

3 Strong Strategies for Effectively Communicating With the Opposite Sex

My husband is an outdoorsman, a man's man, and he loves and appreciates me as a woman. I have great respect and love for this man I married at 21. We grew up together in some ways, learning as we went, perhaps in a simpler time.

Rick embraces his manhood and honors me in my femininity. We allow each other the freedom to use our individual gifts. Rick is a strong person and has been used of God to run a business, teach children and later teach prison inmates, impacting the lives of many. Yet he has no problem with a wife who is a visible leader, and he securely cheers me on. Although he may appear to lead from the back of the room, he in fact leads by just walking in the door. Some men have been puzzled by our relationship and many have been challenged by his example to honor their wives as leaders. We don't always get it exactly right, but we always come back to the table to talk things through and I find safety in his love and esteem for me as his wife, who leads.

I am a successful business woman, an ordained minister, a wife to the Rick-man and mother of two incredible women of God. But primarily I am a child of God who is a woman.

How Can Men Honor Women?

I've missed some opportunities because I am a woman. I've been talked over, passed over, and overlooked by the good ole' boys at times. But I'm interestingly not bitter or halted by this because of a few key male influences in my life. My Dad was a man full of humility and grace who believed I could do anything God put in my heart to do. I entered college and the business world braced for the affronts sure to come from men

because of the acceptance by my father and mentor, Herbert Low.

My husband has esteemed me since the day we met at a dance in the student union building in college. His constant proclamations of love, undying devotion, and expressions of service puzzling and provoking other men to reconsider the role of a man more often than not, show anyone within view that I am loved (and nobody better mess with Linda). He's a gentle giant some say; others call him a lion. I call him the Rick-man.

Pastoral leaders in my life like Scott McKay and Mike Bickle have honored me with invitations to lead in ministry settings. Scott McKay was the first man to ask me to speak from the platform and expressed confidence that I had something to say as a woman. Mike Bickle welcomed me to the leadership of The Joseph Company. at the International House of Prayer.

Men, when communicating with women consider these suggestions:

- Hear us out without reframing our message in your own terms.
- Ask clarifying questions.
- Don't patronize us or condescend; we are tougher than you think and can take the heat of a good debate rendered with honor.

How can a woman embrace her destiny when interacting with men?

As women, we do the world a favor when we step up to the plate with brains and hearts engaged. Rather than looking for special favors as women, let's own who God has called us to be, bringing forth our creativity without sacrificing good process and emotional intelligence.

Basic communication tips for women that everyone will appreciate:

- Learn to talk in bullet points and avoid rabbit trails.
- State the action, then the reason. Men like a clear target.
- Communicate objectively.

For most of my career, I have been the only woman at a boardroom table of men and happily have not been keenly aware of the fact. That's because I've embraced my calling and believe I just might have something to contribute. If I don't speak up, we'll never know.

At this stage it's about getting the job done more than being a woman.

Let's work together to be at our best and get the job done.

Linda Fields founder of 7-Mpact, leads The Joseph Company as a mentor to young people and an executive leadership strategist helping individuals develop their leadership portfolios. Prior to moving to Kansas City, Linda led a successful corporate learning organization in Texas, which positively impacted over 150,000 participants. While she finds her MBA, entrepreneurial experience and university-level teaching beneficial, Linda credits prayer as the key to building a high performance organization which consistently delivered results with character, integrity and love.

As an international conference speaker, Linda's passion is to release workplace believers to impact their spheres of influence by stepping into leadership, staying on course and finishing well in their appointed destiny to know God.

Linda specialized in communication in her post-graduate studies at the University of Texas, earned an MBA from Southwest Texas State and received a Bachelor of Science in Business Education from Southwest Texas State. Linda and her husband, Rick, moved from Texas to join the International House of Prayer in 2007.