

POWERFUL MEN - To love big, think small.

Women...can't live with them and can't live without them!

Ask any man and he will shake his head ruefully when faced with the mystery of his partners emotions and perceptions...the runaway best seller, 'Men are from Mars and women are from Venus' testifies to our perplexity as to the other genders strangeness!

A man sets sail...

So how does a man navigate the murky waters of building a relationship with a woman and come out of it not pressed into a woman's mould, but truly and courageously a man?

Well, some important information will be needed to begin to map out this unknown territory.

A map for the voyage

Firstly, understanding that woman run on a very different mix of biological chemicals to a man. They tend to score high in things like oestrogen, progesterone and oxytocin (the bonding hormone otherwise known as the 'hug hormone'!) Men on the other hand have higher levels of Testosterone, Adrenaline, Cortisol (otherwise known as the stress hormone used to prepare a body for defence).

These differences mean that in stress situations what a woman needs to reduce her stress hormones in her body is first talking in a warm, empathic way helped along with lots of eye contact. When she gets these, her stress chemicals reduce and she is calmed, reassured and recovers confidence.

A man on the other hand in stress situations experiences strong, physical sensations of tension and stress and the cortisol, testosterone, adrenaline levels climb to dangerous levels in his brain causing in effect a red warning light that he could erupt into physical violence soon. At this point, for a man to carry on trying to talk (especially when it's about emotions or criticism!), can drive the chemical cocktail of testosterone etc. through the roof...usually of his head!

This explains why women feeling anxious about something so often say some version of, "If you'd only talk about this/your feelings/our problems etc. you'd feel so much better." Their thoughts make sense because talking helps them, by reducing their anxiety.

What they don't yet understand is that with a different biological make up, when their partner responds angrily with words or withdrawal, saying, "All you ever want to do is talk...and it never helps! Lets just leave it - it'll sort itself out..." that men are working with the knowing that talking often really doesn't help them-in fact, it often makes them feel worse and even more of a failure. So how does the powerful man deal with this difference, seeing her need to talk as valid and necessary whilst creating space for himself to stay in control of himself?

To love big, think small.

When you feel those familiar sensations of stress, impatience etc. then now is the time to step into your desire to protect her or your loved one and offer her some small gesture of support and reassurance.

Show your protection by making eye contact with her, touching her hand, rub a shoulder or ask if you can help. (Hunt out those unique actions you've done that speak HER language of love and

add them to the list.) Do these several times a day even if you set your mobile to remind you to step into her world and reassure her you are there for her. Remember, thinking of her during the day doesn't count in her world if she doesn't know about it!

This takes a heroic commitment on your side in the service of protecting and providing the conditions that are helpful for her anxiety to fade.

“You’re always trying to control me!”

Often a man can try to protect his partner but be accused of controlling her, so lets look at what’s happening there.

You might be concerned for your partner when she starts talking about whatever it is she’s worried about and quite naturally you offer advice and instructions as a way of problem solving for her.

Your motive is good but your talking your language not hers so it comes across as implying she's not clever/creative/decisive enough to decide things on her own.

What she needs right then is space to be heard and if she doesn't get that, then she can easily feel that her perspective and opinions aren't as relevant/valid/as important as yours.

So your frustration begins to rise and it's easy to end up telling her what to do and then criticising her or withdrawing your presence/affection in your frustration if she doesn't do it. Support that feels respectful and protective in a woman's language is listening with lots of eye contact and reassuring her of her competence/intelligence/creativity/resourcefulness. This makes space for her to work out her own solution or fail whilst feeling the protection of your support and affection.

Looking at her differently...

Make the bold, exciting move from seeing her requests or complaints as judgements on your ability to protect and accusations about you failing, to using those requests or complaints as a signal to you that she needs help-even if she is asking for it in a strange, womans language!

And stepping into your power!

After all, how do you want those you love to remember you...near the end of your life what will you regret not doing enough of?

Our children need men like you to be modelling what a real man looks like - one who chooses self control and wields his personal power firstly over himself and then over others with an understanding of how they need to be protected. When life dishes you crap you stay in charge - not those things on the outside controlling you.

Make those heroic acts of exploration into the uncharted territory that is a woman's world and understand her fundamental need to be validated - let her know that you see and hear her mental and emotional experience and that you value and respect them.

This, my friend, is the powerful man.