

Same planet, different worlds

Have you ever heard a seemingly normal woman saying something like, "I don't know what I do to turn men off. I seem to push them away. Maybe I'm too demanding, or not demanding enough. Men are so confusing."

And it could be that very same day that you hear a seemingly normal man, unrelated to the first woman, complaining: "I don't get women. I must be doing something wrong. Women are so hard to understand."

When men and women get together, there are, in effect, two worlds—his and hers. They have different values, priorities, and habits. They play by different rules.

Scientists have come to accept that a few fundamental differences between men and women are biological. It turns out that men's and women's brains, for example, are not only different, but the way we use them differs too. Women have larger connections and more frequent interaction between their brain's left and right hemispheres. This accounts for women's ability to have better verbal skills and intuition. Men, on the other hand, have greater brain hemisphere separation, which explains their skills for abstract reasoning and visual-spatial intelligence. Poet Robert Bly describes women's brains as a "superhighway" of connection while men's brains connections are compared to a "little crooked country road."

Different habits of men and women are explained by different roles in the process of evolution. Although life conditions have changed, both men and women tend to follow their biological programs.

Men tend to retain a firm sense of direction – they need to trace the game, catch it, and find the way home, while women have a better peripheral vision that helps them to see what's happening around the house, to spot an approaching danger, to notice changes in the children's behavior and appearance. Men's brains are programmed to hunting, which explains their narrow range of vision, while women's brains are able to decipher a wider range of information

When entering a room, men look for exits, estimating a possible threat, and ways of escape, while women pay attention to the guests' faces to find out who they are and how they feel. Men are able to sort out information and archive it in their head. Women tend to 'rewind' the information over and over again. The only way to stop thinking of the problems is to talk it over. When a woman shares her problems with a man, she is not looking for solutions – she needs someone to listen to her.

Men prefer strident noises, hard handshakes, and red color. They are better at solving technical problems. Women have a sharper ear, they use more words while talking, and are better at completing tasks independently.

Based on these biologically explained differences, some psychological distinctions between men and women can be established:

- Men grasp a situation as a whole and think globally, while women think locally, relying on details and nuances.
- Men are builders and creators. They take risks and experiment, while women select the most valuable knowledge and pass it over to the next generation.
- Men are more independent in their thoughts and actions, while women are more willing to follow the ideas suggested by others.
- Women's self-appraisal is lower than that of men. Women tend to criticize themselves, while men are more satisfied with their own performance.
- Men and women have different sources of satisfaction. For men it's career and prosperity, while women value family and kids.
- Men have a pronounced need to fulfill their goals, and women rank relationships with others first.
- Men get sick twice as often as women, although women tend to be more concerned about their health.
- Women endure pain and monotonous work better than men.

All the above gets even more confusing, if we take into account that 15 to 20% of men happen to have a female type of brains, and about 10% of women have a male type of brains, which means that some percentage of men and women, no matter how small it seems, are partially programmed to the behavior and way of thinking of the opposite gender.

"Okay, I understand the problem", you are saying to yourself, but -"what's the solution"? That depends on whether you are a woman or a man.

From: <http://peoplerelationships.syl.com/battleofsexes/differences> (21st November 2010)

Complete the sentences with articles if necessary:

Five things you don't usually hear a woman say to a man:

1. No thanks. I don't like ... chocolate.
2. I know it's our anniversary ... next Saturday, but let's not go out. Let's stay in and watch ... Cup Final on TV.
3. I want to buy ... new car. I really like ... new BMW. It's got fuel injection and does 180 kilometres ... hour.
4. I'm glad you like ... beer. I like men with ... fat stomachs. I find them very attractive.
5. Don't worry. I wasn't expecting ... present. I don't like ... presents anyway.

Five things you don't usually hear a man say to a woman:

1. I see Brad Pitt has ... new film out. Would you like to go to ... cinema and see it?
2. I'm completely lost so I'll stop and ask ... woman over there for directions.
3. I thought ... sheets needed changing so I put them in ... washing machine.
4. I think ... red dress suits you, but take your time. There are lots of ... other shops we can try.
5. I really admire the way you can go to ... work, run ... house, and bring up ... children so well.

From English File intermediate