

DUCKLOW'S

MEN ARE FROM EARTH. WOMEN ARE FROM EARTH. GET OVER IT.

IT WAS QUITE A FEW YEARS AGO THAT JOHN GRAY RAN TO THE BANK WITH HIS PROFITS FROM "MEN ARE FROM MARS. WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS." I BROKE THE BINDING OF MY COPY WHEN I THREW IT ONE TOO MANY TIMES AGAINST MY OFFICE WALL.

Gray argues that men solve problems alone, recharging silently in their emotional caves. Women need to talk things through. They need support and intimacy, not the "quickie" problem-solving solutions that men offer.

Well, this might be true if you are a life-depleted caveman tossing quickie conclusions to conundrums. And it might be true if you are a continually blathering and succouring-dependent "helpmate." The problem is with Gray's tradition sexual differences template. In real time, some women are emotional cave-dwellers as some men are warm fuzzy devotees.

In case you hadn't noticed, men are from earth, women are from earth and we ought to get over it!

It is not about being opposite – it is about being equal and wonderfully appropriate to each other. It is about equitability and responsiveness. It is about a "one-another-ness" that can lead to a life-enhancing intimacy.

Once we get over the illusion that we are from differing planets, maybe we can be intimate and equal others. Here are some "earthy" ideas for couples seeking intimacy.

1. Clarify together your non-verbal rules. These rules are your treasured assumptions that you fold away unexamined in your cranium. You discover just how many you have when you bump into someone who has a completely different list of "rights and wrongs." For example, you might want your partner to kiss you like he or she means it before

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leaving for work. Good to check this out. Or you may end up being kiss-less and bitter about it.

2. Re-introduce life-enhancing rituals. Have family dinners together (without gazing at the TV) and pray for just a moment before you consume. This “saying grace” thing helps you to be God-conscious as well as develop an attitude of gratitude. Psychologists will tell you that there are rituals that build intimacy and there are rituals that deconstruct your life. How about expressing common courtesies – the kind of thing you would do with a stranger but might ignore with a covenant partner. Things like asking a question and listening deeply—a good ritual to re-introduce to your friendship.

3. Act “as if” you love one another until you really do love the other. This is especially helpful if you have not enjoyed intimate friendship for a long time. If the displeasurable events of your life and relationships are outnumbering the pleasurable, then take a day or two and act “as if” you are in love, that you are respected, and completely trusted. Know what? This will open your brain and your behaviour to a new set of feelings.

4. Give up the tyranny of having to be right. This fight-till-you-find-out-who’s-right syndrome shuts down intimacy, maturity, personal growth, God-consciousness and virtually everything else that is important to being human. And even if you discover that you are “right,” does this help you to live your life better, love your spouse expansively and forgive heart-fully? Probably not.

If we accept that we are complimentary earthlings rather than alternate life forms, our points of commonality bring one another into more equitable relationships. Gray’s approach seldom helps people build a relationship when their life experiences are planets apart. And how helpful is it when your planets collide?

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