

Background information about Marital Adjustments

Today we are going to talk about some of the most common ones that you mentioned Personal needs and expectations and sexual adjustments (in laws).

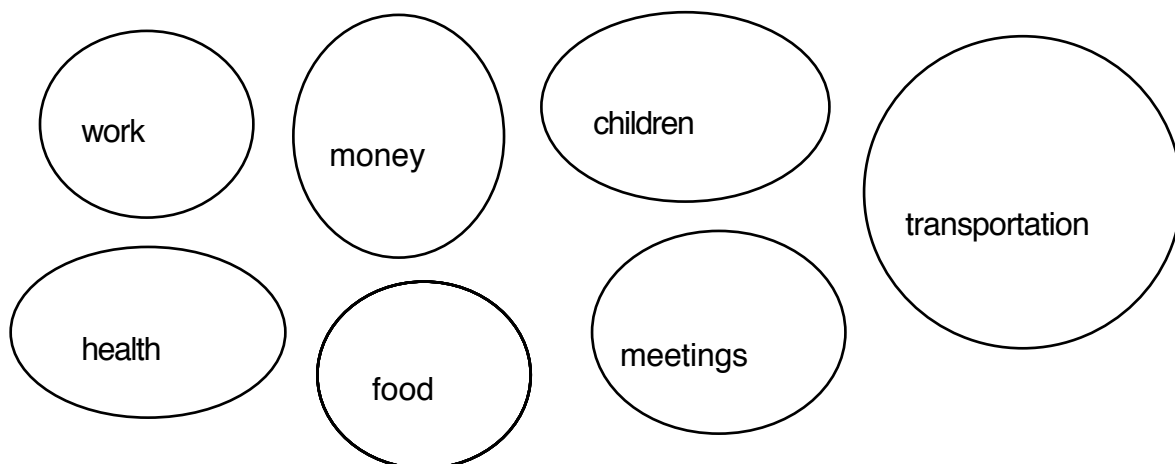
The first thing I want to discuss is some of the ways men and women think and act differently. Much of these basic differences are inherent in the way each of our brain chemistry works. Some of these differences are cultural expectations, but they exist just the same universally. This is not to say that men or women are better than each other, but their thought processes and communication styles differ, and when we can better understand that about each other we can appreciate and learn to adjust and communicate better with the opposite sex.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

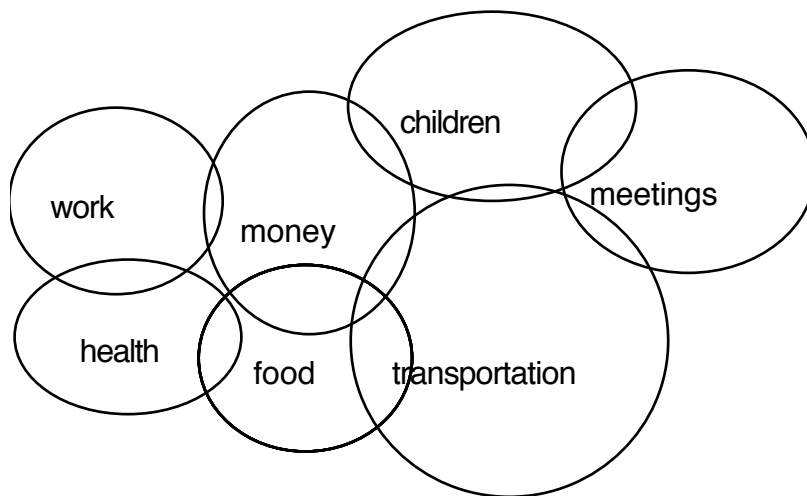
Men and women are different in many ways, especially in the way they think. In his book, *What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women,* Dr. James Dobson relates an interesting theory about this difference.

In a man's mind, all things are in categories. (Cut circles of random sizes from heavy paper. Write the following words on them: work, dog, wife, sex, friends, children, vehicles, yard, bills). Place the circles on the wall where the students can see them. Better yet, have the students make their own circle and write one of their concerns on it.

A man deals with each circle as he is required to. They do not overlap, but remain entirely separate from one another. If he is watching a ball game on television and the children come in screaming, he may not notice them because he is watching television. When the game is over that circle is closed. He may pay the bills and even discuss them with his wife, but when he has finished, that circle is closed. He can then open his mind to other things such as sex. He has forgotten the events that took place earlier in the evening.



On the other hand, the woman deals with her life much differently. She can comfort the child with a cut knee while she makes dinner and may even be on the phone at the same time. She may pay the bills and be thinking about which child needs new shoes or the refreshments she must take to the PTA meeting. The woman may argue with her husband and still be thinking about it when she goes to bed. Obviously, she is not in the mood for sex. A woman will think of many things at once. If this were to be shown, it would look like this. (Move the circles on the wall to overlap each other, symbolizing how a woman does many things at once).



If a man and woman understand these things about each other, it will help their relationship immensely. A man would know that in order to gain his wife's attention, he needs to apologize or at least discuss problems before wanting intimate relationships. The wife would understand that her husband is not trying to hurt her feelings, he simply deals with things in a different way. Both people need to work together to understand one another and create a quality relationship.

What are some other ways that Men and women are different?

Watch Video Clip of "Gender Roles" from You Tube.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YlwWS2atEmc>

Watch Video Clip of "Tale of Two Brains" from You Tube
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxtUH_bHBxs

John Gray, Author of "Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus", lists several ways that men and women are inherently different, yet expect each other to be exactly like them. "This attitude sets us up to be disappointed again and again, and prevents us from taking the necessary time to communicate lovingly about our differences."

You may wish to show clips from the Video or read excerpts from the book "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus", as you discuss to illustrate the following points of many of the differences between men and women.

1. Values: Men like to offer solutions directly to women, when a problem arises, while women, offer unsolicited advice. When men do this, it invalidates the women's feelings, and men do not like to be "told what to do", especially if they didn't ask for advice.
2. Stress: Men tend to pull away and silently think about what's bothering them, while women feel an instinctive need to talk about what's bothering them.

"Another major point of Gray's books are the differences in the way they react under stress. He believes that many men withdraw until they find a solution to the problem. He refers to this as "retreating into their cave." In some cases they may literally retreat, for example, to the garage or spend time with friends. The point of retreating is to take time to determine a solution. What is

known is that men in their caves are not necessarily focused on the problem at hand, many times this is a "time-out" of sorts to allow them to distance themselves from the problems so their brains can focus on something else. This allows them to revisit the problem later with a fresh perspective.

This has historically been hard for women to understand because when they are stressed their natural reaction is to talk about issues in order to find a solution. This leads to a natural dynamic of the man **retreating** as the woman tries to grow closer. This becomes a major source of **conflict** between any man and woman"

3. Motivation: Men feel motivated when they feel needed, and women are motivated when they feel cherished.
4. Languages: Women express things more about feelings and men express things more literally.
5. 5. Intimacy: A man gets close, but then inevitably needs to pull away. Women need to understand this, and understand that when he retreats, he will swing back like a rubber band.
6. Loving Attitude: Women are more like a wave and men need to learn to interpret how to be supportive.

The wave is a natural cycle for women that is centered around their abilities to give to other people. When they feel full of love and energy to give to others their wave is in a stable place. As they give to others (and don't receive the same amount of love and attention given to them in return) their wave begins to grow until it eventually crashes. This is a time when a women feels she has nothing else to give to those in her life and she needs the love of those around her (including self love) to help come out of this dark place. Once she is rejuvenated (by getting the support she needs) she is able to pop out of this dark place and once again has love and energy to give.

When men go into their cave, they are actually going through a phase of their relationship with a woman, when they want to be left alone. Any woman who has wondered why a boyfriend is not emailing/calling/messaging/meeting her will know what it feels like to be shut out of the cave. Women and 'the wave' is a concept [which] means that women go through periodic phases when they are unable to keep up their spirits without help and assistance from understanding men. At such times, 'the wave' crashes, and it needs to be given **love** and reassurance to rise up again with its usual confidence.

7. Love: Men and women usually give the kind of love they need and not what the opposite sex needs. Men primarily need Trust Acceptance, and Appreciation. Women primarily need caring, understanding and respect.

(Review Love Languages, and Golden Rule with a twist From Arguments:

8. Arguments: Men like to act as if they are always right, which may invalidate a woman's feelings. Women sometimes unknowingly send messages of disapproval instead of disagreement, inciting a man's defenses.
9. Score: Men think that one Big gift or sacrifice, balances many little indiscretions, but women put equal values on each loving act.
(Communication Unit)

How can knowing this about Men and Women assist in some of their adjustments they will need to make in marriage?