

WHAT DOES SHE
WANT FROM ME

ANYWAY?

AI Letterer

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INTRODUCTION

The other night I had dinner with a good friend. John was in town on business so we met at a local sports bar for a burger and a couple beers. We had a great time talking about our favorite sports teams, our careers, and our families. We even reminisced about the glory days running track back in high school.

All of a sudden the mood changed. John became quiet and I could tell something was bothering him.

After a few moments John told me what was wrong. "I've been married for over 25 years and I'm still trying to figure out how to make my wife happy. In spite of my good intentions, I feel like I'm still not meeting my wife's deepest needs. Why doesn't she just tell me what she wants and needs from me?"

John is feeling what many men feel. They really love their wives but feel like something is missing. They want to be their lady's knight in shining armor but are having a hard time meeting their deep emotional needs. Often times they aren't even aware of what those needs are.

Guys, you're not alone. Sigmund Freud also had trouble figuring out what women want. He is quoted as saying, "Despite my thirty years of research into the feminine soul, I have not been able to answer....the great question....what does a woman want?"

MARRIAGE TAKES WORK

Remember when you first started dating that special lady in your life? You loved spending time with her. You took her out on dates, sent her cards and flowers, and talked to her on the phone every day. You had fun and enjoyed each other's company. Life was simple and there probably weren't a whole lot of demands on your relationship. After a while you fell in love, married, and then thought you'd live happily ever after. You thought the relationship skills you possessed when you dated would be all that you would need when you got married.

Many men I talk to feel like they need to develop a whole new set of skills once they're married. After all, marriage is hard work. It's not a simple social institution. Marriage is a complex relationship that requires special training and abilities to meet the emotional needs of a member of the opposite sex.

What are these emotional needs and how do I go about meeting them? First of all, they vary between men and women. Your needs tend to be very different from your wife's needs. When she chooses to meet your needs you feel loved and fulfilled. When you choose to meet her needs she, too, will feel loved and fulfilled. Keep in mind that needs vary. No two women are alike. There is no cookie cutter approach.

So, what does your wife want? Learning to apply the following will pay huge dividends in your marriage.

1. BE AFFECTIONATE

Keep in mind the affection you showed your wife when you were dating. You verbally told her how much you loved her. You showered her with cards, flowers, and gifts. You hugged and kissed her many times each day. Essentially you created an environment of affection that clearly and repeatedly expressed your love for her. Continue to do these things now that you're married. Affection is something your wife needs not just when you were dating but through-out your entire marriage. Adopt the attitude, "I'm going to keep wooing and winning my mate."

2. BE KIND

Start doing the little kindnesses again. I'm talking about the little things you use to do before you got married. Try opening the car door for your wife. How about holding her hand in public? Surprise her after a hard day's work with a hot drawn bath. In other words, be kind to your wife with both your words and actions. Treat her with love and respect.

3. KEEP TALKING

I remember talking about everything when my wife and I were dating. We talked about our lives, our feelings, our future plans. We talked about sports. We talked about everything! Then we married and all of sudden it seemed like all conversation came to a halt. Once married we should do everything in our power

not to become complacent. Spend the time necessary to keep your marriage strong and alive. Set aside time every day to talk to your wife. It doesn't matter what you two talk about as long as you talk and keep the lines of communication open. When talking with your wife make sure that your conversation is never judgmental but always informative, constructive, and enjoyable. Nothing will shut a woman down more than a man whose conversation is sprinkled with a critical, judgmental tone. The rock band, Pink Floyd, in their song "Keep Talking" wrote, for millions of years mankind lived just like the animals. Then something happened which unleashed the power of our imagination - we learned to talk. Learn to talk to your wife. She craves conversation with you. Never become too busy "to just talk."

4. BE HONEST AND OPEN

Your wife wants complete honesty and openness from you. What does that mean and what does it look like? It means that you tell your wife everything about yourself. You don't hold anything back that will surprise her later. Your wife wants to know what you're thinking and what you're feeling. I know some men have a difficult time communicating feelings. Your wife will develop a closeness with you when you learn to communicate your inner self. Be truthful with her. Don't give her a false impression. Be truthful about your thoughts, feelings, intentions, and behavior. Share your past events, your schedule, and your plans for the future. Let her know about your dreams and desires. As you

become completely open and honest with your wife a closeness and intimacy will develop between the two of you that you never imagined.

5. ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE

Accentuate the positive. Don't be so critical with your wife. She can probably find plenty of things that aren't perfect about you, too. Make it a habit of looking for the good, and then let her know what you find. Building up and encouraging your wife will pay huge dividends.

6. PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

I know in many households both the man and woman work to make ends meet. I have no problem with that but keep in mind that God has given you the responsibility to house, feed, and clothe your family. It is not your wife's responsibility! It's ok for her to pursue a career, but you should never depend on her salary for living expenses. If you're working in a job that provides insufficient income to provide financially for your family then resolve the problem by upgrading your skills so that you can increase your salary. Providing for your family financially also doesn't mean that you work 60 plus hours a week. The number of hours you work per week should be reasonable. It's important that you save some of your best time and energy for home.

7. PROVIDE FAMILY SUPPORT

Your wife needs you to be committed to your family. Your job is to lead and guide your children. Spend the necessary time and energy committed to the moral and educational development of your children. Spend time reading to your kids. Spend time playing with them. Take them on frequent outings. An outing can simply be playing catch at the park with them followed by ice cream at Baskin & Robbins. Done on a regular basis will pay huge dividends. I hear many busy dads say that they try to spend quality time with their kids. Quality time is important but quantity time is more important. It spells love to them. Attend child rearing lectures with your wife. Discuss with your wife the meaning of train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart. When the children misbehave be sure that you discuss a training plan for discipline with your wife. It's important that you get her buy in and that you both are in agreement. A loving husband recognizes that his care of the children is very important to her.

SUMMARY

Finally, take responsibility for doing your part. Focusing on the above will help put new life and warm into your marriage.