

3 Tips for Understanding Your Wife

Do you fully appreciate the benefits your children's mother brings to their lives -- and your life? It's no revelation that women are different from men in many ways. Often, those differences can be sources of conflict, and those differences involve much more than where one squeezes the toothpaste. Having children really brings these differences to the surface, whether it's how you approach discipline, household tasks for the kids, or your time commitment to work and family.

It's important to learn to understand, accept and honor the differences between yourself and your wife (or children's mother). Your children need something that she is uniquely equipped to give; they benefit from her approach to parenting just like they benefit from yours. In many disagreements, the real issue isn't about who's right and who's wrong; it's a matter of understanding and appreciating differences. Your job is to learn to be complimentary instead of contradictory. Children need to see what healthy, loving marriages look like.

Here are three quick pointers to help you understand your wife or children's mother:

1. Learn to appreciate and meet her emotional needs. As a general rule, compared to you a woman connects more through conversation, she places higher value on thoughtful and romantic gestures, and her identity is more attached to her home. How do those generalities describe your wife? If you don't know, ask her (and listen)! [Read about more male/female differences.](#)
2. Know her "love language." What makes her feel loved the most? Is it gifts? Time together? Acts of service? Physical affection? All of these are important, but too many husbands think they're showing love when they're actually "speaking the wrong language." You may be expressing love by bringing her gifts, but if her language is spoken words, then she isn't getting the message. She may even think you're trying to buy her love. Or, you may be doing good works for her to get out of the dog house, but what she really needs is for you to spend more time talking and listening to her. Here's a [helpful resource to learn more.](#)
3. Communicate about expectations. It's hard to have a strong marriage or be a great parenting team if you aren't working toward the same goal. Ask her, "What's your idea of a good marriage?" And answer the question yourself. Talk about your parents' marriages and qualities in other marriages you may want to emulate or avoid.

ACTION POINTS

- Ask your children what qualities they're looking for in a future mate. (Often their answers will reflect something about your marriage or your attitudes about marriage.)
- Show respect to your kids' mom and encourage them to honor her -- even if you're a divorced dad.
- Without making a show of it, make a compromise that shows you appreciate how your wife is physically and/or emotionally different from you.
- Ask your wife, "What communicates love to you most clearly?" Then start focusing your efforts more in the area of her "love language."
- Schedule a time when you and your wife can get away alone and do something fun together.

I know many of you that will read this may sort of “blow this off.” Maybe you have been to your “weekend marriage seminar” or attended some conferences at your church. I bet they were a bit uncomfortable but at the end of the day many of the ideas proved useful. I must admit I did not do that and I must admit that I wished I had. Maybe I would avert some later pain in my marriage? Maybe we would have communicated better? Maybe we? I guess the underlining theme is this: If you want a successful marriage with minimal pain and hurt – you may want to pay serious attention to what makes “us” tick and what makes “them” tick to make a We. Maybe? Give it a try and remember in all things, Listen, Listen and Love, Love.

Recommended Resources:

- [How Do You Say I Love You? by Judson Swihart](#)
- [The Five Love Languages - Men's Edition by Gary Chapman](#)

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