

BOOK SUMMARY

THE FAMOUS
INTERNATIONAL
BEST SELLER

MEN ARE
FROM MARS,
WOMEN ARE
FROM VENUS

JOHN GRAY

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE
TO RELATIONSHIPS



VITAL *partners*
human relations consultants

www.vitalpartners.com.au

CHAPTER 1:

MEN ARE FROM MARS, WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS.

It is important to remember that men and women have reciprocally different natures, Men and women need to appreciate these differences, and cease expecting each other to act and feel the way they do.

CHAPTER 2:

MR FIX-IT AND THE HOME IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE.

Men love to have their abilities recognised and appreciated, and hate to have them scorned or ignored; women love to have their feelings recognised and appreciated, and hate to have them scorned or ignored. Men don't rate feelings highly as in their view they can result in hotly impassioned, wildly unstable behaviour; women don't rate abilities highly as in their view they can result in coldly dispassionate, aggressively competitive behaviour,

Men like to work on their own, and exercise their abilities by solving problems quickly and singlehandedly; women like to co-operate, and exercise their feelings through interactive communication with one another. Men value solutions, and view unsolicited assistance as undermining their effort to solve problems alone; women value assistance, and view unsolicited solutions as undermining their effort to proceed interactively. Men desire that their solutions will be appreciated; women desire that their assistance will be appreciated.

CHAPTER 3:

MEN GO TO THEIR CAVES AND WOMEN TALK.

When faced with tough problems, men become non-communicative so they can work out how best to help themselves, while women become communicative so that others can work out how best to help them. Men like to demonstrate their abilities by being allowed to solve problems without interference; women like to demonstrate their feelings by being allowed to relate problems without interference. When men do communicate, they like to get to the point, and generally only want to listen if they feel the conversation has a point; women enjoy talking for its own sake, and are happy to listen unconditionally.

CHAPTER 4: HOW TO MOTIVATE THE OPPOSITE SEX.

A man's instinct is to look after himself, even if it means sacrificing others; a woman's instinct is to look after others, even if it means sacrificing herself. In a relationship, a man has to learn how to care for his partner rather than sacrificing her needs in favour of his own, and a woman has to learn how to be cared for by her partner rather than sacrificing her own needs in favour of his, so that the needs of both are met. If they do this successfully, both win, unlike their instinctive behaviours where one person gains from another's loss. This has to be worked at, because if either partner feels their efforts towards the relationship are not being successful in pleasing their partner, they may feel hurt and decide to revert to their instinctive behaviour.

Unfortunately this then causes the other partner to do the same, and the relationship unravels inexorably. In a relationship, a man needs to feel that his attentions are needed, and a woman needs to feel that her needs are attended. To achieve this, a man has to express his desire to fulfil her needs and her worthiness to receive his care, and a woman has to express her desire for his care and his worthiness to fulfil her needs. Both must remember to appreciate, accept, and forgive the other, and avoid blaming them when they fail.

CHAPTER 5: SPEAKING DIFFERENT LANGUAGES.

Men talk in very literal terms for the purpose of relaying information; women employ artistic licence and dramatic vocabulary to fully express and relate their feelings. Men like to sort their thoughts out before communicating them, and have the tendency to become distant and non-communicative as they ponder their concerns. At this time, a woman needs reassurance that her partner still rates her as worthy of being taken care of. Women like to sort their thoughts out in the process of communicating them, and have the tendency to pour forth a litany of general grievances as they relate their concerns. At this time, a man needs reassurance that his partner still rates him as worthy of taking care of things. Both must try to avoid feeling personally to blame when their partners are dealing with problems.

Then a man is troubled, he does not want his partner to express concern for him, but loves to be told that the problem is easily within his abilities to rectify because of the implicit vote of confidence in his abilities. When a woman is troubled, she loves her partner to express concern for her, but does not want to be told that the problem is a simple one to solve because of the implicit dismissal of her concerns about the issue.

A solution should be sought once her feelings have been fully listened to: too quick a solution justifies his abilities but devalues her concerns, too enduring a problem justifies her concerns but devalues his abilities. Men feel validated and gratified when they are left to sort things out by themselves, and feel undermined by being offered sympathy or unsolicited assistance.

CHAPTER 6: MEN ARE LIKE RUBBER BANDS.

Men periodically bolt for cover when they suddenly fear that their self-sufficiency is becoming threatened. At these times they may become utterly unapproachable, demanding the right to be left on their own and to be allowed not to express their feelings, but if given support by being afforded space for a little while, they will soon feel better and spring back into their usual loving selves once again. It can be hard for women to handle the suddenness and speed with which men bolt for cover, and then subsequently spring back.

At times when men retreat into themselves, they can assist their partners not to be overly concerned or take it personally by providing some brief reassurance that they will return in due course. Women should resist the temptation to try to drag their partners back prematurely or criticise them over this natural behaviour.

CHAPTER 7: WOMEN ARE LIKE WAVES.

Women periodically sink into a depression when they feel it is time for emotional cleansing and resolution. At these times they may become utterly negative in their outlook, dwelling on every problem which troubles them, including long-standing ones which will generally have been raised and addressed before, and if they cannot find any real issues to concentrate on, then they will find some random other things to worry about.

They suspend their normal giving natures, demanding the right to express their feelings and not to be left on their own, and if supported and allowed enough time to express and release their negative feelings, they will begin to feel happier again and return to their usual loving selves. The slowness in which they sink into depression and subsequently recover may be hard for men to handle.

At times when women sink into themselves, they can assist their partners not to be overly concerned or take it personally by providing some brief reassurance that it is not their partners' fault. Men should resist the temptation to try to lift their partners back up prematurely or criticise them over this natural behaviour, Men demand the right to be free from time to time: women demand the right to be heard from time to time. When a man feels free he finds it easier to support a woman's need to be heard: when a woman feels heard she finds it easier to support a man's need to be free. If a man's periodic need to be free coincides with a woman's periodic need to be heard, the best solution is for the woman to make do with being heard by her friends instead.

CHAPTER 8:

DISCOVERING OUR DIFFERENT EMOTIONAL NEEDS.

Men and women need to remember that the emotional needs of the opposite sex are not the same as their own. Providing our partners with the wrong type of emotional needs will not be greatly appreciated. Deep inside every man is a knight in shining armour seeking a damsel in distress who will love him, and shower him with trust, acceptance, appreciation, admiration, approval, and encouragement. Deep inside every woman is a damsel in distress seeking a knight in shining armour who will love her, and shower her with caring, understanding, respect, devotion, validation, and reassurance.

Men must listen attentively to women to understand their needs, avoiding getting angry or defensive; women must have faith in men's abilities and best efforts to fulfil their needs, avoiding trying to change or control them.

CHAPTER 9:

HOW TO AVOID ARGUMENTS.

Communication between relationship partners should be loving and respectful; verbal attacks contrast are highly destructive. It is often not so much what is said that causes the damage, but the tone of voice and body language which accompanies it.

Arguments thrive on men failing to pay sufficient attention to women's feeling, and women being critically disapproving of men. Either one may be the initial trigger, because a man's inattentiveness can cause a woman to get upset and express disapproval, and a woman's disapproval can cause a man to get defensive and stop listening to how she is feeling. When men make mistakes they become frustrated and angry, and are best left alone until they calm down. Men consider apologies to be admissions of guilt; women view apologies as expressions of compassion. This difference of perception is why men are generally much less willing to apologise than women.

When engaged in an argument, men use strong and aggressive words to ensure that they win the argument, and women are frequently forced to back down in the face of a totally determined and implacable opponent. Men then feel that they have won the argument, but it is a hollow victory as their partners have not changed their views, but merely buried them in order to avoid an ever-escalating conflict. Sometimes people prefer to evade arguments instead of engaging in them. Men tend to do so by withdrawing inside themselves and refusing to talk; women often just pretend that the disagreement has been forgotten. The resultant peace is a cold one because the issues continue festering unresolved.

To stop communication degenerating into arguments, men should strive to listen without getting defensive, and women should try to express their feelings without criticising their partners.

CHAPTER 10: SCORING POINTS WITH THE OPPOSITE SEX.

Men feel loved if their efforts at giving are appreciated; women feel loved according to what they receive. For women, loving someone means knowing and attending to their needs without waiting to be asked, and so a loved person should never have to ask for anything as their needs ought to be anticipated ahead of time. So women give unconditionally, and proactively seek ways to help others, whereas men only give when they feel that their efforts will be fairly appreciated and rewarded, and often will not know how or what to give without being specifically asked. Men often quickly suspend giving when feeling pleased about having done something; women may only suspend giving when feeling displeased with their partners for doing nothing.

Men value results; for women it's the thought that counts. Consequently, men value big things much more than do women, who feel more appreciated by receiving lots of little gifts instead. A woman may consider a bunch of flowers to be just as good a proof of love as an entire month of hard work towards paying the bills.

If men and women do not take account of these different perspectives, they may fail to give their partners what they actually want. When this occurs, the man will frequently suspend giving as he feels he is not receiving enough reward back for what he has given, but the woman will continue to give unconditionally even though she feels she is giving more and has started to feel unloved, unappreciated and resentful.

Men should try to identify various little ways to give to their partners without waiting to be asked first, and should avoid the mistake of assuming their partners to be happy giving and not asking for anything back. Women should be careful not to give a false impression to their partners of being happy when they are not, and if they begin to feel resentful they should gently reduce their giving, learn to ask for things back, and be sure to keep expressing lots of appreciation of their partners' efforts so as to encourage them to give more. Men should try to listen lovingly and respectfully to women's feelings, women should try to express their feelings in a loving and respectful manner. If men give, and women appreciate, both end up feeling happy.

CHAPTER 11:

HOW TO COMMUNICATE DIFFICULT FEELINGS.

Unresolved negative feelings can cause us to act in ways we really don't want to, or become manifest in all kinds of compulsive or addictive behaviours. Avoiding our negative feelings doesn't make them go away, but compassionately embracing them can heal them and enable us to start loving again. By acting as loving parents to our own inner child, we finally allow our repressed feelings to be fully expressed and released.

To ease the pain and win love, men often obsessively seek success, and women obsessively seek perfection. Men may use anger, ego, or oblivion (such as burying themselves in their work) to avoid vulnerable feelings of pain or fear; women may lapse into depression or confusion to avoid having aggressive feelings of anger.

Constructive communication is a learned skill, and many of us must first unlearn the paradigm of negative communication and repression of feelings which we experienced during childhood. Communication works best if you presents the full picture, so that the root of the problem is revealed rather than just the symptoms.

Writing our feelings down is excellent for expressing our negative emotions (anger, pain, fear, and regret) in a controlled manner, rather than letting them explode at our partners in the heat of the moment. Having done so, we can get back in touch with our loving feelings, and are then in a much better state to explain to our partners what we are feeling, and what they can do to help us feel better. It is important to communicate such feelings in a loving atmosphere because we may need to feel securely loved while communicating such intimate and revealing feelings, and our partners may need the same if some of those feelings will be painful to hear, or could be taken personally.

At times it is worth discussing them with friends or counsellors first.

CHAPTER 12:

HOW TO ASK FOR SUPPORT AND GET IT.

Men love to do things which are appreciated, and hate to do things which are demanded. Criticising him or giving excessive instructions will make him feel more like a slave than a loved and trusted partner.

Men love to prove their worth through the things they do, but they generally wait to be asked, and take a long time to learn to offer their services unsolicited. Women should therefore control their expectations of men being able to anticipate their needs, ask for help without making it sound like a demand because they resent the need to do so, and appreciate the help they receive even though it needed to be requested first.

Women should avoid requesting help from a man in a way which either doesn't sound like a clear request, or carries implicit criticism that he should have already done it. Questions which begin with the words 'Could you' or 'Can you' are often interpreted by men as questioning their abilities, and they therefore respond more positively to the same questions if they begin instead with 'Would you' or 'Will you'. The difference may seem tiny, but it can feel as different as the man saying 'No I can't' or 'No I won't' in response to the request. It is best to allow a man the freedom to do things in a way and at a time that works for him. If a man is busy doing something and a woman needs his help on something else, she should feel free to ask him for help, but be prepared for him to request to defer it or even to refuse it; if requests always require positive answers, they are really demands, and men will sense the difference. A man grumbles about a request then he is actually considering it, and the best approach is to simply wait for him to come to a decision without saying anything further, and aim to accept the outcome graciously.

CHAPTER 13:

KEEPING THE MAGIC OF LOVE ALIVE.

In relationships, unresolved negative feelings can pop up without warning, and we suddenly become upset, or sensitive, or distant. When this happens to our partners we should encourage them to work through it, accepting that it may take some time and that they may need support from outside as well as from ourselves, and do our best to control any impatience or resentments we may feel towards them during these times.

Love inevitably changes over time: the pristine bliss we feel when we first fall in love doesn't last forever, and over time our personal faults and negative baggage inevitably become exposed.

But if we stick tight through the ups and downs of life and each other, then our initial bliss gradually changes into a mature form of love which can become stronger and fuller with every passing year.

ARE YOU SEARCHING FOR A CLOSE, LONG LASTING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE RIGHT PERSON?

Take your first step to happiness.

GET STARTED



VITAL partners
human relations consultants

www.vitalpartners.com.au