

Eye-Opening Truths That Help Women, Men, and Relationships

Do you want to enjoy a fantastic relationship with your spouse or significant other? Maybe you've sincerely tried, but there's still too much conflict or confusion. Or maybe you have a good relationship, and want it to be great.

Relationships can be transformed when we suddenly "get" something we just didn't realize before! Below is a sampling of some key "aha moments" about men, women and marriage from Shaunti Feldhahn's 10 years of research with 10,000 men and women. There are always exceptions, though, so the key is to learn your partner. (Note: this simple overview doesn't address deep systemic problems such as abuse or addiction.)

About Shaunti Feldhahn: Shaunti received her graduate degree from Harvard, started out on Wall Street, and unexpectedly became a social researcher and best-selling author investigating life-changing truths about relationships. Her research is regularly featured on media as diverse as The Today Show, Focus on the Family, and the New York Times. See Shaunti.com for more.

Interested in having Shaunti share these truths with your group? Email Naomi Duncan at NDuncan@shaunti.com.



What Women Need to Know About Men (See **For Women Only: What You Need to Know About the Inner Lives of Men**)

1. He looks confident – but has so much self-doubt

Despite his "in control" exterior, your man often feels like imposter. He deeply wants to be a great husband or dad, but is worried about being found out as inadequate (his most painful feeling). You can hit this vulnerable, raw nerve without intending to ("Why did you do it that way?!"). But affirmation builds him up into the great man he is longing to be. ("You are such a great dad.")

Survey says: 76% of men said, "I am not always as confident as I look." 69% are powerfully affected by hearing "you did a great job at that."

2. He needs respect so much he would give up love to get it.

Just as inadequacy is a man's most painful feeling, his greatest need is feeling that you respect him. You need to know he loves you even when you're unlovable that day, right? Similarly, he needs to know you appreciate, respect and trust him even when he makes mistakes. He might get angry or withdraw if he feels your disrespect – even if you didn't intend it – and will light up if he hears "thank you."

Survey says: 74% of men said if they had to choose, they would give up feeling loved if they could just feel respected. Instead of hearing "I love you", 72% of men are powerfully affected by hearing "thank you."

3. For him, sex is primarily an emotional need.

At the most basic level, men want to be wanted sexually – and it has a profound emotional impact. Feeling that his wife desires him gives a man confidence and a sense of well-being in all areas of his life – where feeling that you don't desire him can create a sense of dejection and lack of well-being.

Research Shows: 97% of men surveyed said getting enough sex wasn't by itself enough; they wanted to feel wanted.

4. He will process something best when there is time to think first, then talk.

During conflict when you're pushing to 'talk it out' to get resolution and feel reassured, he often needs to pull away... not to avoid the issue but so he can think it through and better talk about it later.

Research Shows: 71% of men (or more) said if they don't want to talk during conflict it is to allow time to process, avoid hurting you, and/or get a better result.

Bringing It Home: Questions For Him

- What do I do or say that most makes you feel respected and appreciated? What makes you feel disrespected and unappreciated?
- To help me see this, can you give me an example of a time I really made you feel trusted? A time when you felt I didn't?



What Men Need to Know About Women

(See ***For Men Only: A Straightforward Guide to the Inner Lives of Women***)

1. She needs to know every day, “he would choose me all over again”

Just because you said “I do,” doesn’t make her feel permanently loved. Inside even the most confident woman in a great relationship, is an underground, “am I loveable/would he choose me again?” insecurity. When that insecurity is triggered, she may seem unlovable right when she most needs reassurance. And your simple, daily actions of pursuit (e.g. taking her hand) show you care and often prevent insecurity in the first place.

Survey Says: 82% of women have this hidden insecurity. During conflict, 86% say hearing him say “we’re okay” provides the reassurance she needs.

2. She wants emotional security more than financial security.

Your wife’s primary need is not financial security but emotional closeness. So when you give more time to work (because you love and want to provide for her), she feels work is a higher priority and is insecure about your love. She wants your family attention more than anything else you could provide.

Survey Says: 70% of married women said if they had to choose, they would endure financial insecurity if that was what it took to get closeness with him.

3. If she wants less sex, it’s about her brain chemistry not your desirability

Although you think her lower interest means you’re not desirable (a depressing thought), it’s usually just a physiological difference. Where men often have “assertive desire” (tied to testosterone), women often have “receptive desire.” She enjoys sex just as much when it’s happening, but doesn’t think about it as much and needs “anticipation time” to have the same interest. She also may need to feel closer outside the bedroom.

Survey Says: 96% of women who wanted less sex than their husbands indicated that it had nothing to do with his desirability. Instead, for 60% it was primarily a physiological difference.

Bringing It Home: Questions For Her

- What are some situations or words that make you worry about us, or whether I truly love you? (Just for the record, I do love you!)
- What are a few day to day things I say and do that most make you feel reassured that I do love you and will always be here for you?



How To Make A Happy Marriage

(See ***The Surprising Secrets of Highly Happy Marriages***)

In a three year study of the happiest couple, some simple actions were the “secret sauce” to creating a happy marriage. For example:

1. When you’re hurt, believe the best of your spouse’s intentions

When you are legitimately hurt, refuse to believe your mate intended to hurt you, and look for a more generous explanation instead. For example, stop yourself thinking, “He/she knew how that would make me feel and they said it anyway.” Instead, force yourself to realize: “My spouse cares about me, so they must not have known how that would make me feel--or they wouldn’t have said it.”

Survey Says: This isn’t just wishful thinking: The vast majority (97-99% even in troubled marriages) deeply care about their spouse. But to be happy in marriage, you have to believe it.

2. Boss Your Feelings Around

Every couple – happy or not – experiences times of conflict. But to be happy in your marriage, you need to not focus on what is driving you crazy, and instead focus on the

good things your spouse usually does. (“Yes, she is telling me what to do, but look at how many things she’s managing for the family today...”)

Survey Says: The happiest couples quickly talk themselves out of being mad or stop a negative train of thought to begin with. 64% of the happy spouses do that, where only 27% of so-so or struggling couples do.

3. Be “all in” – with no secret bank account

In marriage, take the risk of fully investing emotionally, financially and physically instead of holding back to protect yourself. Never say the “D word.” It turns out, those “just in case” actions create a lack of trust and cause the problems you’re trying to protect yourself from. But being “all in” usually dramatically increases security and happiness.

Survey Says: Many people (46% of struggling couples) protect themselves, but the happiest couples (72%) often became so happy because they committed fully, stopped keeping secrets, and decided divorce wasn’t an option. Instead of being “risky,” these actions made them happier.