like he feels rejected when she does not want to have sex.

**Try this: "A part of me would like to have sex, but I think I would enjoy it more later," is not the same thing as saying "No."*

***Men try this:** "I really am not waiting for you to notice that I am distressed. I want to be alone. That is not something that you have to fix."

If the man is stressed, he figures that if he does more at work (be a better provider) she will be happy. It does not work that way, anymore. It used to.

See pp60-69 for more good ideas on communication

Emotions

When he has strong emotion, he sorts it out alone, in a solitary way so that he can feel. He needs to act to feel.

When she has strong emotion, she needs to sort it out together, work in community so that she can feel. Talking is her medium.

Read p 112 the Role of money

Clear signs- imagine each gender giving very clear signs when you are open to solutions/suggestions/talk.

Women tend to listen for awhile and then talk OR she waits until someone asks her to talk. This is foreign to most men. If he wants to talk, he talks. He does not know the woman rule that after talking he is supposed to ask her questions.

If you want him to talk, try this: Stop asking questions, it feels like interrogation. Instead, try "That makes sense because..." This comes across much better and soothing. It lets him off the hook of needing to talk more. He may be open to conversation but not have anything to say (common for men).

P 209, pp 214-220 What women could say ; Signaling he is ready to listen

pp 223-227 What not to say

Feminine/Masculine Side

When a woman witnesses a woman being feminine and respected, she becomes more feminine. Otherwise, she chooses another way in order to be respected and becomes more masculine. She goes for the respect, either way.

A man will be more feminine if he does not witness a man being loving and being strong or powerful. He goes for the strong. If that means he loses the loving, it appears to be worth the tradeoff.

A single woman is from Mars (Men are From Mars) because she takes care of herself. Once in a relationship the traditional female tenderness begins to emerge.

Ideally both genders would nurture both sides of themselves, starting with their biological gender.

He asks, "Why should I sacrifice, give of myself, if it makes no difference."

She says, "I will not give of myself because I am not supported."

Men who are too far on the feminine side need to be around other men, do personal growth work and look to their spirituality for support.

As with the above, please see if these ring true for you. For some couples, the roles have been switched on some of these. If you think they are way off, ask your partner.

She cannot find her own feminine side and be the man for her.

She feels turned off by this overdeveloped feminine side of his unless it is balanced by his masculine side.

To toughen up, he needs to nurture his masculine side. He needs to stop being more sensitive than she is. He needs to talk less than she talks. He needs her to appreciate, accept and trust him.

Please do not make her support his need to talk and share feelings –this should be done with other guys.

Need to support the female to achieve balance in this relationship.

He needs to show courage and try out new formulas for success.

She needs direct support for her female side. Don't overlook your feminine side or deny needs. Spend your time with women friends where you do not need to do all the work in a conversation.

He needs to appreciate all that she does, be caring, understanding and respect her.

NOTE: It is not healthy for them both to compete for attention at the same point in time.

When she pursues the man, he moves to his feminine side and waits and lets her pursue- he loses his appeal.

Without sexual polarity, attraction between them decreases.

He needs to validate her like mad.

She needs him to talk about her problems when they get home. He does not need the same thing.

She tends to feel undernourished, so she eats to temporarily suppress (push down) her insecurity. Dieting reinforces her male side (strict discipline). *She needs ease, comfort, security, fun, recreation, pleasure, beauty, effortless and to feel less pressured. This nourishes her.*

She might be embarrassed by her tender feelings or feel weak/need. "I cannot be lovable if I am soft," she may think.

He will not let in her love until she *allows him to do something for her* or until she minimizes his mistakes.

Male side of the woman- There is not enough time to relax. I have to take on this responsibility. I cannot say no.

"My need for help is not acceptable" Her happiness appears based on providing fulfillment for others, not her own needs.

She may not know how to be vulnerable. No matter what he does for her she is always drawn to do more. Men love to make a difference, and she will not let him.

Want to nurture the female side? read pp 283-284 then read about the male side pp 286-289

Women who want men to talk more- wants him to be the feminine before she feels safe to be feminine. If he does it safely, she might risk being feminine again. It feels risky to be feminine.

Replacement needs: Replace the need for love with the need for food. (I cannot get the love I want, so I eat)

Replace the need to be supported with the need to support others.

Replace the need for love with the need for sex. (If I cannot be loved at least we can have sex.)

She feels driven to support his feminine side- "If I can listen sympathetically to his problems and feelings, he will listen to mine. If I can fulfill his feminine needs, he will fulfill mine." He sees it differently.

Great topics pp 253-255, 268-269

Secrets of **lasting passion** pp281-316 If you are not attracted, get in touch with your own gender first. Watch how your partner naturally slides to their side. Do NOT give up who you are

Lasting intimacy pp317-334

p 328 Statements of Forgiveness

Essentially, if they knew what they were doing, the complete pain they are causing, they probably would not do it. They do not know how else to react when _____ happens. If they *did* know a better way, they would do it.

Please do not rely on your spouse to provide all your needs.

Vent your anger on paper and contain those emotions. Then you may talk to your spouse without feeling so intensely.

As a couple, can you tell that there are some over generalizations here? There are some truths and some exaggerations in some places for you, as a couple. Talk about what resonates with you and what does not. Do not take it as truth, until you check it out.