



How Men and Women Differ

Joy Smith Ed.D.
Licensed Professional Counselor

Men	Women
Brain Differences	
<i>Typically have larger brains (sexes score equally well on tests of intelligence) with more white matter which give men greater spatial reasoning ability, white matter inhibits “information spread” in cortex, allowing single-mindedness useful in difficult problem solving</i>	<i>Have greater numbers of neurons in areas of the brain associated with perception and speech; more developed corpus callosum offers greater ability in global response to problems and advantages when dealing with language tasks; able to more readily see alternate side of an argument</i>
<i>Are gifted at systemizing and ordering, analytic thought, constructing rules-based analyses of events and the world</i>	<i>Are gifted at detecting the feelings and thoughts of others, inferring intentions and responding with empathy</i>
<i>Greater ability to detach from painful situations; compartmentalize</i>	<i>Produce higher levels of stress hormones and fail to shut off production readily; biologically prone to ruminate over troubling situations</i>
<i>Less sensitive to touch, pressure on the skin; less aware of changes in volume and voice inflection</i>	<i>Demonstrate greater sensitivity to sound; adept in noticing small changes in volume; have better visual memory, tactile sensitivity</i>
Emotional Differences	
<i>Tend to have greater difficulty correctly identifying emotion in women-University of Pennsylvania study</i>	<i>More likely to correctly identify emotion in the faces of other women-University of Pennsylvania study</i>
<i>Tend to be more independent with a greater need for autonomy and space</i>	<i>Typically have a greater need for emotional connectedness</i>
<i>Are more likely to use work or sports as a means of escape from relationship pressures</i>	<i>Are more likely to be physically affected by stress in the relationship</i>
Communication	
<i>Avoid verbalizing passing thoughts because this is considered unimportant information</i>	<i>Process information and feelings by talking; details are important</i>
<i>Are more abstract; they are more likely to talk about ideas, concepts, and theories</i>	<i>Are more likely to talk about fears, feelings and experiences</i>
<i>Use “report talk” to gather facts, debate opinions, and solve problems through reasoned conversation</i>	<i>Use “process talk” in order to understand themselves and others, identify and validate feelings</i>
<i>Have a more limited feeling vocabulary and experience greater difficulty identifying feelings other than anger</i>	<i>Have an extensive feeling vocabulary and ability to identify feelings including nuances of emotion</i>
<i>View conversation as a means to an end; must have a practical purpose i.e. solve a problem, gather specific useful information</i>	<i>View conversation as means of processing—an end in itself</i>

<i>Demonstrate a greater need for control in discussion; will more often ask for evidence to support a claim</i>	<i>Tend to be better listeners; feel more secure in conversation and require less control of the discussion</i>
<i>Are more likely to focus on future plans and solving problems for a better tomorrow</i>	<i>Are more likely to focus on current feelings and experiences, the here-and-now</i>
Conflict	
<i>Tend to be more competitive; want to prove a point, keep score and win a debate</i>	<i>May be more likely to acquiesce in order to “keep the peace”; may use passive-aggressive means to win conflict</i>
<i>Respond to conflict with logical, ordered, solution focused discussion</i>	<i>Respond to conflict with feeling and experience focused discussion</i>
<i>Desire solutions and action when presenting partner with a problem</i>	<i>Desire empathy and validation when presenting partner with a problem</i>
Romance	
<i>Feel loved when they are sexually desired and needed</i>	<i>Feel loved when they are cherished, protected and cared for</i>
<i>Define romance in sexual terms</i>	<i>Define romance in emotional terms</i>
<i>Tend to prefer romantic actions over romantic talk</i>	<i>Enjoy romantic and feeling talk; use this to feel closer to their partners</i>
<i>Usually do things for their partners as romantic gestures</i>	<i>Do things for their partners in concert with emotional gestures and expressions</i>