

What Men Wish Women Knew

By Brenda Spina, M.S., LMFT, LPC

Men and women alike have worked for years to understand the areas of vulnerability for both genders. Many specific concerns have been identified and strategies have been written about for making the relationships between men and women successful. When the decision was made to address the concerns of men, this therapist wondered if the concerns had changed over the past 20 years. As I talked with men, I was struck with the honesty in which they responded to my inquiries. Here is a compilation of what they had to say.

“We live in trying times. A lot of men, including myself, are facing a crossroads in their lives. I lost my job last year. I have to fight letting worry set in. The need to be focused, diligent and open minded to gain employment is always on my mind. What I need at home is for the understanding that my purpose in life is being challenged. That purpose is to provide for the family. Men often feel the pressure in this area. I need my wife to understand the pressure that I feel regarding my sense of purpose. I want to understand what this is doing to her insides as well. We have to work hard at open and clear communication around this concern.”

“It's a challenge for me to communicate the basic need to be understood and acceptance. I look for acceptance in a different way. Here is one area my wife and I struggle with. The man wants to rest when he gets home, because of the stress or problems he had. My wife wants to tell me all about her day and what she went through with the kids. I need a "time buffer" before talking about problems occurring at home and that the problems being presented by my wife are not necessarily things that need fixing. When she begins without the time buffer, here is my first thought. “Now there is something else here that I am going to have to solve along with everything else I faced today.” This further threatens my feeling of fulfilling my purpose at home and with my mate. Men feel like failures when either home or work are not going well. If it is conveyed from the beginning that the problems of the day being told to him are not necessarily an obligation to solve, the better he will feel. Both, despite the differences, need to understand more than ever that they are a team: A team against the trials of life, through thick and thin.”

“One of the biggest needs for me at home is to know that I am loved, and that my wife is happy. A man pursues woman, in part, because he wants to find a woman he can be successful with. This means he wants to experience success in making her happy. I married my wife because I came to trust and know that we were both committed to trusting each other. Did we have differences? Yes, but we found away to get through them and still feel loved by the other.”

“It struck me that, years ago, marriage was more like a contract to take care of and protect each other, and the kids. Now thanks to many things, men and

women seem to look out for themselves first. Truthfully, I think men and women are looking for the same things: Love, affection and trust. It's because of this that we need communication more than ever to understand each other so that we will accomplish this goal.”

I thank God for the vulnerability of these few men. In a nutshell, men wish women understood what gives them a sense of purpose, the need for acceptance, the affirmation of affection, and the desire to give and receive trust. These are the things laying the foundation for stability and a sense of security for men in their marriages.

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