

# What Do Women Want?

Husbands desire to be great lovers with a truly skillful and passionate sex life. What happens that so many men fall short of this grand goal? Here are two of the most common skill deficits that sabotage these lofty dreams: (1) Men don't truly understand women; and (2) Men don't realize that they don't truly understand women.

These seven keys will unlock passion in your marriage.

Humbly and wisely step back and take a quick journey through Female 101. No magic buttons exist that will instantly turn your wife on and transform your sex life. However, these seven keys can have amazing results, if you are willing to get into your wife's reality and quit believing she will ever think or behave or feel like you.

**1. Women are much more complex sexually than men.** Physically, men respond very well to their wives' Plan A: Show up and initiate physical loveplay. But to make love to your wife, you need Plans A, B, C, D and E.

One night, loveplay will create arousal with a lot of fun. The next night the same physical loveplay will be irritating and too sensitive, hence the need for plan B or E. Great lovers know how to be quick on their feet and slide smoothly into another plan without pouting or shutting down.

I wish that were all. While you are finding Plan C for creating enjoyable physical stimulation on a given evening, you smack your head into other complexities. Your arousal is fairly predictable and often too quick. Your wife isn't built that way.

Women need time to get beyond distractions and be fully

present in lovemaking. Throw into the mix the relational and emotional complexities she tunes into, and you don't have to have a Ph.D. to know men are really wired differently than women and are usually a whole lot simpler.

**2. Wives need emotional connection to respond physically.** How curious that men and women jump to false conclusions because they think each other operates from the same sexual reality.

Wives often think all men want is sex, when their husbands actually are trying to connect with them emotionally through sexual activity. Men can wonder why what arouses them won't work on their wives—often wishing women would respond like men. We can graph it like this:

Men: Physical activity\*connects the heart\*opens the door to emotional bonding.

Women: Emotional bonding\*connects the heart\*opens the door for physical activity.

After you have been neglectful or hurtful, your wife doesn't want to make up by having sex. She needs to feel your love and attention so she can once again feel like making love.

In a study of more than 2,000 Christian women, when women were asked what they liked most about sex, the vast majority valued physical closeness, emotional closeness or time spent together much more than the physical release of sex. Women want to feel emotionally connected or the lovemaking won't usually follow.

**3. Women are more easily distracted and prone to interrupted desire.** Women multitask better than men do, while men focus in on the task at hand. Husbands can falsely assume that their wives don't like sex when in reality they struggle focusing.

Women's minds and feelings fire off in a variety of directions. Sex is never a simple, "Let's go enjoy each

other.” The environment and their inner attitudes automatically affect lovemaking.

Women are more easily distracted and the mood can be broken. Saying things such as, “The kids probably won’t wake up for another 20 minutes” won’t reassure her or promising to pick up the bedroom after you make love won’t help her focus.

The wise husband minimizes distractions. He makes sure the phone calls have been made, the children are sound asleep and the laundry is folded. He begins to help his wife focus in on lovemaking by starting foreplay with physical affection before he heads for the bedroom.

Great lovers also recognize and attempt to control another huge block to desire: fatigue. Be sensitive to her lack of energy, and schedule lovemaking at rested moments or provide breaks for her to become restored.

This may be one of the biggest differences between most men and most women: for men, sex easily overshadows exhaustion. For women, exhaustion overshadows any desire for sex. She doesn’t hate sex; the distraction of genuinely being tired is interfering with her ability to respond.

**4. Women respond with receptive desire.** Husbands so often buy into the myth of the beer commercials: Really sexy women always want sex and go around jumping men.

Studies show that women think about sex less often, are indeed more easily distracted and often are not as hormonally driven to desire sexual activity. However, most wives do enjoy their sexual feelings, want to be close to their husbands and want to deepen their relationship through lovemaking.

Studies are showing that women have more of a “receptive” desire (open to initiation, responding to loving and direct approaches) than an “assertive” desire (thinking actively about sex, initiating activity). A skilled husband understands

this and knows that his wife probably won't think about sex all day without the loving note he composed that morning.

A typical scenario can be the woman feeling really tired on a Friday evening, with sex the furthest thing from her mind. Her husband has been nice the last few days, taking her out for a nice dinner. His sexual initiation later that night creates in her mind, Wow, I never thought about sex but that would be a nice way to end the evening.

Wives can sometimes desire their husbands to sweep them up into creative, passionate lovemaking. THIS DOES NOT mean women want to be pushed into sexual activity. The romantic scene in their minds involves husbands who are skilled, romantically assertive and deeply attracted to their femininity.

**5. Women fantasize in 3-D.** Guys, when your wife steps out of the shower, do you zoom in on her soul/heart and notice that she is tired, relaxed or happy? Do your fantasies about her include ambience, and the way you felt so connected and in love?

Your wife fantasizes in all three dimensions of your total person: body, soul and spirit. Her erotic mental imagery feeds off of you, the relationship and her feelings in marvelous ways, contributing to her choices sexually. A good lover understands his wife's method of thinking, as he enhances her desire and enjoyment of lovemaking.

Her mental images about your body probably don't often include crucial parts of your male anatomy. She remembers such things as your hygiene, your hands that lovingly touch her, your tone of voice that expresses caring and your smile that lights her up.

Your ability to express feelings and to attend to her with surprises and thoughtfulness makes her want to give herself to you. She responds to that spiritual part of you that longs for completion and is committed to her.

**6. Wives enjoy nurturing sex but resent duty sex.** Husbands often complain that their wives don't really want sex but passively comply. Men, learn the difference between "duty" or "pity" sex and "nurturing" lovemaking.

Duty sex fulfills an obligation motivated out of guilt or a "wifely requirement" when the husband is getting pushy. Pity sex gives the mate sexual release because he is needy, or frustrated, and it's been awhile.

Nurturing sex, on the other hand, is a wife being able to say "no" and yet saying "yes" with a desire to connect with her husband. Remember that when you are pushy or pouting so she can't say "no," then it will be impossible for her to lovingly say "yes."

**7. A woman's sexiness is empowered by her dad and husband.** A young girl grows into her femininity as her father is able to make affirming statements such as, "You are such a beautiful woman, and I am so proud of the person you are becoming."

These kinds of affirmations launch her into the world of boys and dating with feelings of self-confidence. She makes sure that other guys value and respect her just like her dad does. Sadly, many girls do not have dads who can do this launching and the importance of their husbands' roles then increase.

Women have what can be called an "alluring" desire for their husbands. This is when they realize that their feminine beauty and bodies have great appeal to their husbands, and they are empowered to want to turn them on. Many husbands don't realize that they are the one who can get this ball rolling.

Guys, as you compliment your wives and never obsessively focus in on flaws—as you build their sexiness up—they will respond in neat ways. You can help create their feminine power that can result in great lovemaking. Your affirmation can help her tune into her own sexuality and turn nurturing sex into passionate connection.

Men, if we desire to be the world's greatest lovers with the most intimate and passionate sex lives ever, we will have to be smart. Work with who your wife is, not what you wish she could be. Become a sensitive, skilled and wise lover who knows how to turn your wife on because you understand women, and particularly your woman.

---

Doug Rosenau is a marriage and sex therapist in Atlanta, author of *A Celebration of Sex* and co-founder of Sexual , which teaches biblical sexuality.

Debra Taylor is a marriage and sex therapist in California, co-author of *Secrets of Eve* and a co-founder of Sexual Wholeness.