

Why Your Husband Can't Read Your Mind

Romance novels, movies, TV shows and magazines love to paint unrealistic pictures of what modern loving relationships look like. I have a strong disdain for "princess movies" that make girls think a handsome prince will rescue them and solve all of their problems. Contrary to popular belief, men *cannot* read minds. This was something that only took me a few years to come to terms with regarding Ted. For a while, I believed in and hoped for the best when it came to his emotional intelligence toward me. I just knew that with enough training, he could reach relational perfection.

Alas, I'm not a magician, and I could not change his DNA. He was never going to be able to sense my every want or desire. I began to realize that if I wanted something from him, I was going to have to ask for it. How embarrassing, right? That's what I thought in the beginning. But again, the choice was to suffer in silence or get what I needed. There is a big gap between the pain of not getting what you want and the joy of actually getting it. However, that gap instantly closed each time I gave Ted the information he really wanted so he could meet my needs.

While sharing similar core values, Ted and I are remarkably different. One of the areas we were nearly polar opposites at the beginning was in the area of cleanliness. I was your typical neat freak, type A, everything has its place kind of person. Ted's standard was, "As long as there aren't any bugs, we're fine." Okay, that might be a slight exaggeration, but the truth is he wasn't bothered by clutter, dust, clothes on the floor or the lack of vacuum lines.

My initial interpretation of his neglect was that he didn't care about me or how a messy one-bedroom apartment made me

feel. We were crowded in that tight space, especially with my grand piano taking over what should have been the dining room. I saw every little thing and was offended that he did not.

Our one tiny bathroom had white linoleum tile. Why anyone would have solid white tile is beyond me. Every time I went into the bathroom, I saw all of the hair and dust that had accumulated on the floor. Out of pure curiosity and experimentation, I would wait to see how long it would take for Ted to notice the filth. It was agony.

Is he ever going to do anything about this stuff? Did I marry a slob? Does he expect me to fall into the gender role of housekeeper? If so, he has another think coming! No way am I the domestic goddess! We are equal partners, so we both clean!

After about the fourth day of my solo, silent “standoff,” I realized Ted had no idea there even was a standoff. He did not know I was running an experiment measuring how long it would take him to notice the dust and strands of hair. He didn’t even know it bothered me. When I mentioned it, he said, “What dust?” I’m pretty sure steam was shooting out from my ears by this point.

“Do you not see it every time you go to the bathroom?!”

I think I was actually grossed out that he didn’t notice it. What kind of cleanliness standards did he have?

To his surprise, I began unloading on him, with shock and awe, how his lack of cleanliness made me feel. He looked like a deer in the headlights. He truly had no idea what I was talking about and never had any intention of making me feel that he didn’t care.

Once I calmed down, he gently said, “If you want me to clean the bathroom floor, just ask me.”

Could it be that simple? I wanted him to read my mind. I

didn't really want to say anything out loud. But here, he gave me the opportunity to simply ask and it would get done. *How profound!*

Now, after years of marriage and four children, I am fully capable of stepping over piles of stuff to get to my office and get working. I don't know if I'm a rehabilitated clean freak or just an inoculated mom-preneur trying to survive. Either way, I have chilled out and Ted has stepped up his game.

This balance is one of the coolest things about marriage. Areas where we started out as opposites are now finding their way to a middle ground. Each day, we get into a better rhythm, making life really enjoyable. This is in no way a claim that we have reached perfection, but improvement is improvement. {eoa}

Ted and Charity Bradshaw *both grew up in the area of Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas. As the children of multiple divorces, they decided they wanted something different than what they saw growing up. From the very beginning of their married life in 2002, they crafted healthy boundaries and open lines of communication that have allowed for honesty, love and respect to flow freely. They have a passion for helping other couples build strong, loving and fun marriages. Charity is an author, business and writing coach, speaker, and president of LifeWise Books. Ted is a registered nurse. They reside in northwest Houston with their four children.*

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