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Sex in Mars, love in Venus

WOMEN'S WORLD

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Too much, too little ... when it comes to sex, the sexes differ.

I STUMBLED across a funny quote the other day: "Sex is like air; it's not important unless you aren't getting any."

It made me think about how different men and women are. The quote above is generally more applicable to men than women. It sounds like a cliché, but it's true: men want sex more than women do.

So it doesn't matter that much to women if they don't have sex – what is more important to them is love and intimacy.

There is a statement that is widely available on the Internet, which says: "Men are frustrated with women because they never want sex, but women are frustrated with men because they always want sex. Women blame men they don't know how to love, but men blame women that they only talk about love but don't want to make it."

So does this mean that men are men, and women are women, and never the twain shall meet?

Of course not. After all, sex is a natural function for humans, and men and women have been able to overcome these differences and procreate since the beginning of humanity.

However, understanding the differences between both genders could help to clear up some frustrations and assumptions that exist between couples, and hopefully, improve relationships.

The real difference

Sex is related to hormones. Specifically, the testosterone hormone is what makes humans want sex. This is a predominantly male hormone, as the male body produces 20 times more of this hormone than a female's.

Hence, isn't it understandable why men usually want sex more often than women do?

It is not the fault of men or women – we are just made this way. Anthropologically, it is believed that men want more sex because the male species is naturally programmed to spread its seed as widely as possible, so that the male genes will be passed down. So, for men, quantity matters.

Conversely, women bear the consequences of sexual intercourse, ie a child, so they are genetically programmed to be more selective with their sexual partners. A woman is genetically programmed to look for quality in her male partner to show that he will be a good provider. She seeks love, instead of sex, because it is a sign of commitment that he will be a faithful companion to help her raise her child.

While this view may explain the fundamental evolutionary differences between men and women, it somewhat simplifies the complex dynamics of relationships and cultural attitudes towards sex.

Sex is icky?

There are other factors that can explain why men and women view sex so differently. A lot of it has to do with the fact that most men are generally comfortable with their physical bodies, including their desires, performance and bodily functions – why do you think men enjoy jokes about passing wind?

On the other hand, women struggle to reconcile their perceptions of their bodies. They are not entirely comfortable with their body shape and are very self-conscious about their genitals, the way they smell, and how certain sensations feel.

Part of this is due to cultural conditioning, as we have been brought up to avoid thinking about our bodies, since that would be considered rude or perverse. It is taboo to touch or scrutinise ourselves, so our own bodies become alien to us.

However, it is not fair to say that all men only want sex and do not experience love or romantic feelings at all. It is also a misconception that all women only want sugar, spice and everything nice.

With cultural and social changes in our modern society, women actually want and think about sex more than they admit to. Some are even becoming more open regarding their sexuality.

This means that the twain can meet in the middle, because men can learn to focus more on emotions and women can learn to enjoy sex.

Learning to please each other

It's hard for men to run away from accusations that they're only in it for sex. Even in a loving, committed relationship, a couple will likely have different expectations and experiences from sexual intercourse, until they learn to really communicate with each other in bed.

Most women say that they need to feel desired and be romanced with more intimacy before they are prepared for sex. This applies not just to the moments before entering the bedroom, but even in the initial part of the relationship, before a couple becomes sexually intimate.

During intercourse, communication and connection is particularly important for a woman. For her, emotional arousal is just as important as physical arousal, and in fact, is a precursor to the latter.

As for men? Well, let's just say that the process need not be as lengthy for them. But that doesn't mean that they cannot learn to slow down and be there for their partner all the way.

Relationship experts often advise men not to rush for intercourse, and engage in a slow, gentle and relaxed foreplay until the women are sufficiently aroused.

The time and effort is a worthwhile investment, because it promises that both the twain shall meet most pleurably!

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