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. . . ABOUT LIFE LINES . . .

The Life Lines series is designed for *real* people in *real life* situations. Written by published authors who are experts in their field, each book covers a different topic and includes:

- information you need, in a quick and easy-to-read format
- practical advice and encouragement from someone who's been there
- "life support"—hands-on tips to give you immediate help for the problems you're facing
- "healthy habits"—long-term strategies that will enrich your life
- inspiring Bible verses
- lists of additional resources—books, Web sites, videos, and seminars to keep you headed on the right path

Life Lines is a joint effort from Marriage Alive International and Smalley Relationship Center. Marriage Alive founders and directors David and Claudia Arp serve as general editors.

Whether you need assistance for an everyday situation, a life transition, or a crisis period, or you're just looking for a friend to come alongside you, Life Lines offers wise, compassionate counsel from someone who can help. This series will connect with you, inspire you, and give you tools that will change your life—for the better!

Titles in the series:

Life Lines: Connecting with Your Husband—Gary Smalley

Life Lines: Connecting with Your Wife—Barbara Rosberg

Life Lines: New Baby Stress—David and Claudia Arp

Life Lines: Survival Tips for Parents of Preschoolers—Becky
Freeman

Life Lines: Communicating with Your Teen—Greg and Michael
Smalley

Life Lines: Making Wise Life Choices—John Trent

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Do you ever wonder . . .

- why a woman talks so much without getting to the point?
- why your wife's radar goes off when you talk to certain women?
- why you feel as if you're her top home-improvement project?
- why she wants to finish your sentences for you?
- why women insist men stop and ask for directions?
- why women can't just think like men?

When you married your wife, you saw all the wonderful qualities of her femininity. She's nurturing, caring, thoughtful, generous, affectionate, romantic, and gentle. So of course she appeals to you! That softer side of womanhood is naturally appealing. But then you had a run-in with the flip side of her femininity—that sometimes overly emotional, sensitive, moody side that has probably left you feeling confused and maybe even a little miffed. It's that side that makes a man say, "Where did this woman come from?!" Quite frankly, that side of femininity can easily confuse the

best of men. There are times when a woman can be just plain difficult to live with—let alone understand!

But the truth of the matter is men and women are different. Now, that's not a news flash; I'm sure you've already figured that one out. But what you may not have known is that God *designed* men and women to be different. In other words, God created your wife to be wired with all those sides of femininity, just like God created you to be the way you are. This is a good thing! It may not feel that way when you scratch your head in bewilderment at something totally crazy—in your view—that your wife's done again. But when you begin to understand the way your wife's been created, and you begin to connect and work with her through your differing designs, you'll discover maybe she's not really crazy, illogical, or irrational after all. And your marriage will be stronger because of it.

DISCOVERING YOUR DIFFERENCES

If you can't understand your wife no matter how hard you try, then this book is for you! It will give you insight into why your wife thinks the way she thinks and appears to act so strangely at times. So let's begin our adventure by looking at a few of the misunderstandings that result from some basic differences between men and women.

My husband, Gary, handed me this e-mail one day. I think this sums up our differences pretty well. See if you agree.

Men and Women Are Different: Take bathrooms, for instance. A man has six items in his bathroom: a toothbrush, toothpaste, shaving cream, razor, a bar of Dial soap, and a towel from the Holiday Inn. The average number of items in the typical woman's bathroom is 437. A man would not be able to identify most of these items.

What about the closet? A man has about four pairs of shoes: sneakers, sandals, casual, and dress. If a woman actually counts, she'll find she has thirty-plus pairs of shoes, but she only wears about four of them.

And how about public rest rooms? Men use rest rooms for purely biological reasons. Women use rest rooms as social lounges. Men in a rest room would never speak a word to each other. Women who've never met will leave a rest room giggling together like old friends. And never in the history of the world has a man excused himself from a restaurant table by saying, "Hey, Tom, I was just about to head to the rest room. Do you want to join me?"

When a woman says she'll be ready to go out in five more minutes, she's using the same measure of time a man uses when he says that the football game's just got five more minutes left. Neither of them is counting time-outs, commercials, or replays.

Gary and I really laughed when we read this—mostly because it was as if we were reading about ourselves! Gary will be the first to admit he's had to work through the frustrations of trying to figure out who I am—and why I'm so different from him. And I'll be the first to admit I haven't been the easiest to live with at times. I'm sure there were even moments when Gary would pray, "God, what were you thinking? Why did you create her to be so different from me?" But he stuck with me and spent the time trying to understand me. That's made a huge difference in our marriage.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND WOMEN

Remember Henry Ford? In the early days of Ford Motor Company, the Detroit plant suddenly lost all its electricity. Ford tried everything he could to fix the problem but nothing worked. Finally he called an electrician. The man walked over to the electrical box, fooled around with a couple of wires, and the power

was restored. He then handed Ford a bill for ten thousand dollars.

Ford was astonished. "Why should this thirty-second job cost so much?"

"There's no charge for fixing the wiring," said the electrician. "The ten thousand dollars is for knowing which wires to jiggle."

So here's the ten-thousand-dollar question: Do you know your wife's emotional wiring well enough to know what wires to jiggle to connect you with her emotionally? Like you, your wife wants to be understood. She needs to be cared for, listened to, encouraged, and given attention. I feel like a million bucks when I know my husband understands me. When you seek to connect with your wife, you send her a message that says, "I respect who you are and your thoughts, feelings, and ideas." And who doesn't want respect?

HERE TO HELP

So what's the bottom line? Obviously you're reading this book because you want a better marriage and a better relationship with your wife. I'm going to share with you what researchers, experts, and scores of men and women say about a woman's wiring. Keep in mind that because *everybody* is different, I'm going to be talking in generalities or stereotypes, but you'll probably see your wife in a lot of what I'm sharing.

I'm also going to discuss what I've learned in my own research, through the nationally syndicated daily radio program Gary and I host, *America's Family Coaches—LIVE*, as well as what I've learned in nearly thirty years of marriage to Gary. I'm going to tell you how to tune in to a woman's wiring. I'll help you identify what she needs, how she communicates with other women and with men, what intimacy means to her, and how to understand her definition of romance. I'll also give you Life Support—practical ideas you can implement right away to improve your relationship and let your wife know you genuinely care.

In the Healthy Habits section, I'll present more practical ways to strengthen your relationship and help you understand these six areas that are important to women:

1. The power of intimacy
2. The fundamentals of friendship
3. Safeguarding your relationship
4. Reviving romance
5. Authentic love and acceptance
6. The secrets to really connecting

Finally, I'll direct you to excellent resources to further your pursuit of understanding your wife.

Connecting with Your Wife can be your lifeline to understanding your wife and rediscovering the love

of your life. So sit down in your recliner, put up your feet, grab a Coke, and get comfortable. But leave that remote alone! You can check the scores after you've read this little book. When you're finished, you'll be saying, "Hmmm, so that's why she acts that way. Now I get it! Maybe she's not really crazy after all."

Is it worth it? Absolutely. My husband, Gary, can attest to that. So whatever you do—don't give up! You'll be glad you didn't. . . . And so will your wife.

. . . 1 . . .

UNDERSTANDING A WOMAN

Men and women sure are different.

When a guy needs encouragement, he typically goes for the slap on the back from the guys on the court. When a woman needs encouragement, she wants hugs from her supportive friends. Men look to their friends to be just company. A woman wants emotional connection in friendships. For her, it hasn't been a good time if she hasn't had a good laugh or a good cry.

Typically, a man wants a friend with whom he can share activities and hobbies. A woman wants someone with whom she can share words. Author and relationship expert Gary Smalley has said that a woman

needs to speak twenty-five thousand words in a day—and a man needs to speak only half that number. The problem is that generally a man's words are spent by the time he reaches home at the end of a day, and a woman still has half her words left to say.

Now, I know there are times when you marvel at your wife's talents, abilities, and insights. You wonder, *How does she do it all?* Many women have a tremendous ability to do a wide assortment of things—all at the same time! Like the way your wife can make dinner, grade the kids' homework, give the dog a bath, talk on the phone, and know when there's been way too much silence from the kids—alerting her to a disaster that's about to take place in the basement! On the other hand, there are times when your wife marvels at your ability to focus on one thing at a time. You're probably better able to focus intensely on the project at hand and shut everything else out.

BACK TO BASICS

We can laugh about our many differences, but when you look closely, they boil down to just a few simple principles. Obviously, these are generalities, but on the whole, men replenish by having someone listen to their ideas; women replenish by having someone listen to their heart. Men are more likely to share just the facts, while women love to share their feelings

and all the details—conversations, the setting, what people were wearing. Men compete; women connect.

From the bathroom to the bedroom, it is essential for a man to understand the way his wife thinks. The truth is, God made us different so we could complement each other. If your wife were the same as you, one of you would be unnecessary! So God designed you to pick up the slack where your wife falls short—and he designed your wife to pick up the slack where *you* fall short. He designed you and your wife to combine your unique qualities to become one. (Read Genesis 2:24—“This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.”) But have no fear! God can help you in making that “oneness” a great thing for your marriage. After all, that’s what he had in mind when he first created men and women way back in the Garden of Eden. Yes, marriage takes work, but it’s one of the most joyful, fulfilling relationships you can have.

On the whole, men replenish by having someone listen to their ideas; women replenish by having someone listen to their heart.

So let’s address some hot topics every man needs to study in order to really understand a woman—and in turn have a great marriage. He needs to understand:

• • •

- how a woman is wired differently
- how to listen without fixing
- how women respond sexually
- how a woman's hormones affect her

Ready to tackle these top four topics? Let's go!