

The Ugly Truth Revealed

Sarah Elizabeth Malinak, M. Div.

My husband, Joseph, and I recently attended a workshop where we heard the following truism. “Usually, women want their men to change. Usually, men do not want their women to change. Mostly, men don’t change.”

It reminded me of the scene in the movie, *The Ugly Truth*, where Mike tells Abby that personal growth ends for men at toilet training! And then I read the words of a respected spiritual advisor that went something like this, “You wouldn’t leave the nurturing and care of your business in the hands of a kindergartner, why do you leave the nurturing and care of your relationship in the hands of your husband?!” That spiritual advisor, by the way, is a man not a woman!

When information comes in threes, I pay attention. What is the message here and is it any deeper than, “Don’t expect a man to change?” I think the answers are yes and yes; there is a message and it is deep.

Men and women are hard wired to bring very different but complementary gifts to relationships. Hundreds and thousands of years ago, these different and complementary gifts gave us very few problems and a lot to celebrate. Presently, however, men and women spend so much time together both in society and at home, that we women expect men to understand us the way our sisters do and men expect women to understand them the way their brothers do. But we don’t understand each other in that way and no amount of wishing will make it so.

Some of the gifts a man brings to a relationship include wanting to protect his lady, desiring to take care of her, feeling as though he must earn her trust and admiration. This means when she brings a problem to him, he doesn’t want to listen to every little detail and allow her to process. He wants to offer advice or action that will bring an end to the problem and her processing! He has no patience for her need to talk it all out. That is counter intuitive to his soul and counter productive to providing for her happiness.

It especially means he doesn’t want to hear how he done her wrong. If things he does or says offend her and she tells him every little detail of why what he does or says doesn’t work for her, she communicates to him that he’s the problem, even the enemy. It makes him want to fix that problem, which can look like him leaving. Whether he leaves for a short while and goes to his cave to process the problem or whether he leaves for good; if she communicates that he is the problem, she limits his options to help her.

These gifts of wanting to protect his lady, desiring to take care of her, and feeling as though he must earn her trust and admiration also mean he doesn’t suffer fools lightly. If she has a friend, co-worker, family member, or superior who disrespects her, he will want to communicate to that person in no uncertain terms that he or she needs to back off from his lady or they will have him to deal with. And if he cannot get to them and if his lady

insists on maintaining a relationship with a person who abuses her, she will find herself on the receiving end of his impatience.

It is fine for a husband and wife to name each other as best friends. However, men don't want to be treated like girlfriends. They want to be respected as men, as difference makers, as protectors and providers. And so, if you want to change him in order to improve him, making him more like you; you are, in fact, asking him to sacrifice the beautiful qualities that make him a man and that bring sexual chemistry to your union.

If you are a man reading this, imagine how you can be proactive about communicating these ideas to your lady. Even though you are not hard wired to nurture and grow the relationship, you do have a responsibility for the unique gifts you bring to it. Especially if she wants to make you over in her image, you could invade her space a little bit, come right out and tell her, "I want to be your lover, not your girlfriend." That said with desire coloring the words, "I want to be your lover," are capable of cutting through her resistance. Though it may be a scene that needs to be repeated once in a while, the rewards are worth it!

*

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!