

Why a Man Gives a Woman His Heart

Amazingly, a man's hunger for **respect** is more right-on than I ever realized. At work, my husband receives kudos for a job well done. His paycheck and bonuses verify his skill and dedication. John also works hard to provide for and protect his **family**.

Respecting John is admiring his work, his **character** and his **care**. It's telling him I appreciate these things and admire him for the man he is. It's not talking bad about him to my friends or even behind closed doors. It's "talking him up" at home and in front of others and not second-guessing his ideas. It's honoring his opinions and decisions (which is tough, especially when my opinion differs!).

Basically, it's my job as a **wife** to go against society and their "liberated thinking" and figure out how to respect my husband unconditionally and **honor** him.

But what does respect have to do with lifetime commitment? Everything. After all, why would a woman want to stick with a man she can't respect? And why would a man want to stay around when he is treated as the one messing up all the time? (Marriage is more than this, of course. We made a **covenant** before God, and God has called us to commit for life. But just think how we can transform our **marriages** and our generation when we strive to follow this principle.)

Of course, God always knew what we're just starting to understand. Check out Ephesians 5:33: "Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband" (NIV).

Yet unconditional respect, it seems, is something that generations of women have forgotten how to do.

It's not that we wives purposefully set out to sabotage our

marriages, but this is what lack of respect does. We tell our husbands we want them to be spiritual leaders and the head of the house, but then we make all the decisions or question the decisions they do make. (Ouch! I've done this too many times to count.)

If we're going to strive for "forever," we need to think of the ways we can make this thing last. This is part of the work and the planning. A good question to ask is: How can I show my husband the respect he desires?

In an effort to show my respect, I try to remind John I believe in his capabilities, take time to understand his point of view and affirm his accomplishments. John appreciates it when I stop what I'm doing to give him a pat on the back when he's manicured the front lawn, cleaned the garage or built a set of bookshelves. When I first started doing it, I felt like a mom talking to a 3-year-old: "Great job, honey." But from his smile, I quickly learned he was energized by my praise.

The amazing thing is that when you do look for ways to show respect and you do work at it, your needs are met too. Because your husband is getting what he needs, he pours out his love in return.

Emerson Eggerichs, in his book *Love and Respect*, calls this the Energizing Cycle: "Her love motivates his respect. His respect motivates her love." I can confess: Being in this cycle is indeed energizing ... and fun!

So why is *respect* still a foreign word even to those of us who know its power? This is a hard one, since many times we weren't raised seeing it lived. To put it in a more culture-friendly term, another word for *respect* is *admiration*. And this is how defines them both:

Respect: -noun. Esteem for or a sense of the worth or excellence of a person, a personal quality or ability, or something considered as a manifestation of a personal quality or ability.

Admiration: -noun. A feeling of wonder, pleasure or approval.

What would a man give for a wife who respects and admires him?
I've seen this lived out ... his whole heart.

Tricia Goyer *has written more than 35 books, including both novels that delight and entertain readers and nonfiction titles that offer encouragement and hope. She has also published more than 500 articles in national publications such as Guideposts, Thriving Family, Proverbs 31, and HomeLife Magazine.*