

Men must get away from the Source of their Stress: That Means You!

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The other night on twitter I saw a “tweet” that revealed a man’s need to go to his cave when stressed out by relationship issues with his woman. With everything I have read that has explained the phenomenon to me, nothing has brought it home to me like this micro-post. It read, “Girls: Guys must get away from the source of their stress. When he’s in his ‘Nothing Box,’ he’s not mad, he’s simply de-stressing.” I’ve never heard of a man’s “nothing box” before but it is obviously the same thing as “the cave” reference that Dr. John Gray made popular two decades ago. I prefer “cave” because it sounds manly! The “nothing box” sounds like a diminishment of something that I have come to learn is very important to men.

If the concept is new to you, let me explain it. However, new the concept is, it is a good bet you have experienced it! When a man and woman are in an argument, at some point the conversation breaks down because he has to get away. Whether he goes for a drive, picks up the newspaper and starts reading, or goes to his office or work room, the man needs space and he creates it. He creates it immediately without consulting you or asking your permission. Women tend to find this behavior dismissive and insulting.

The cave also looks like this. The man comes home at the end of his work day and he just isn’t interested in how your day went. He wants to sit back and relax. He wants the television or the newspaper or to disappear somewhere out of range. He doesn’t seem to want his woman’s company. That is not if she needs to talk. If she genuinely wants to sit quietly with him doing her own reading or watching TV, that’s great. However, he unwinds best without conversation and by creating space for himself.

As I write this, I have a chorus of women’s voices in my head screaming at me, “Don’t you dare justify this behavior in men!” Well, I apologize ladies; but, indeed, I am going to justify it. I can promise you this: if you will get on board with this phenomenon in men, your life and your relationship will improve.

Joseph’s and my podcast has given us the gift of talking with many high quality relationship experts this year. In fact, two of our early guests were Dan and Jennifer! The men who are out there writing and making a difference in relationships have consistently referred to how a man has to process his feelings on his own. They discuss the science of how men’s and women’s minds work differently. This has been very helpful because how our minds work goes back to prehistoric days when the differences sustained communities and saved lives.

For instance, have you noticed that when a man is driving in heavy traffic, he isn’t inclined to carry on lengthy, winding conversations with his woman? If you are in the middle of a conversation it will come to an abrupt end as the traffic gets all of his attention. This is because men are wired to protect. In situations where physical harm could occur, their focus becomes laser sharp on protecting. Forget conversation! There have probably been countless arguments in the front seats of cars for decades because she

was talking, his attention completely left her to focus on his driving, and she felt dismissed!

In fact, it might be the drive to protect that explains why over and over again, men who are relationship experts agree, men process their feelings on their own. It is hardwired into their chemistry and their physiology to separate themselves from the women they love when under stress with those women.

Women can talk for hours about everything they experience, think, and feel. Men cannot. It isn't that they don't want to. They can't. Between Joseph and his men friends, they all know when one or more of them just can't talk anymore. Between men it isn't insulting for one or more of them to withdraw either physically, emotionally, or mentally when talking comes to the point of being overwhelming. Also, between Joseph and his men friends, the only thing they laugh at where their marriages are concerned is how they cannot keep up with their women's talking and sharing.

Joseph and I talked about this quote, "Girls: Guys must get away from the source of their stress. When he's in his 'Nothing Box,' he's not mad, he's simply de-stressing." He said, "I know this sounds terrible, but it's like dog training! You know how when training a dog, it tires the dog out because it forces the dog to think so much? Well, that's how it is for men. We simply cannot keep up with our women when it comes to talking and sharing. It's one reason we get angry about it. We cannot keep up with it and that causes us to feel shame. Once that shame button is switched on, the conversation is over."

He went on to say that men are problem solvers. In all that talking, problems aren't being solved. Therefore, all that talking is a source of stress. Eventually, the only way he can process the stress is to get away from it.

So how will a woman's relationship improve when she accepts this masculine phenomenon? By accepting a man's social and biological reality, she respects him. That respect of him translates into his love for her growing. Men adore women who respect them. It is as simple as that.

What I got so deeply out of that micro-post was this: it isn't personal. When he goes to his cave, he is taking care of his needs. In a very real sense, it isn't about me (or you). Respecting his masculine process allows us both to relax and get back to the good stuff, living life together in love.

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There is a secret to relationship success that is direct, simple, and effective. We and others have used it to transform marriages that felt burdensome and hurtful into marriages filled with love and satisfaction.

You can discover this secret for yourself in the e-workbook called *Creating the Love You Want: Five Unique Steps to Improve Your Marriage*. Go to <http://www.CreateTheLoveYouWant.com> and order your copy right now. With it, you can begin making a difference for yourself tonight!