

CHAPTER 1

THE BASIC DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

I. Virtually all conflicts and misunderstandings between the sexes can be traced to one simple problem:

"A failure to understand the basic God-created differences between men and women."

- A. This not only applies to problems in marriage.
- B. But also to conflicts and frustrations in dating as well.

II. Probably, each one of you has some difficulty understanding the attitude and behavior of the opposite sex.

A. No doubt you as a man have been troubled and perplexed about the following questions:

- Why can't women make up their minds?
- What does it take to please her?
- Why does it take a girl so long to forget a misunderstanding?
- How can a girl be so happy and chirpy one day, only to find a day later that she's cold, distant and difficult to talk to?
- Why are little things and insignificant details so important to women?
- Why are they so temperamental, changeable and unpredictable in their day-to-day disposition?
- Why are women generally late with no reasonable explanation?
- Why don't girls show more excitement and enthusiasm when asked for a date?
- Why does a girl flirt with a guy, then turn down a date when he asks her?
- Why is it so difficult to choose topics of conversation that both fellows and girls can relate to?

B. Probably you as women have been equally distressed and frustrated with such questions as:

- Why aren't men more sensitive to women and their feelings?
- Why do men feel like they have to prove their masculinity instead of just being themselves?
- Why do they brag on themselves and put others down?
- Why do they sometimes act tough and macho?
- Why do they tend to be curt, blunt and use rough language?
- Why don't men place the same importance on special occasions like a dance or a dinner as women do?
- Why can't men realize that it isn't necessary to spend a lot of money to make a date successful?
- Why do men bottle up their emotions?
- Why are men so interested in external, physical things?
- Why are some men inconsiderate and thoughtless in waiting till the last minute to ask for a date?
- Why are some men more interested in dating the popular and attractive girls than they are in being a friend to all?
- Why are men so reluctant to express their feelings to let you know they really care?
- Why are men in general more wrapped up in outside activities — such as their jobs, plans, personal ambitions — than in their home and family?
- Why can't men perceive or understand what women need most — appreciation, gentleness and a caring attitude?

III. Today, we are going to answer these questions and explore the male and female differences.

- A. To do this in depth would require a full-year, three-unit course in college.
- B. For our purpose today, however, we'll cover the most important highlights.

IV. Let's begin with a number of general differences.

A. Seven major points:

1. Our physical anatomy should give us a clue that men and women were designed for two entirely different roles
 - a. The man has a larger frame, stronger muscles and a rugged appearance.
 - 1) He was designed to be the aggressor, protector and provider.
 - 2) He has 50 percent more brute strength and larger lung capacity than the woman.
 - 3) These characteristics give him dominance and make him the natural leader.
 - b. The woman has a smaller frame, delicate features and less strength and stamina.
 - 1) In 1 Peter 3:7 she is described as a weaker vessel. (Greek word for "weaker" means "more sensitive" or "fragile.")
 - 2) She was designed to be a helpmate, companion and mother.
 - 3) These characteristics point out her dependence on the man and make her the natural follower.
2. God equipped each sex with a different kind of brain to function according to his or her physical structure.
 - a. Each one thinks and acts differently to life's situations according to natural built-in laws.
 - b. Consider how unwieldy, unnatural and confusing life would be if their brains and bodies were cross-switched.
3. God created men and women with different qualities and complete each other.
 - a. This was made clear when God fashioned them.
 - b. Gen. 2:20-24 — *"And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. (21) And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; (22) And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. (23) And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. (24) Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."*
 - c. These verses should teach us that neither sex is complete without the other.
 - d. It takes two halves to make a whole — it takes male and female to become one flesh.
 - e. Hence, it behooves us to learn and understand how vitally important these differences are in order to become a whole and balanced person.

(Items #4 and #5 were adapted from "*If Only He Knew*" by Gary Smalley, p. 17)

4. Virtually every cell in a man's body has a different chromosome and genetic makeup than that of a woman.
 - a. This startling fact reinforces how totally different we are.
 - b. We were designed to fulfill what makes us distinctly male and female.
5. Experts tell us that the seat of emotions in a man's brain is wired differently than a woman's.
 - a. He has strong drives and motivations that make him an adventurer and conqueror.
 - b. She has sensitive feelings and tender needs that equip her to be a companion, loving wife and mother.
6. According to a recent *Reader's Digest* article (Nov. 1982), men predominantly use the right hemisphere of their brain in certain phases of thinking while women use the left hemisphere.
 - a. This unique arrangement causes each to react differently under stress and pressure.
 - b. The article goes on to explain why men, when under duress, may explode with anger or violence while women tend to become depressed and fall apart.

7. To briefly summarize, we as men and women should deeply appreciate our God-ordained differences and strive to understand their true significance in God's great plan.
- This will require thought, effort and consideration for the needs and feelings of each other.
 - It will bring new meaning to the golden rule in all our daily encounters and relationships.

{There is some evidence that hormonal changes can be more readily excited or triggered in a woman than a man — thus causing fluctuations in her daily moods, attitude and temperament.}

- V. To illustrate more pointedly these overall differences, let's notice a graphic quotation from the book, "For Better or For Best" by Gary Smalley, pg. 29.

A. Quote the following:

- "The best example...to illustrate these differences is to compare the butterfly with the buffalo. The butterfly has a keen sensitivity. It is sensitive even to the slightest breeze. It flutters above the ground where it can get a panoramic awareness of its surroundings. It notices the beauty of even the tiniest of flowers. Because of its sensitivity, it is constantly aware of all of the changes going on around it and is able to react to the slightest variation in its environment. Thus, the butterfly reacts with swiftness toward anything that might hurt it. (Try to catch one without a net sometime.) If a tiny pebble were taped to its wing, the butterfly would be severely injured and eventually die.*

"The buffalo is another story. It is rough and calloused. It doesn't react to a breeze. It's not even affected by a thirty-mile-an-hour wind. It just goes right on doing whatever it was doing. It's not aware of the smallest of flowers, nor does it appear to be sensitive to slight changes in its environment. Tape a pebble to the buffalo's back and he probably won't even feel it.

"The buffalo isn't 'rotten to the core' just because he goes around stepping on pretty flowers. In fact, the buffalo's toughness is a tremendous asset. His strength, when harnessed, can pull a plow that four grown men can't pull."

- The analogy, of course, is obvious. The man is the "buffalo" and the woman is the "butterfly." Many times a man may "plow" through life's situations while a more sensitive woman will "feel" life and her environment. The "pebble on the butterfly's wing," the author suggests, "may take the form of a sarcastic remark, a sharp criticism, or even an indifferent attitude. Whatever it is, it can hurt and even crush" her and yet he may not even know what he's done.

- Clearly, men and women were fashioned for two distinct roles in God's great plan.

- B. Failure to understand these differences results in much anxiety, tension and distress in social relationships with each other.

- VI. Listed below are specific differences between men and women.

- Please note that these traits are the norm — the natural bent — that each has toward life.
- These are by no means complete, and there will always be exceptions.

24 SPECIFIC DIFFERENCES

MAN

- He is interested in ideas and things.
- He is interested in status, career and personal ambitions.
- He feels a strong need to provide and be the leader.
- He is more aggressive, daring and adventurous — ready to step into the unknown and try new things.
- He thinks with hard, cold facts — is more logical, analytical and deliberate in making decisions.
- Once a decision is made, he is ready to step out and act.
- He is oftentimes a slower thinker. He wants to be certain he has all the facts.
- He has a broader perspective — sees the big picture.
- He tends to suppress his feelings, but then blows up to get things off his chest.

10. He is more cautious in communicating his thoughts for fear of exposing his weaknesses.
11. When he feels insecure around women, he tries to impress them by boasting about his achievements or projecting a macho image.
12. He tends to have more intellectual vanity and expresses it by engaging in deep theories, concepts and philosophies.
13. He thinks long-range — maps out his life and drives himself to achieve his goals. He resents distractions or interruptions that impede his progress.
14. He is more outwardly bold and courageous — will confront danger head-on and take charge in emergency situations.
15. Security to a man is having a good job and money in the bank.
16. A man thinks money is to be saved.
17. He likes sameness and stability.
18. He is tough-skinned and can bounce back when criticized, corrected or defeated.
19. For all intents and purposes, he's the head of the human partnership.
20. Because of his personal pursuits and preoccupations, he's often cold, uncaring and insensitive to her feelings.
21. He has foresight.
22. He is the mainspring.
23. A man was made to love.
24. He needs a woman to love.

WOMAN

1. She is interested in people and building relationships.
2. She is interested in marriage, establishing a home and starting a family.
3. She wants security, protection and the assurance that he cares.
4. She is fearful of the unknown and feels unsure of taking chances.
5. She is more impulsive — and when under pressure usually makes snap, emotional judgments.
6. She shies away from major decisions — would rather that he assume responsibility.
7. She's intuitive and perceptive — can usually get to the heart of a matter quickly and accurately.
8. She is more concerned about details and the finer points.
9. She expresses her emotions more freely — cries easily to release her frustrations. Tends to be moody.
10. She's more candid, honest and forthright and openly bares her feelings.
11. When she feels insecure and rejected, she withdraws, becomes self-conscious and depressed.
12. She is more interested in talking about practical everyday concerns and human-related topics.
13. She tends to think short range — can quickly adapt to new situations and take frustrations in stride. She is not as easily bent out of shape or upset over interruptions.
14. She is prone to be easily frightened, or may become hysterical and fall apart in a crisis.
15. Security to a woman is having a man to look after her needs.
16. A woman thinks money is to be spent.
17. She likes change and variety.
18. She is very sensitive to correction and is easily bruised by negative comments or cutting remarks.
19. She's the heart and nerve center.
20. Because she needs approval and acceptance, she is often crushed and mortally wounded by his calloused and indifferent attitude.
21. She has insight.
22. She is the balance spring.
23. A woman wants to be loved.
24. She needs a man to love her.

VII. The subject of male and female differences would not be complete without mentioning some of the *essential* needs of each sex.

A. **THE BASIC NEEDS OF A MAN.**

1. He needs to be admired.
2. He needs honest feedback.
3. He needs to be respected for his role as the leader.
4. He needs to be bolstered and encouraged.
5. He needs recognition for his achievements and success.
6. He needs the loyalty and support of the opposite sex.
7. He needs a challenge and to be understood for his masculine interests, drives and ambitions.
8. He needs a woman to be enthusiastic and responsive to his ideas, suggestions and requests.
9. He needs appreciation for the special things he does.
10. He needs a sense of self-worth.

B. **THE BASIC NEEDS OF A WOMAN.**

1. She needs attention.
2. She needs appreciation, approval and sincere compliments.
3. She needs people and personal relationships.
4. She needs to be loved, respected and treated with tenderness.
5. She needs a shoulder to cry on without fear of rejection.
6. She needs to know that her opinions count.
7. She needs to know that a man appreciates her differences and tries to understand her emotional makeup.
8. She needs a man to tell her of his plans so she'll know how to properly prepare for them.
9. She needs to be assured that he is mindful of her physical limitations.
10. She needs for a man to be sensitive, protective and caring of her total welfare.

VIII. In concluding this lecture, it would be helpful to realize that the needs and differences between the sexes can be summed up in two broad principles.

A. These two principles can best be remembered as two grand mottos.

B. Try to picture them as stamped on the forehead of each other or as a sign hung around the neck.

C. They are worded as follows:

- For the man — ***NEEDS A SENSE OF SELF-WORTH — TREAT WITH RESPECT.***
- For the woman — ***FRAGILE — HANDLE WITH CARE.***

IX. Drill these two mottos into your mind and you'll begin to build successful and harmonious relationships into your life.

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