

R-E-S-P-E-C-T is how Men spell Love

Sarah Elizabeth Malinak, M. Div.

I got a phone call this week from a woman whose relationship was falling apart. It had been fading for a long time and likely didn't have the potential to be re-birthered. She wanted a magic cure for it. I worked with her from her perspective of trying to save it and towards the end of an hour long conversation, we got to the nuts and bolts of what had likely gone wrong; which was also the thing that could bring the relationship back to life.

What had gone wrong was within a couple of years of their relationship, she stopped respecting her man. When you stop respecting someone, there is no neutral. No respect results in words and behavior that communicate disrespect. Disrespect from his woman will tear at a man's love for her. If they don't catch the problem and fix it, that disrespect will ruin the relationship.

As I coached her to share respect in verbal and physical ways, I faced a challenge I always face whenever I have this conversation with a disrespecting woman. I said to her, "Men are just fine as they are. They don't need to be fixed or improved. The way they are, the way they handle themselves, is perfectly fine."

She interrupted me at that point and said, "For them," meaning men are only perfectly fine just the way they are in the company of other men but not in the company of women. There is the rub. There is the disrespect that makes a man walk away. It is subtle and insidious.

Nothing says "I love and adore you," to a man quite like verbalizing and showing your respect of him. Remember or imagine what it is or would be like when your fellow says, "I love and adore you!" It nurtures you, feeds you, and improves the relationship. In the exact same way, that is how a man experiences the words, "I respect you."

I have to be honest, though. It isn't easy for a woman to express her respect for a man either verbally or through her actions. I don't know why it isn't easy. It does seem to be a universal challenge for women. I imagine the answer to why is multi-dimensional and multi-generational. But at the end of the day, "why" doesn't matter. This is a problem that behavior modification can solve. It takes discipline but is quite simple.

Whenever you find yourself respecting or admiring him for anything, no matter how small or big a deal it is, tell him so. It may feel awkward and uncomfortable. You may choke on the words, but say it. You're not the only person in the room and I can tell you from experience, he will not experience your discomfort. Rather, he will feel seen, heard, appreciated, and deeply loved. Those are results that make the discomfort worthwhile!

Show him you love him. When your best girlfriend shares an interest with you that you could care less about, you don't dismiss her or tune her out. But we tend to roll our eyes and huff and puff when the men we love request our attention for something they're

interested in that we are not. Stop those eyes from rolling, focus on him and give him your full attention. He will feel respected and he'll adore you for it.

This isn't about becoming "perfect respecters." Relationships can't be perfect. Life and relationships are messy on this planet. The thing is there are ways to make life and relationships more fun and fulfilling. Women respecting men and men loving women are key ingredients to the recipe of making life and relationships yummy!

*

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!