

5 Things Your Wife Won't Tell You She Needs

I remember watching *What Women Want* not long after its release in 2001.

The movie chronicles a man, Nick Marshall, who receives a fresh perspective on women after a fluke accident. And by “fresh perspective,” I mean he has the ability to read women’s minds. Sounds fascinating, right? I thought so too.

Then I watched the movie.

Don’t get me wrong, I laughed quite often. But I was also terrified. I left the theater with one of those “I just saw a ghost” looks. Totally dazed and confused. For like two hours, I vowed never to date a woman again. I would be single the rest of my life, maybe become a monk or something. Singleness would be easier than trying to figure out a woman.

Fast forward 15 years. I’ve been married to an amazing woman for over six years, we have two children and our marriage gets better every day. I’m still convinced women are the most beautifully complex beings on earth, but it’s possible to understand what they need.

By no means do I have women (or anything else, for that matter) figured out. I’m only 30. I’ve only been married six years. So, I don’t write as an expert. Instead, I write as a man who loves his wife and wants to know her better. If you’ve ever thought, “I just can’t figure her out,” maybe this post can be a launching pad to deeper conversations with your spouse.

Here are five things your wife won’t tell you she needs:

1. Security and protection. The world is uncertain and

unreliable, and your wife needs you to create a culture of stability, a place where she can rest from the world's craziness.

Your wife also wants you to protect your marriage from outside attacks. And I'm not talking about physical attacks (although, of course, that's part of it). She wants you to fight for purity. Here's an example. A man I would call my second father told this story several years ago. While living in Florida, his wife stayed at home with the kids. More days than not, she went to the beach. That's what you do in Florida. But not this man. He never went. Ever.

At this point in his story, I was puzzled. Who would choose to stay away from the beach? Sun. Sand. Sharks. What more could you want? Then he explained why, and I will never forget his words.

"At the time, I struggled with lust, and protecting the purity of our marriage meant more than a few hours of relaxation."

That's called fighting for your marriage.

The greatest threat to your marriage is, of course, Satan. So, husbands, if you want evil to stay outside, you must let Jesus in. Every day, make sure your wife knows Jesus is the most important person in your marriage.

2. Undivided attention. Husbands, your wife needs your undivided attention. She wants to feel valued. Making sure you focus on her is a huge component of feeling valued. And, guys, you need to know something about undivided attention. The word "undivided" means ... not divided.

"Thanks, Captain Obvious."

Right. But most husbands don't understand why their wife doesn't feel valued even though they sat on the couch together for three hours. Here's why. You stared at the TV or your

phone most of the time while occasionally nodding your head, pretending to listen. That's called divided attention.

Guys, you're not spending quality time with her because you're in the same general area. This isn't about proximity. This is about posture and attitude. When your wife speaks, look at her. Eye contact says you're valuable.

Your wife won't tell you this, but she needs undivided attention. And she should. If you don't turn off the TV or put down the phone when your wife speaks, you're not just sending your wife a signal. You're sending yourself one. You're saying your relationship isn't important.

3. Open and honest communication. Generally speaking, guys don't want details. If I'm talking with friends, I don't care for details. If they're necessary for making a decision, by all means, give me the details. Otherwise, I only need the important stuff.

Your wife is wired differently. When she says, "How was your day?" she wants the details. "It was good" is more of a slap in the face than a sufficient response to her question. Your wife loves you, and she wants to know everything about you, even stuff you consider insignificant. But she probably won't tell you this.

Communication is the linchpin of a healthy relationship. Anytime I withhold information from Tiffani, whether I am scared of how she will respond, I want to "protect" her or I just don't have the energy to share all the details, it goes bad. The longer I'm married, the more I realize the importance of open and honest communication.

Even if openly communicating means revealing painful information, your marriage will be better off in the long run. For many years, I hid a pornography addiction from Tiffani. She discovered my addiction only when she opened my computer and stumbled across a pornographic site. I was always afraid

to tell her because I didn't want to hurt her. Turns out, the wound she sustained was deeper (and took longer to heal) because she discovered it rather than me being honest with her.

Husbands, your wife (and your relationship) needs open and honest communication.

4. Help with daily tasks. Marriages don't have assigned tasks. You won't hear phrases like "that's her job" in a healthy marriage. Whether your wife stays at home or works 9-5, you should help with daily tasks. And husbands, know this: She probably won't tell you she wants help. But she does.

So, change a diaper without being asked. Fold the clothes. Clean the dishes. Maybe you're tired from work. Maybe your wife doesn't like to clean. But instead of coming home and telling her exactly how you feel, be a servant. Clean the house yourself. Pick up the dishes yourself.

Help your wife. Do so without being asked. Her respect for you will increase exponentially.

5. A break. Culture places impossible expectations on women. Your wife feels those expectations. She might be completely overwhelmed. She might feel totally inadequate. She might be exhausted, sick or hurting. But she won't tell you. And if you ask, she will probably say, "I'm fine."

Husbands, first and foremost, you should understand the weighty expectations on your wife. Be sympathetic to them. Secondly, you must look beyond the words. Don't ignore them, but don't accept them either. Watch her. Study her. When you notice her struggling, step in and give her a break. Give her permission to sit down or get out of the house.

Ask her what needs to be done, and do those things. This will not only help her, it will improve your marriage.

For five more things your wife won't tell you she wants, tune in Thursday.

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