

## **Power Love**

Contained within the vast array of human existence lies something that has confounded man since the beginning of recorded time; the marriage relationship. Humans are unique among earth's living creatures. One of the grandest attributes we are endowed with is the ability to self-fulfill our dreams and desires, to become what we choose and attempt to manifest ideas, having been created with the ability to accomplish these things. But, like with all good things, choice sometimes comes with dire consequence.

The relationships we choose, how we choose to operate within them, and why we choose them, especially marriage (primarily Western civilization) can become deeply perplexing enigmas. No relationship is free from its difficulty. Conflicts ultimately arise in any bond. In the marriage relationship, these are greatly magnified.

Marriage is but one of the many relationship options we have in this life, and it is the most difficult to understand, especially by men. Men and women simply have different priorities in marriage, in particular at the spirit and emotional level. There are exceptions, but most often the two sexes see things with differing eyes.

With today's current litigation concerning gay marriage, some may question my use of man and woman here. I understand. However, my experience and education rests in the traditional marriage. In addition, a good part of this article will address the primary differences between men and women. Therefore, I am unable, not unwilling, to address the gay marriage relationship. But, in all relationships there are some basic principals that, when applied with a heart-felt motivation result in a growing union and bond.

There are a plethora of opinions and standard functions concerning the marriage bond. Differing faiths and religions certainly carry, and in some cases dictate, these functions. Geographical cultures from around the globe vary greatly as to marriage and in many cases the courtship process as well. All of these traditions should be honored. But still, there are basic and primary principals that when applied offer significant benefit. These do not take away from tradition; they build upon it, and in my opinion, add bricks of gold.

## **Knowing the Unknowable**

Men have maligned the way a woman thinks and feels for generations, and in so doing have missed out on life-changing growth for themselves and their relationships. The claim by most

men is that a woman's thoughts and feelings are impossible to understand or figure out. They are not. Difficult, yes; impossible no. Strangely, the difficulty in understanding a woman has little to do with her, and most to do with men. Yet, men tend to project all of the difficulty onto women. This projection only adds to the delusion that women are responsible for men's lack of understanding them.

Although there are many distinct and clear differences between men and women, they are primarily rooted in emotion. Women feel more, more deeply, in more color, and more empathetically than men as a general rule. This is not a great secret. However, it is greatly ignored by men. The irony is that men tend to ignore feelings because they do not want to feel, yet this action creates and deepens other feelings. This ignorance of emotions sadly begins with birth and becomes a handicap with time.

Because women are more apt to use both hemispheres of the brain simultaneously, they are far more "connected" human beings. Men are not created with this capability at birth. So, in short, they are more adapted to linear and logical thinking, rather than emotionally driven. It is not that women are left without this capability, not by any means. To their great fortune, women are capable of logical thought and emotion (thinking and feeling) at the same time. This mixture is so completely foreign to men that it is simply shrugged off as something far too difficult to understand. This actually makes men the less developed of the species.

This canyon of separation is the root of most marital difficulty. But, the canyon can be bridged with some effort and understanding on the part of men. This undertaking requires discipline and commitment but is followed by great reward.

Marriage is difficult in the best of situations. The issues that come with marriage are infinite, and each carry a level of complexity and variability that can sometimes boggle the mind and heart. Here are a few. Consider these and how each can vary with intensity in marriage.

- Adjustment to living together
- In-laws
- Intimacy
- Money
- Complete Honesty (transparency)
- Personal Habits
- Children
- Punctuality

- Faith-based Pursuit and Activity
- Toilet Paper Installation
- Snoring
- Affairs or Attractions (emotional or sexual)
- Work Habits
- Aging (and all that comes with it)
- Responsibilities Around the Home
- Holidays
- Death of a Child or Parent

Take a moment to consider just a few of these. None of the items mentioned are dealt with on a one-time basis. And each is complex in nature each and every time it arises. The psychology behind the differences and disagreements is not explained here. There are a plethora of books, magazines, counselors, and talk show hosts that will cover that. Let's here look at one item and one item only - emotions.

The greatest dilutor of the angst created in marriage by the above issues and more, is a husband who seeks to understand his wife at an emotional and spiritual level. Of course, this is the one thing men have always claimed to be impossible. But it is not.

Men spend huge amounts of time, money, and effort on such things as learning a new golf swing, understanding automobiles and other toys, physical fitness, and more. Little time, comparatively speaking, is spent on truly getting to know our wives where they are most functional - their emotions. Husband, committed men, ask yourself why this is. The benefits to knowing your wife deeply far outweigh the benefits of a new golf swing.

### **Why the Difficulty?**

Intimacy, not a sexual form, but a completely transparent lifestyle, especially in marriage, is horrendously difficult for men. Learning from early on, men stifle and hide themselves in an attempt to be what society calls for. Success measured by wealth, love measured by sexual conquest, children measured by perfection, lifestyles measured by cost, are only some of what men strive for. None of which bring soulful satisfaction. None of which a woman uses to measure a man, primarily. Yet, men have installed these drives and utilized them for years and for generations.

Epochs of misguided social structure and convention have dictated males should avoid showing emotion, therefore precluding any understanding of what they are feeling and why. If men do not understand their own emotions and related causes, they will never be able to understand a woman's. This is the great challenge for men and marriage.

## **Full Commitment**

Where did the idea of a fifty-fifty commitment in marriage come from? If this is an accurate and reasonable expectation, how would it be measured? The complexities of such measurement are insurmountable. It just cannot be done. Sure, chores and some basic responsibilities can be divided, seemingly equally. But, effort cannot be measured, nor can felt love, or how attention is given. To do this, a measurement of motivation and heart would need to be analyzed as well, which is impossible. There are simply far too many variables for a marriage to be fifty-fifty.

The only reasonable expectation is a one-hundred percent commitment on the part of the individual. A wife will be the first to do so but, as soon as her husband is found lacking, a wife's commitment will begin to fade; slowly but assuredly. When a husband is fully committed, unconditionally, the wife will soon rise again to a one-hundred percent commitment.

By commitment, or the lack of, I am not necessarily talking about the marital affair. I am speaking of matters of the heart first; the desire to give one's self fully to another out of joy, not obligation. Affairs do appear in marriages, we all know that. They do, however, take time to develop, and will do so as a symptom only, not as a first function.

Men are by nature defensive creatures. They are also inherently competitive. These attributes help to create much of the marital disharmony. What will be helpful for men to understand is that they do not need to be defensive, and their idea of winning is really a path to slowly losing. When a wife expresses a concern to a husband, at least in the beginning stages, it is not to nag, point fingers, or win a battle. These concerns, complaints, or questions, come from a place inside of her that is spirit and emotion driven.

A wife desires to build a marriage, not tear down. A husband tends to build walls of isolation, creating what I call a "sandcastle life".

## Sandcastle Life

[From my book, Life in Poetry and Prose](#)

*Laboring strong all the days of his life,  
he builds his castle, but fills it with strife.  
Towering high, above all those below,  
peering over the land, his father bestowed.  
Barren and empty are acres of field;  
his spirit so damaged, yet not willing to yield.*

*Surrounding his castle lays a great moat,  
holding at bay those he wants close.  
A functioning drawbridge placed in the wall,  
has never been opened and never will fall.  
Each moment inside him, a midnight so dark;  
a journey so needed, but he fears to embark.*

*The building continues, on his castle so grand;  
covering his pain, he works with his hands.  
Aching inside, yet avoiding his truth,  
a lonely path he's traversed, beginning with youth.  
Leading to nowhere but lost and alone,  
he bends to continue, as he adds one more stone.*

*Seeing his work, brings tears to my eyes;  
wasting his labor, decaying his life.  
The towers grow higher, but empty they are;  
his spirit so lonely, so damaged and scarred.  
Building and dreaming he hopes they arrive,  
but alone he will live in his sandcastle life.*

### **Tools**

Here are some tools for change and growth. Before men will be able to effectively apply any of these, though, a true desire to become unconditionally committed to the process of change is necessary. Without it, success will be incomplete at best.

1. Loose all defensive attitude and behavior - all of it. There is absolutely no good that will come from being defensive. Truth will always surface regardless of what you say or what attitudes you carry. The best example of this is the man Jesus. He was accused, ridiculed, beaten, and scourged and he never uttered a defensive word (according to history and biblical accounts). Engaging in defensiveness, especially within a marriage, will only lead to suspicion, or at minimum, a wife who feels a husband is not hearing her.

When a husband commits to the process of eliminating defensive actions and then attitudes, his wife will draw closer to him in her heart. In time she will become more attentive, loving, and more deeply committed to him. A wife will feel free to share her heart-felt feelings safely and without ridicule. A husband will be rewarded with honor.

2. Become transparent as glass. Again, becoming transparent and completely honest is difficult for men, especially with wives. Men want to be seen as sturdy and strong, the confident hero. In truth, though, men are vulnerable creatures only covered in self-created scales of armor. This armor should be removed, set aside, and ultimately destroyed. It only serves as a barrier to true intimacy in a marriage.

In her spirit, a wife will always sense when a man is being evasive or less than honest. This sense she has will grind at her and cause her to question more, either within herself, or to her husband. If a husband is still being defensive, or closed, he will create more strife in the marriage. This cycle continues until one day the marriage is ice cold or completely dissolved.

The amazing thing is a wife will accept a man's openness. She wants his heart completely, in whatever shape it is in. She is created to be of help to her husband and is willing to do so in nearly any circumstance or situation, as long as he is sharing his true heart openly.

3. A man must get to know his own emotions and what causes them. This will take time and a lot of effort. Men spend a lifetime stuffing their emotions away and in most cases have no clue as to their existence, truth, or cause. Furthermore, they do not know what to properly do with them once they begin to feel them. This tool is the most difficult to become comfortable with for men.

One of the best methods for a man to more deeply uncover and understand his emotions is to keep an honest journal. A simple documenting of the days events and what affects they cause will naturally move a man to a deeper understanding of the emotional state of being.

The next step is for the man to begin sharing some of the feelings he experiences, along with their causes, with his wife. If this is done honestly, the wife will move closer and closer to her husband. This is in part for two primary reasons. One, the wife will begin to see his heart and she will feel her husband is trusting her with it. Two, the wife will feel the husband is now more capable of understanding her at this level, which is her primary level of functioning.

Once a man is in touch with his own feelings, he will naturally understand his wife at a greater level. When this occurs, the dynamics of the entire marriage and relationship are elevated to new heights. An unimaginable bond emerges and a connection of two spirits is welded firmly together.

This is what men and women truly want from their marriage. We choose our relationships. We have the power to manifest the beauty within them. It is within our ability to do so. We are all created with this ability.

Men, lose the armor, drop the façade, be real with your wife. You will be loved for it. You will become your wife's fantasy man.

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