



Mark D. Ogletree, M.A., PhD,
LPC

4829 Cedar Crest Dr.

McKinney, Texas 75070

214.868.6238

Doctree10@comcast.net

Specializing in Marriage and Family Therapy, Parenting Solutions, Depression, Anger, and Anxiety Issues, Sexual Addictions.

Quotable:

"As the patriarch in your home, you have a serious responsibility to assume leadership on working with your children. You must help create a home where the Spirit of the Lord can abide. Your place is to give direction to all family life. You should take an active part in establishing family rules and discipline. Your homes should be havens of peace and joy for your family. Surely no child should fear his own father--especially a priesthood father. A father's duty is to make his home a place of happiness and joy. He cannot do this when there is bickering, quarreling, contention, or unrighteous behavior. The powerful effect of righteous fathers is setting an example, disciplining and training, nurturing and loving is vital to the spiritual welfare of children." (President Ezra Taft Benson).

Family Times

Meeting Women's Needs

When it comes to marital needs of each gender, the needs of men and women are often different though there are similarities. The problem comes when a man assumes that his wife's needs are the same as his own, or if a woman feels that her husband's needs are just like hers. Such assumptions can complicate the relationship to say the least. Because our needs are not the same, they need to be addressed. Last month, I wrote about the needs of men. This month, the women get their turn! I will base my remarks from Willard Harley's book, *His Needs; Her Needs*.

1. Affection

It isn't that women do not like to be involved sexually with their husbands; they just don't need to have sex to meet that need in the way that most men do. What is more crucial to women is their need for affection. Of course affection must precede sex, for without that preliminary activity, sex comes off as a selfish act within marriage. In my visits with couples, I am prone hear women say, "He never puts his arm around me," or "He never hugs me," or "Whenever I hug him, he takes that as a cue that I want to have sex---now." For most women, affection symbolizes security, protection, com-

fort, and approval. When a husband expresses some form of affection to his wife, he is basically saying: "I'll take care of you and protect you. You are important to me. I'm concerned about the problems you face, and I'm with you."

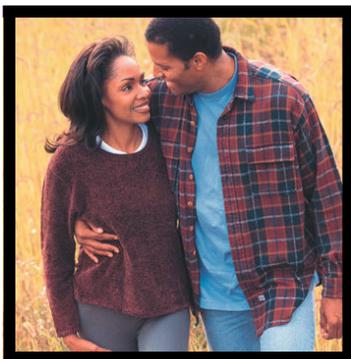
It is important that a wife conveys such information to her husband. Tell him what you need to meet your needs for emotional and physical intimacy. Sure, each woman is different, but there are some forms of affection common to all women. Husbands, wives like non-sexual physical attention. Perhaps a hug every morning before you leave the house and an embrace after you walk in the door from work. Make it a conscious thing to do it and it will become automatic in time. Send her a note or call her on the phone to let her know you have been thinking about her. Help out with the housekeeping chores. We have evidence to prove that no husband in America has ever been shot while doing the dishes. So, help out around the house with dishes and the vacuum. You should have learned how to do those two things as a missionary. Have you ever sent her a love letter in the mail? You can never go wrong with flowers. And you need not wait for Valentines Day or your anni-

versary to do so. Surprise her with her favorite flower today. Invite her to go to dinner, formally. That is, ask her on a date, just like you did when you were engaged, or dating her. Call her from work and ask her out. You plan it all out, including the baby-sitter. She'll no doubt be shocked, by why not? If you want to really surprise her, open the car door for her and pull her chair out for her to sit down at the restaurant. Go on a walk after dinner and hold hands. Don't talk about the kids unless she brings it up; talk about your dreams, and what you love about her. When you get home, give her a back or foot rub with no strings attached. Wives, you can pay me for this commercial later.

2. Conversation

Just as men need recreational companions, women need someone to talk to, someone to share their life with. One of the most frequent complaints from women is "Why won't my husband talk to me?" At the same time, some husbands are perplexed and wonder, "Why does my wife place such a high priority on communication?" The answer: For women, communication is the key to loving and feeling loved. In fact, women want to share their lives with a spouse who loves them for who they are. They want to grow

Meeting Women's Needs (Cont.)



Women often connect to their husbands through communication. Men often connect by doing things together.



“When men gather, they talk about practical things, like fixing cars, their new weed-eater, or how their favorite sports team is doing. Men would never talk about themselves or their feelings with other men.”

old with a husband who values them and understands them, and who can share their deepest feelings and needs. Women expect love to last forever and such a relationship is often attained by couples who have learned to reach the deepest levels of human intimacy.

Men and women view communication differently, and the spoken language serves a different function for each gender. According to one study, men prefer to discuss music, current events, and sports. Women, according to the same study, opt to discuss relationship problems, family health, reproductive concerns, weight, food, and clothing. Put another way, men prefer to talk about things outside of themselves, while most women would prefer to discuss topics of a more personal nature.

Just as the couple who jogged before they were married, the wife didn't have a need to do it. She simply jogged because she knew it was important to her future husband. The same principle applies to conversation. Before most couples marry, they can talk for hours about anything and everything. Do you remember those days? Staying up until the wee hours of the night talking about pizza toppings, music groups, academic classes, co-workers, and parking tickets. Life couldn't have been better. Do future husbands have a need to talk for hours about trivial things? Probably not. However, they just enjoyed that time together, wanted to impress this woman, and they were content to stay there regardless of the topic.

Once men marry, they do not have a great need for con-

versation at home. For instance, men generally don't call each other on the phone just to talk unless it is a business deal. Could you imagine something like, “Hey Earl, how are your children doing? How was work this week? Did you fix the block on your engine?” If a man needs to solve a problem with his computer, or find out what time the game starts, they may get on the phone or their favorite website.

Women, on the other hand, will call each other just to talk and catch up. When they get together they are more likely to share personal issues concerns—which brings them enjoyment. When men gather, they talk about practical things, like fixing cars, their new weed-eater, or how their favorite sports team is doing. Men would never talk about themselves or their feelings with other men. When women converse they want to share their deepest feelings with someone who will handle their ideas and feelings with great care. When they experience this type of caring, they feel closer to that person. In fact, someone wisely said that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. In a similar way, the way to a woman's heart is through meaningful communication. As women converse, they connect.

So, some practical ideas are worth sharing. Husbands, when your wives want to communicate with you, focus on them like you would your boss. Give them your time and full attention. Don't walk around the house eating snacks and looking for the remote control while your wife is trying to share the meaning of the universe with you. Sit down on the couch, look her right in the

eye, and listen to what she wants to say. Occasionally, you may want to restate some of her ideas so she knows you are really listening. Resist the temptation to criticize her or to resolve her concerns. Don't do it! Just listen. If she does share a problem, ask, “Honey, what do you think we ought to do about this; what are some of your ideas?” After she picks herself up off the floor, give her a cool rag and some smelling salts— it will help her recover quicker. Practice attentive listening. It is one of the great gifts you can give your spouse.

3. Honesty and Openness

Just like men need to feel that their wife is attractive, women need a husband who will be honest and open with her. Without this type of communication a husband can undermine his wife's trust and destroy her security. President N. Eldon Tanner once said: “Just imagine the reversal that would take place if full integrity were to rule in family life.

There would be complete fidelity. Husbands would be faithful to wives, and wives to husbands. There would be no living in adulterous relationships in lieu of marriage. Homes would abound in love; children and parents would have respect for one another. ... [How else will our children come to] value honesty and integrity?”

To feel secure, a wife must trust her husband to give her accurate information about his whereabouts and doings. She needs to know that he is where he says he is, and he's with the people that he said he would be



Meeting Women's Needs

with. That if he's on a trip, that's where he is. She needs to know that when he works in an office full of women, that he maintains discretion in his relationships with them. She should never feel insecure about her man's relations with other women.

According to Bell, Daly, and Gonzalez (1987), the old-fashioned virtues of honesty, trust, and fidelity are important elements for contemporary marriages to succeed. Sincerity, truthfulness, faithfulness, and trust are the cement that binds people together. One young wife commented: *I never have to worry about my husband. When he tells me something I know its true. He's a very sincere, up-front person. I know where I stand with him all the time. He always keeps his word. If he promises the kids something, he never disappoints them. He travels a lot, but I trust him completely. I know he's faithful to me. He isn't the kind of man to sneak around. If two people can't believe in one another, or depend on one another, they don't have much of a relationship in my opinion.*

Openness is an important part of marital communication. A wife needs her husband to share with her his life and schedule. Intimacy to a woman means connecting and closeness to her husband. The primary medium for this need for intimacy is through communication. Women appreciate it when their husband opens up and shares his feelings, his dreams, his concerns, and his fears. Any husband can make his wife's day by sharing his heart with her.

As long as I have gone out on a limb here, I may as well

go for broke. Husband, your wife doesn't need any new surprises or revelations – they got a big enough one when they married you. Your wife ought to know when you have a meeting; when you have an appointment. She needs to know what the gist of your conversation with the Bishop was all about. Share with your sweetheart. It will pay great dividends for both of you.



4. Financial Support

Women need to know there is money in the bank. They need to feel that they can go buy groceries and not bounce a check; that they can buy birthday gifts for their children and not have their husband erupt like Mount St. Helens; that Christmas, "The most wonderful time of the year," won't cause him to have a cardiac arrest. We know that money, or the lack thereof, has been linked to marital problems and ultimately divorce. Several years ago the American Bar Association linked 89 percent of all divorces to quarrels and accusations over money. President N. Eldon Tanner said it this way: "Overindulgence and poor money management place a heavy strain on marriage relationships. Most marital problems, it seems, originate from economic roots— either insufficient income to sustain the family or mismanagement of the income as earned. Do women marry for money? It sounds

bad to say it that way, but sure they do. They have to! If women want to eat with utensils instead of their hands, and live in a house rather than a cardboard box, they should consider marrying someone with a little cash, or at least with the ability to produce some. Indeed, women better marry someone who will pay the bills and provide for their family. Often, when this financial need isn't met, women head to the workforce to supplement their family income. Contrary to what most people think, however, most married women resent having to work. In fact, most women would love to stay home with their children while their husbands provide for the family. Can you imagine the heartache and struggle that many women experience as they leave their young children with daycare providers as they drive off to work?

5. Family Commitment

Women need to know that their husband loves being married and being a father. It is also an added bonus when a wife knows and understand that husbands don't even mind spending some leisure time with their extended families—the in (out) laws.

Most wives want their husband to take a leadership role in the family and commit themselves to the moral and educational development of their children. They want their husbands to be a key part in training and bringing-up the children. Women don't want a father who watches family life from the sidelines; they want a "quarterback" who is involved in every play. This is a legitimate need that women have. Elder Neal A. Maxwell made it



Women need to know there is money in the bank

Women want their husbands to be a key part in training and bringing-up the children. Women don't want a father who watches family life from the sidelines; they want a "quarterback" who is involved in every play.



Meeting Women's Needs

clear when he stated that "Even marvelous mothers cannot fully compensate for malfunctioning fathers."

Sue Bohlin warns husbands, "if you want to trash your marriage, don't show your wife you love and appreciate her. Don't talk to her. Close off your heart to her. Make her constantly worry about finances. *Don't be a faithful husband and father.*"

Men, your wives need you to be a family man. There are so many things men can do to meet their wives needs in this area such as insuring that you are home to eat meals with your family, go for walks or bike rides together, attend church as a family, conduct family meetings, hang out with your children, take an interest in their school work and help them with their homework, drive car pools, read to your children before bedtime, work on family projects, have fun together and a host of other possibilities. You might even ask your wife, "Honey, what can I do to be more involved with the family? What can I do to be a better father? Get out a note pad and a pen, and write everything down that she says you need to do. Review it often and implement her suggestions. You will

notice a drastic improvement in your marriage relationship.

Moreover, there is a myriad of ideas that men can do to improve marriage. A weekly date, a phone call from work, shopping together, planning family activities, giving her some additional spending money occasionally, and lots of affection and genuine expressions of love and caring. It wouldn't hurt to ask her what she needs. Simply ask her, "Honey, what can I do to be a better husband?" President Ezra Taft Benson declared:

"As the patriarch in your home, you have a serious responsibility to assume leadership on working with your children. You must help create a home where the Spirit of the Lord can abide. Your place is to give direction to all family life. You should take an active part in establishing family rules and discipline. Your homes should be havens of peace and joy for your family. Surely no child should fear his own father--especially a priesthood father. A father's duty is to make his home a place of happiness and joy. He cannot do this when there is bickering, quarreling, contention, or unrighteous behavior.

The powerful effect of righteous fathers is setting an example, disciplining and training, nurturing and loving is vital to the spiritual welfare of children. I don't want to give you the impression that the needs I have discussed are the only needs that men and women have. I have simply mentioned a few of the primary needs that men and women have. You and your spouse will surely have other needs that I have not addressed here. Yet, there is the key. You two need to talk about your needs and be unafraid to share your real positive feelings with each other. I hope you will talk about them together.

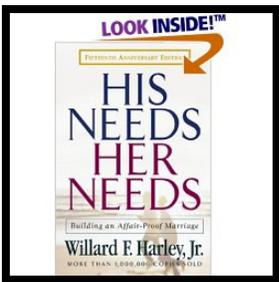


then you must give him specific suggestions on what you mean by how he can meet that need. Likewise, men, if you need a recreational companion, teach your wife what you need precisely in this area.

Meeting each other's needs requires selflessness on the part of each spouse. Filling your partner's love bank will require you to make sacrifices of time and resources occasionally and to actually place your spouse's needs above your own. It's a matter of talking together and making joint commitments that you will do it.

If you want to learn more about this topic, I recommend that you pick up the following book by Dr. Willard Harley:

The first step in meeting each other's needs is to (1) talk about them openly, (2) discuss them thoroughly, (3) be clear and specific about how you will go about meeting each other's needs. When a spouse gives specific suggestions on how their needs can be met, then it is possible for the other spouse to understand how they can use their agency to meet that need. It is when couples play 'guess what I would really like to have you do for me' that the prob-



Seminars and Workshops Coming to Dallas on Marriage and Family Topics:

As some of you may know, Kevin Hinckley and I have been involved in teaching and presenting workshops at Education Week both at Brigham Young University in Idaho and in Provo. We have had a wonderful time, and have received a great response. Our topics have included marriage and parenting issues. We have entertained several requests to conduct our workshops and seminars here in the Texas. We would like to begin a series of workshops in the Dallas Area beginning in March. Our beginning topic will center on parenting teenagers, and all of the elements that seem to go along with that. We will talk about everything from parenting styles, fortifying our children, For the Strength of Youth, dating, movies, friends, and how to help our youth become converted to the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you are interested in our March workshops, or know parents who could benefit by attending, please have them email Doctree10@comcast.net; or call 214.868.6238.