

“YUP.”

“NOPE.”

“MAYBE.”

A WOMAN'S GUIDE
TO GETTING MORE OUT OF
THE LANGUAGE OF MEN



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"Yup." "Nope." "Maybe.": A Woman's Guide to Getting More out of the Language of Men

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INTRODUCTION

ARE GUYS AS CLUELESS AS THEY ACT?

WHY ANOTHER BOOK on women and men? That's a great question. It all started one evening last summer, when I (Stephen) was watching TV with my wife. It was warm in the house, so I got up and adjusted the thermostat to cool off. "Are you hot?" she asked. "Because I am freezing." A few minutes later, she got up to get a glass of water. I noticed that as she passed the thermostat, she adjusted it back to where it had been. Now, I should have left it alone, but because I'm a man, I couldn't let it go. Consequently, a silent battle began over the thermostat—just a little unspoken conflict fought with stealthy maneuvers and cunning strategy. The thermostat bounced back and forth all night, and we both lost the war. I stayed hot and she stayed cold.

In an effort to strike a peace accord and thus restore harmony to the atmospheric condition of my home, I asked a mechanical-engineer friend who designs heating and cooling systems to help me out. He explained it this way: "Heat dissipation is a function of surface area (r^2), and heat production is a function of volume (r^3); so the production-to-dissipation ratio corresponds with the radius."

"Huh?" I asked with an expression that looked like I had just ingested a mouthful of bad cottage cheese.

"The smaller you are, the colder you'll be."

This got me thinking, and I decided to do some research. I learned that because women menstruate, they are more prone to

anemia, which can make them feel cold. I also discovered that a woman’s core body temperature varies little, in order to provide a healthier growing environment for babies in utero. Consequently, if a woman’s core temperature drops by a little bit, all the blood gets drawn from the extremities into the core. When a man’s core temperature drops by a little bit, it just sits there, no problem. This all made sense, and it explained why even in the summer my petite wife has been known to turn on the in-seat heater when she is in the car.

I recounted this skirmish to David, my friend and cowriter, over a cup of coffee one day, and he asked, “Why would God make men and women so completely different and then call us to share life together, to be in intimate relationship with one another? It seems like the opportunities for conflict and misunderstanding are enormous. Is God crazy? I wish some guys would write a book that explained to women what men are really thinking.”

“Hey, that’s a great idea, David.”

As we did the research for this book, we were reminded of many things we had learned in grad school. For instance, that there are basic biological differences between men and women. These differences are easily recognizable when we consider the structure of male and female brains and our differing physiologies. For example, the male brain has greater hemispheric separation, which helps to explain why men have a skill for abstract reasoning and visual-spatial intelligence (and why more men are engineers). The female brain has more frequent interactions and larger connections between the left and right hemispheres, which can explain why women are generally more skilled in verbal and written expression, have a stronger mastery of language, and pos-

sess the marks of intuition and empathy (and why more women are counselors).

Poet Robert Bly describes the female brain as a “superhighway” of connection, whereas the connections in the male brain are better described as a “little crooked country road.” Perhaps, like us, you are curious about why we are invited to travel the superhighway and the little crooked country road together.

THE BIG DEAL OF SEX

Sexuality directly and significantly influences almost every aspect of our lives. Femaleness or maleness is hardwired into our physiology, anthropology, and theology—it’s written into our hearts, minds, souls, and bodies. We’re aware of sexuality from a very early age. Children discern the difference in the sexes before they ever notice other variations like height, ethnicity, or hair color.

This idea that sex is central to our lives is neither new nor particularly profound. We all pretty much know how pervasive it is. Take a look around. Our culture is laden with sexual images, sexual stereotypes, and sexual innuendos. From high art to beer commercials, sexuality is the common lexicon.

Sex is ubiquitous. Just visit the supermarket. You can’t even buy a bag of groceries without being inundated with sexuality. Next time you’re in the checkout aisle, take a look at the magazines: *Cosmo*, *People*, *Us*, *Entertainment Weekly*. Sex is everywhere. Heck, it’s even in the pages of *Wired*, an award-winning science and technology magazine I (Stephen) subscribe to. In one issue, there was a big, yellow, eye-catching bubble on the cover that read, “Women, Sex, and the Science of Orgasm.”¹ This teaser heralded an article exploring the scientific search to

create female Viagra. (No need to speculate. Of course I read that article first.)

All this attention on sex is not part of a vast left-wing conspiracy (despite what Rush Limbaugh might say). Sex is everywhere for one simple reason: It's central to our human experience. Sex *sells* because advertisers know that it scratches an elemental itch at the core of who we are. Even the Bible makes a big deal about sexuality, tying it to spirituality and intimacy with God.

THE DUDE AND THE GIRL

About the same time we started talking about this book, I (David) began premarital counseling with a couple who lived in two different cities. I met with them on weekends when the groom-to-be was in town. He was, as they say, a man of very few words. A woman might say he was “emotionally constipated.” We'll refer to him simply as Dude Can't Talk.

The bride-to-be was quite verbal (if you can imagine that). We'll refer to her affectionately as Girl Won't Shut Up. Because of their long-distance relationship, her desire was for them to speak by phone at the end of each day, simply to “hear each other's voice.” Dude Can't Talk obliged her with this nightly ritual, but things did not go as planned.

According to Girl Won't Shut Up, they would chat freely for ten to fifteen minutes. That of course was the part of the conversation where she talked about her day. What she'd eaten for breakfast. What route she'd driven to work. How relationships at work were progressing. The errands she'd run after work. Whom she had talked to on the phone that day, and when. What her mother had said about the people she had talked to on the phone that

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day. Making sure he knew that Brad and Angelina were expecting. How her training for the half-marathon was going. And discussing their plans for the next weekend he would be in town.

Dude Can't Talk would throw in an occasional "yup," "nope," or "maybe," and every once in a while, he would follow it with an "uh-huh."

The next portion of the evening chat often involved a good deal of silence. According to Dude Can't Talk, he wondered to himself, *Why in the world do we stay on the line if there is nothing left to say?* One night, tired from a day of making sales calls, he mustered up enough courage to say, "This is silly. We should just finish the conversation if we're done talking."

Girl Won't Shut Up, in her desperation to create some kind of connection, brought this up at our next counseling session, saying to Dude Can't Talk, "I'd rather hear you breathing on the other end of the line than not hear you at all."

This comment was greeted with silence by Dude Can't Talk.

Girl Won't Shut Up then vowed not to carry so much of the conversation from this point on. She had come to the conclusion that she was doing too much work in their relationship, and this was just one example. Her solution was to wait patiently for Dude Can't Talk to take the lead in their phone dialogue. This would be his way of proving his interest in her, in the relationship, and in communication.

I remember thinking, *I can't wait to see how this turns out.*

When the couple arrived for their next weekend session, I asked how the new strategy was working. Girl Won't Shut Up reported that the first nightly phone call after our last meeting began as they always had, with her description of her day's activities,

and an exchange of logistical information. But then she remembered her now-sacred vow of silence.

“I just stayed silent . . . for what felt like five minutes or more, until . . . until . . .”

Until she just couldn't take it anymore.

According to Dude Can't Talk, at this point she yelled, “Well, at least tell me what you're wearing right now! Do you even know how to have a conversation?”

Girl Won't Shut Up looked away as he tattled on her, but then she shifted toward me, still full of energy, and said, “Answer me this, ‘Dr. Phil.’ Is he really as clueless as he acts? I wish some man would write a book for women explaining what is going on inside a guy's head.”

I thought to myself, *Now that you mention it . . .*

“MANSPEAK”

Dude Can't Talk and Girl Won't Shut Up are extreme examples, in some ways, but their relationship illustrates one aspect of how differences in men and women affect their relational intimacy and authenticity. When two guys are having a heart-to-heart, a lot can be communicated with a few head nods, a couple of grunts, and the occasional, well-chosen expletive. But from a woman's perspective, men aren't quite so clear. What a woman *hears* a man say, what he *doesn't* say, and what he's *trying* to say are very often disconnected. Here are a few examples:

A woman asks a man, “Are you happy in our relationship?” He says, “Yup.” She hears, “He's not that into me,” but he might really mean, “I've never been happier.”

At the end of a very romantic and connected day, the man

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says something like, “Wanna do it?” She more than likely thinks, *All he wants is sex. That Pig!* What he meant was, “I really love you and want to make love with you.”

A woman comes home from a really disappointing day at the office and unloads her frustration about her boss and coworkers on her husband, crying the entire time. He responds with, “What you need to do is . . .” Feeling dismissed and lonely, she leaves the room and calls her mother. What he was trying to say was, “It scares me that I don’t believe that I am enough for you right now.”

One lazy Sunday afternoon, a wife says to her husband, “I need to talk to you about John Jr. and the note his teacher sent home from school.” He says, “Can’t it wait until halftime?” Her interpretation: “He doesn’t love our son.” What he was thinking was, *I have no idea what to do.*

With men and women (as with so much of life) what you see is not always what you get. It’s a lot more complicated than men and women being from different planets or just needing love or respect. The trouble is that we are very similar in substance but different enough in form and structure that unless we are intentional in listening and interpreting each other well, we will miss the mark, even though we are often after the same things.

TWENTY QUESTIONS

One of the best parts of writing this book was the research. We began by sending out a mass e-mail to every woman we knew, explaining the concept of this book and requesting that they send us questions they had about men—things that bewildered them, things that caused them great frustration, and things that they

just wanted to know more about. We got hundreds of replies from women from all over the country, and a wide variety of questions, such as these:

- Why won't men stop to ask for directions?
- Are men just emotionally constipated?
- Do men *always* think about sex?
- How can men fight fearlessly in war and yet whimper like children when they're sick?
- Why are some men afraid to get married?
- Why do men spend so much time on the porcelain throne?
- What frightens men about becoming fathers?
- Why can't men ever find what they're looking for?
- Why do men leave their socks and shoes on the floor?
- Why don't men help with the children the way their wives would like?
- Why do men watch sports?
- Why do men like gadgets?
- Why do men drive fast?

Once we had received all these questions, we reviewed them for similarities and common themes. We then set up dinners with women of various ages, races, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Some were married; others were single. Some were grandmothers; others were barely out of their teens. Some had children; others did not.

We asked these women to tell us all the questions they had about men—and they did, talking for hours. We took great notes, we laughed (and laughed some more), and often we scratched our

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heads. These questions opened the door to extraordinary conversations, which became the foundation for this book. Our method was far from scientific, but it sure was fun. In the end, what we learned is that women really don't understand all that much about men, and they have many more questions than answers.

When we sat down to write, one thing was certain: It was going to be a book about sex. Not about the act of sexual intercourse but the energy created by the differences between men and women. This book, as honestly as possible, explores the inner dynamics of men and women in relationship. It's a book that looks deeply into the hearts of each gender and exposes something true and hopeful about what is at play between the sexes.

We came to the conclusion that men are in no way as clueless as they sometimes act. However, we do believe that the demand placed on men, in an increasingly feminized culture, to *relate like women* is dangerous. We're also certain that many men are emotionally and relationally stunted, and we observed that women and men both use the excuse "Hey, he's just being a man" as a way to escape the struggle of engaging with members of the opposite sex, who are so different and yet so intriguing.

We hope to accomplish two things with this book: 1) Show women how to move beyond the question of "Is he as clueless as he acts?" to embrace a genuine curiosity and appreciation for the differences in men, so that women can discover acceptance for their own presence, power, and purpose; and 2) inspire men to be as curious about women and begin to see the heart behind their actions, so that their masculinity will more likely be authentic, safe, courageous, and full.

Men and women are each God's image-bearers. We all

have the same core feelings, needs, desires, longings, and hopes. Women and men were both created as relational beings by a relational God in a relational context. But how we engage with that context, navigate relationships, and interpret data are vastly different. Most of these differences are rooted in our gender.

God’s hope for sexuality is far grander and more glorious than the lewd, prurient, lustful presentations that dominate so much of our culture. If you want to understand life and live well, love well, and parent well, then you need to understand a fundamental ingredient of our humanity—sexuality, and how it interacts with and influences all other areas of life.

Have fun.

1

“YUP. NOPE. MAYBE.”

DECODING MANSPEAK



JAKE AND ANNE were wrestling with the idea of starting a family. They had been married for “four very long years,” and Anne was ready to take the jump into parenthood. Jake, on the other hand, was “fine with holding off for a while.” Anne was a mover and a shaker, but Jake preferred to take things slow. They had been coming to me (David) for counseling for several months, and helping them work through their decision about children had been a bit like refereeing a friendly game of Twister between Orville Redenbacher and Martha Stewart.

Anne would typically come well-prepared, with notebook in hand, all assignments from the week completed, and a list of additional questions she’d like to ask during our session. Jake, on the other hand, rarely remembered his assignment or had only partially completed it. Anne would shake her head in disbelief,

frustration, and sadness, and then Jake would laugh awkwardly and say something like, “I should take better notes when I’m here, shouldn’t I?” The conversation would start at medium volume and build to a crescendo of contempt, apologies, and tears.

One evening, when Jake again came unprepared, Anne was running low on forgiveness. Following his usual “aw, shucks” confession, Anne lit into him.

“You’re kidding, right?”

“Nope,” he replied apologetically, but he was looking at me, not at her.

“What?!” With a single word, Anne captured all the energy and frustration of four years of unmet expectations.

“I forgot,” Jake added sheepishly. I thought to myself, *Oh man, you’re in trouble now . . . big trouble.*

Anne snapped, “Do you even want to do this?”

Jake, eager to make up for lost ground, put just a little too much enthusiasm into his response: “Yeah!”

(Let me pause here and give you some brief history. During the several months that I had been counseling Anne and Jake, I had given him some questions and statements that he could use anytime he was unsure about how to pursue his wife’s heart.)

When Anne’s tight lips and narrowed eyes conveyed her doubts about his commitment to the counseling process, Jake began regurgitating every key phrase I had taught him—simultaneously. “What do you need from me?” “Help me understand how I’ve hurt you.” “I want to know your heart, Anne.” “How do you feel?” “What you say is important to me!” “Tell me what you need right now!” He paused and racked his brain, like a schoolboy searching for the last phrase in reciting the Preamble to the Constitution.

I gave him a look that said, “Jake, that’s more than enough. Just buckle your seatbelt tightly. The car is about to crash.”

Anne hung her head, and Jake and I waited in silence. *Here come the tears*, I thought.

When she looked up, her eyes were wet, but her voice was steady. “I want you to get off your butt and do something! Do you hear me talking to you, Jake?”

It was quiet for a long moment, and Jake seemed like he was afraid to move. I adjusted in my seat to get comfortable. Finally, Jake looked at me as if to say, “Help me out here, man. . . . Don’t we have some kind of secret man-pact? Can’t you see I’m drowning?”

Rather than throw him the life preserver he so desperately wanted, I decided to let him tread water for a while, and I tossed him a question instead. “Jake, do you know what your wife is asking from you?”

“Maybe?” He looked at me helplessly, his expression a mixture of uncertainty and disorientation—like a man who had just been dragged into a bridal shower. Then, realizing he should say more, he added, “Well, obviously to do *something*.”

Anne was now crying without reserve.

“And what is that something she is wanting from you?” I asked.

Jake became anxious at this point and started shifting in his seat. “I know where you’re headed,” he said, pointing his finger at me and then at his wife, “and I’ve told you I’m not ready for kids yet.”

Anne didn’t even look up, but I knew her heart was breaking.

“Jake, I don’t think she’s asking you to conceive *tonight*.”

But she is aching to know that you are interested in the desires of her heart, the things she wants, even if it scares the life out of you.” (And, boy, was he scared.)

“She wants you to chase after her the way you did when you first met . . . to be that interested in her again. And, yes, it may eventually lead you to having a child. And if that’s the case, well, you’re a smart guy. You’ll figure out what to do along the way.”

I stopped and looked at Anne again. She had stopped crying and was nodding her head, as if to say, “Preach on, brother.” Jake looked trapped, but also a little relieved. Not because he didn’t know what to do, but because he knew exactly what to do . . . exactly what was required of him.

I once commented to Jake that he had been given the gift of a passionate woman. Anne is strong, expressive, and engaging. (She can also be demanding, impatient, controlling, and resentful). Like many women, she is hungry to be chosen and led. Jake is an articulate, well-educated, confident man, but like many men I know, he also has a deer-in-the-headlights look that he puts on frequently. (You know the one—a little mild terror mixed with some confusion and a touch of “oh crap.”) And there’s nothing quite like a relationship with a strong woman to make an otherwise confident man turn into a frightened, shell-shocked, fumbling-his-words little boy. “Yup. Nope. Maybe. I don’t know. Maybe. What do you want? Maybe.”

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

For a couple of years, I (Stephen) lived in Seattle. My entire life previous to this Northwest stint, I had lived in and around Nashville. I’m a Southerner, born and raised, but I’m no yokel. I don’t

often say “y’all.” At one time or another, I’ve traveled to most parts of the country and have spent the obligatory summer in Europe. I have an undergraduate degree in English literature, and I know the difference between a split infinitive and a prepositional phrase. I have been told more than once in my life, “You don’t sound like you’re from the South.” But after being in Seattle for only a few weeks, I felt like Gomer Pyle at Tavern on the Green. I hadn’t experienced such cultural self-consciousness since my parents moved us to an upscale, preppy suburb when I was in fifth grade, and I showed up for school with a Butt Cut hairstyle, black parachute pants, and a verbal twang that would shame a country-western singer.

One afternoon, my wife, daughter, and I were at a busy Seattle restaurant for lunch. We had been seated for quite some time without having our order taken, so I waved a waiter over to our table. As pleasantly and assertively as I could, I said, “Excuse me. We haven’t ordered yet. Can we get some help?”

The waiter just stared at me, slightly bewildered. “Sir?” he asked.

Thinking he must not have heard me, I repeated myself, “Can we get some help?”

There was a long pause as his bewilderment grew into a general confusion. Then very sincerely and apologetically, he leaned toward me and said, “I’m sorry, sir, but I don’t think we have ‘hep’ on the menu. Can I get you something else?”

If two people from different geographical regions (like my waiter friend and me) can speak different dialects of the same language, you can understand how communication between men and women can be equally cross-cultural. After all, we grow up

in different worlds biologically, socially, emotionally, and psychologically; and we have distinctly different views of the world as a result. We are creatures of different cultures, with different ideas of what life is all about. Nowhere does this break down more obviously than in our language.

To understand the male culture, we have to understand *manspeak*, because language is at the root of every culture. To comprehend the nuances, components, and character of a particular culture, we must embrace and understand the language. For instance, if we were to say to an English-speaking friend, “It will blow you away,” she would know we were referring to something extraordinary. But if we said to a Spanish-speaking friend, “Te soplará ausente” (literally, “It will blow you absent”), our statement would make no sense. If we wanted to communicate effectively, we would have to choose an equivalent Spanish idiom, such as “Te dejará alucinada” (literally, “It will leave you hallucinated”), which makes no sense in English, but which idiomatically communicates the same idea as the English phrase “It will blow you away.” The point, of course, is that men *and* women must speak in terms the other will understand if they want to communicate effectively.

With men and women, the nuances are often quite subtle. For example, take the little word *upset*. It’s pretty innocuous, right? Wrong. When a woman tells a man, “I’m upset,” what does she mean? She is hurt, sad, depressed, lonely. But more than likely what the man hears is, “I’m angry,” and he immediately thinks, *What did I do to make her so mad?* He’s likely to respond defensively—a far cry from the compassion that the woman was looking for.

Deborah Tannen, in her book *You Just Don't Understand*, labels the differences in the communication styles of women and men as “rapport-talk and report-talk.”¹ According to Tannen, women use conversation to maintain intimacy, increase connection, and develop rapport. Men, on the other hand, talk to establish independence, build status, and deliver data. Keep in mind, too, that what is *said* is only a small part of what is communicated. Researchers generally agree that upwards of 70 to 80 percent of all communication is nonverbal. To decode the language of men, you need to open your eyes, not just your ears. For example, when women talk to each other, they stand close together, maintain eye contact, and gesture frequently. Men typically keep a greater distance, avoid eye contact, and gesture much less often. The differences go on and on.

BREAKING THE CODE

I (David) teach a seminar called *Nurturing Boys*, in which I spend a good deal of time coaching parents and educators on how to crack the “male code.” The male code is a not-so-secret, but often misunderstood, language that males use to communicate with the world around them. Composed of single-word responses, grunting, brooding, and a generous measure of silence, the code involves meanings hidden within other meanings and a full range of nonverbal communication. Because teenage boys are especially fluent in this language, their parents must learn how to translate what is being communicated but not necessarily verbalized. For example, “Leave me alone!” the mantra of many a teenage boy, most often means, “I am trying to be independent, but I also feel really scared; and I’m hoping you’ll stay close to me.”

“You don’t understand” means, “Please be interested in me.” It is an invitation to pursue and engage with your teenage boy.

At every seminar, so far without exception, a handful of women will approach me to thank me for breaking the code. They will usually say something along the lines of, “This will be helpful with my son, but now I am beginning to really understand my *husband!*”

SEX ON THE BRAIN

Science continues to discover and prove how men’s and women’s brains really do work differently. Whatever separates the sexes, it all begins with a solitary Y chromosome, which influences, among other things, the size of certain brain structures and how the brain is wired.

Though men typically have bigger heads and larger brains than women, both sexes score equally well on IQ tests. How come? Women have about 15 to 20 percent more gray matter than men—the part of the brain tissue that supplies focused power and the ability to link thoughts.

Men’s heads are filled with more white matter and fluid.² (No, that is not a joke.) White matter helps to distribute processing power throughout the brain. This gives men better spatial reasoning, which is part of the reason most men prefer to figure out directions rather than ask for them. White matter also allows for single-mindedness, which explains why men tend not to be great multitaskers (and why men are able to tune out everything except the football game).

The white matter in women’s brains is concentrated in the corpus callosum (the part of the brain that links its hemispheres).

This helps both sides of the brain talk to each other more easily, which explains why women are more verbally capable than men.

Male and female brains age differently, too. Women have better blood flow to the brain. As men age, they lose more brain tissue, especially in the part of the brain that considers consequences and regulates self-control. (Again, this is not a joke, nor is it an excuse.)

A study by Dr. Peter Silverstone, a psychiatrist at the University of Alberta, shows that men and women use different parts of the brain while completing the same tasks.³ The study involved volunteers who performed a variety of tasks while their brain activity was monitored by MRI. Silverstone’s work reveals how men’s and women’s brains are fundamentally wired differently. His findings begin to explain why depression, for example, occurs twice as often in women as in men; and why men suffer from schizophrenia, alcoholism, and attention deficit disorder at much greater frequency than women.

Scientific discovery is just beginning to explain some of these differences, and the implications are huge for these lines of research. In the future, we may see medical treatments for men and women evolve to become more gender specific, based on differences in brain composition and structure.

SEX IN THE SOUL

The differences between men and women are far more pervasive than even brain structure, genital design, cultural cues, and biological makeup can explain. There is a deep spiritual significance in how men and women are created that gives further insight into the language that men use—and don’t use.

In Genesis, the first book in the Bible, God gives humanity the responsibility to “fill the earth and subdue it.”⁴ Adam is placed in the Garden of Eden, and his first job is to name all the animals.⁵ The responsibility for naming things is very significant. It comes directly from man’s creation in the image of God, and it reflects the character and essence of God, who *spoke* all things into existence.⁶ In Genesis 1, God speaks and creates beauty out of nothing and order out of chaos. In Genesis 2, God gives Adam the responsibility for naming every living creature. The ancient Israelites, for whom the book of Genesis was originally written, would have understood that the process of naming the animals not only identified and classified them, but also spoke to their character—the essence of their creatureliness.

In the task he assigned to Adam, God had at least two purposes:

1. To let Adam express the image of God in him by utilizing his creativity, his stewardship over the earth, and his deep connection to creation.
2. To help Adam recognize his loneliness and his need for a helper “suitable for him”⁷—that is, a creature also created in the image of God. As God says in Genesis 2:18, “It is not good for the man to be alone.”

The next thing we know, God is knocking Adam out cold, pulling out one of his ribs, and making a woman (Eve) to rescue Adam from his loneliness. When Adam awakens and sees Eve for the first time, his response is not a simple “Thank you, God,” or a tepid “Yup,” “Nope,” or “Maybe.” No, Adam goes way beyond that—he bursts into poetry:

“This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called ‘woman,’
for she was taken out of man.”⁸

This is a high point for Adam, and in his joy he *shouts out* his gratitude and awe—the first recorded act of worship.

This story from Genesis, from the very earliest days of man’s existence, underscores the tremendous power of words—especially the words of a man—to bring boundaries and order to an unruly world. That is why when a man fails to speak, he passes up the chance to shape his world with the words of his heart. As a result, the shadows of evil darken his life, as well as the lives of those around him.

However, when a man is authentic and speaks out of and in harmony with his design, he profoundly reveals God’s glory and his own strength and nobility. Now, the words he speaks may not be as elaborate or voluminous as his female counterpart’s, but they don’t have to be. If they are true, they will have merit, and their weight will count for good. On the other hand, if he doesn’t take ownership of his heart through his words, his words will be weak and disposable, and at best they will warm the air for a moment before dissipating.

Although the differences between men and women provide material for stand-up comics and water cooler jocularities, they don’t imply superiority or inferiority for one sex or the other. But insofar as these differences shape our language, and thus spread out into the nooks and crannies of our lives, they have a profound effect on the quality of our relationships.

“YUP.” “NOPE.” “MAYBE.”

SO, WHAT'S A WOMAN TO DO?

1. Remember, with men (as with debt and infection), less is more. He may be saying a lot with very few words.
2. Avoid the tendency to read more into the situation than is actually there. Yes, men and boys require some reading between the lines, but avoid the tendency to infuse your own stuff into his meaning.
3. Resist the temptation to speak for him. Too often, women throw out emotional life preservers when men don't need (or want) rescuing.
4. If you find yourself going nuts waiting for his response, just remember what we told you: As men age, they lose more brain tissue. You can always blame it on that.

“YUP.” “NOPE.” “MAYBE.”

CONVERSATION STARTERS

INTRODUCTION

BEFORE WE BEGIN

1. What are some reasons you want to read this book?
2. What are you hoping to gain from this book?

GETTING STARTED

1. What was your first date like?
2. What about your first kiss?
3. What was your worst date ever?

CHAPTER 1

1. Take a few minutes to brainstorm and create a top ten list of the most important qualities, characteristics, traits, and attributes of your “ideal/perfect” companion. Be creative and cover all areas of relationship (money, personality, spirituality, sex, family history, etc.)
2. Of the list from question one, what are your top three? Which ones are “must haves”? What are you willing to sacrifice or do without?
3. Men and women can really miss connecting with each other when it comes to conversation. Name a time when you were

frustrated or let down by a man's lack of words or his verbal passivity?

4. Fill in the blanks:

Men tend to be more adept at _____ than women.

Women tend to be more adept at _____ than men. (Fill in the blanks with as many words or phrases as you can think of.)

5. If you are involved in a romantic relationship, identify an area of longing, an area you desire to see in your companion that is not present.
6. When it comes to men and women, there is often more being said than what is put into words. Read the following phrases:
- a. I don't care; whatever you want to do.
 - b. Nevermind.
 - c. I can fix that.
 - d. Looks like we're getting low on gas.
 - e. Shouldn't we have been there by now?
- If a woman were saying these things, what might be her underlying motive or meaning?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
 - If a man were saying these things, what might be his underlying motive or meaning?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

CHAPTER 2

1. Who do you think invented the GPS navigation system, a man or a woman?
2. If there were hidden cameras in your car's console and high-tech microphone devices in the dashboard, what kind of exchanges would be recorded during a driving trip to someplace unfamiliar?
3. Who drives the car most often in your relationship, the man or the woman? Why? What might happen if on your next outing the roles were reversed?
4. If women know men aren't going to stop for directions, why do they ask?
5. Name a time when you "got lost" on a trip with a person of the opposite sex.
6. In the context of women/men relationships, when do you feel powerless? When do you feel adventurous?

CHAPTER 3

1. Discuss the following point: There's a difference between a sanctuary and a hideout. A sanctuary is a place of withdrawing for safety or reflection. A hideout is where we run to avoid conflict or cover our tracks.
2. Name a time when you heard "Honey, I'm going out to _____," and you knew your special someone was

NOTES

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