

Why Men Don't Listen & Women Can't Read Maps

Allan & Barbara Pease

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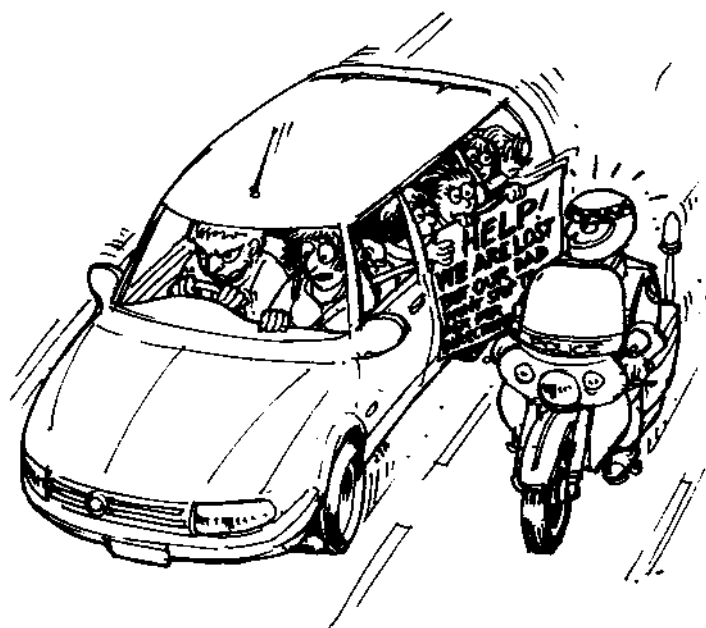
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INTRODUCTION



A Sunday Drive

It was a sunny Sunday afternoon as Bob and Sue set out with their three teenage daughters on a lazy drive down to the beach. Bob was at the wheel and Sue sat beside him, turning towards the back every few minutes to join in the animated series of conversations going on among their daughters. To Bob, it sounded as if they were all talking at once, creating an incessant barrage of noise that just didn't make any sense at all. Eventually, he'd had enough.

'Can you lot please shut up!' he yelled.

There was a stunned silence.

'Why?' asked Sue, eventually.

'Because I'm trying to drive!' he replied, exasperated.

The women looked at each other in complete confusion. 'Trying to drive?' they mumbled.

They could not see any connection between their conversation and his ability to drive. He couldn't understand why they were all speaking simultaneously, sometimes on different subjects, with none of them appearing to listen.

Why couldn't they just keep quiet and let him concentrate on driving? Their talking had already caused him to miss the last turn-off on the highway.

The fundamental problem here is simple: men and women are different. Not better or worse – just different. Scientists, anthropologists and sociobiologists have known this for years, but they have also been painfully aware that to express this knowledge publicly in such a politically correct world could turn them into social pariahs. Society today is determined to believe that men and women possess exactly the same skills, aptitudes and potentials – just as science, ironically, is beginning to prove they are completely different.

And where does this leave us? As a society, on extremely shaky ground. It's only by understanding the differences between men and women that we can really start building on our collective strengths – rather than on our individual weaknesses. In this book, we seize upon the enormous advances that have recently been made in human evolutionary science and show how the lessons learned apply to male and female relationships. The conclusions we unearth are controversial. They are confronting. They are, occasionally, extremely disturbing. But they give us all a solid and thorough understanding of the many strange things that happen between men and women. If only Bob and Sue had read it before they had set out ...

Why Writing This Book Was So Tough

This book took us three years, and more than 400,000 kilometres, to write. In the course of our research, we studied papers, interviewed experts and gave seminars throughout Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, Malaysia, England, Scotland, Ireland, Italy, Greece, Germany, Holland, Spain, Turkey, the USA, South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Namibia, Angola, Switzerland, Austria, Finland, Indonesia, Bulgaria, Saudi Arabia, Poland, Hungary, Borneo, Russia, Belgium, France, Japan and Canada.

One of the most difficult tasks was getting public and private organisations to give their opinions on the facts. For example, fewer than 1% of all commercial airline pilots are female. When we tried to discuss this with airline officials, many were too terrified to offer an opinion for fear of being accused of being sexist or anti-female. Many said 'no comment' and some organisations even made threats about

their names being mentioned in our book. Women executives were generally more obliging, although many took an immediately defensive position and saw this research as an attack on feminism without even knowing what it was about. Some of the authoritative opinions we have documented were obtained 'off the record' from corporate executives and university professors in dimly-lit rooms, behind closed doors, with guarantees that they were not being quoted nor their organisations named. Many had two opinions – their politically correct public opinion and their real opinion, which was 'not to be quoted'.

You will find this book sometimes challenging, sometimes startling, but always fascinating. While it is based on hard scientific evidence, we have used everyday conversations, beliefs and scenarios that range from the humorous to the downright hilarious to make sure it's fun to read. We have tried to boil all the evidence down into the simplest explanations while, at the same time, avoiding oversimplification. This approach makes the information easily accessible for most people, but can annoy others in the science world who would prefer to read a science journal. Our objective in writing this book is to help you learn more about both yourself and the opposite sex, so that your interaction and relationships can be more fulfilling, enjoyable and satisfying.

One driving organisation measured gender differences in reverse parking ability and did comparisons in several countries. Their results were so astounding that when the report was released they were inundated with complaints that they were sexist and racist. The report was immediately withdrawn and locked away, never to be seen again, as it was clearly bad for business. We obtained a copy of this study and will discuss the results but, for legal and ethical reasons, we can't reveal the source.

This book is dedicated to all the men and women who

have ever sat up at 2am pulling their hair out as they plead with their partners, 'But *why* don't you understand?' Relationships fail because men still don't understand why a woman can't be more like a man, and women expect their men to behave just like they do. Not only will this book help you come to grips with the opposite sex, it'll help you understand yourself. And how you can both lead happier, healthier and more harmonious lives as a result.

Barbara and Allan Pease

CHAPTER 1

SAME SPECIES, DIFFERENT WORLDS



The Evolution of a Magnificent Creature

Men and women are different. Not better or worse – different. Just about the only thing they have in common is that they belong to the same species. They live in different worlds, with different values and according to quite different sets of rules. Everyone knows this, but very few people, particularly men, are willing to admit it. The truth, however, is most definitely out there. Look at the evidence. Around 50% of marriages end in divorce in Western countries and most serious relationships stop short of becoming long-term. Men and women of every culture, creed and hue constantly argue over their partners' opinions, behaviour, attitudes and beliefs.

Some Things Are Obvious

When a man goes to a toilet, he usually goes for one reason and one reason only. Women use toilets as social lounges and therapy rooms. Women who go to a toilet as strangers can come out best friends and lifelong buddies. But everyone would be instantly suspicious of the man who called out, 'Hey Frank, I'm going to the toilet. You wanna come with me?'

Men dominate TV remote controls and flick through the channels; women don't mind watching the commercials. Under pressure, men drink alcohol and invade other countries; women eat chocolate and go shopping.

Women criticise men for being insensitive, uncaring, not listening, not being warm and compassionate, not talking, not giving enough love, not being committed to

relationships, wanting to have sex rather than make love, turning the temperature down, and leaving the toilet seat up.

Men criticise women about their driving, for not being able to read street directories, for turning maps upside down, for their lack of a sense of direction, for talking too much without getting to the point, for not initiating sex often enough, turning the temperature up, and for leaving the toilet seat down. Men can never find a pair of socks but their CDs are in alphabetical order. Women can always find the missing set of car keys, but rarely the most direct route to their destination. Men think they're the most sensible sex. Women *know* they are.

How many men does it take to

change a roll of toilet paper?

It's unknown. It's never happened.

Men marvel at the way a woman can walk into a room full of people and give an instant commentary on everyone; women can't believe men are so unobservant. Men are amazed how a woman can't see a red flashing oil light on the car dashboard but can spot a dirty sock in a dark corner 50 metres away. Women are bewildered by men who can consistently parallel park a car in a tight spot using a rear-view mirror, but can never find the G-spot.

If a woman is out driving and gets lost, she'll stop and ask for directions. To a man, this is a sign of weakness. He'll drive round in circles for hours, muttering things like, 'I've found a new way to get there' or 'I'm in the general area' and 'Hey, I recognise that petrol station!'

Different Job Specs

Men and women have evolved differently because they had to. Men hunted, women gathered. Men protected, women nurtured. As a result, their bodies and brains evolved in completely different ways.

As their bodies physically changed to adapt to their specific functions, so did their minds. Men grew taller and stronger than most women, while their brains developed to suit their tasks. Women were mostly content for men to work away as they kept the cave fires burning, and their brains evolved to cope with their function in life.

Over millions of years, the brain structures of men and women thus continued to change in different ways. Now, we know the sexes process information differently. They think differently. They believe different things. They have different perceptions, priorities and behaviours.

To pretend otherwise, is a recipe for heartache, confusion and disillusionment all your life.

The 'Stereotype' Argument

Since the late 1980s, there has been an explosion of research into male and female differences and the way both the male and female brains work. For the first time ever, advanced computer brainscanning equipment has allowed us to see the brain operating 'live' and, with that peek into the vast landscape of the human mind, provided us with many of the answers to the questions about male and female differences. The research discussed in this book has been collected from studies in scientific, medical, psychological and sociological studies and it all points clearly to one thing: All things are not equal; men and women are different. For most of the 20th Century those differences were

explained away by social conditioning; that is, we are who we are because of our parents' and teachers' attitudes which, in turn, reflected the attitudes of their society. Baby girls were dressed in pink and given dolls to play with; baby boys were dressed in blue and given toy soldiers and football jerseys. Young girls were cuddled and touched while boys were thumped on the back and told not to cry. Until recently, it was believed that when a baby was born its mind was a clean slate on which its teachers could write its choices and preferences. The biological evidence now available, however, shows a somewhat different picture of why we think the way we do. It shows convincingly that it is our hormones and brain wiring that are largely responsible for our attitudes, preferences and behaviour. This means that if boys and girls grew up on a deserted island with no organised society or parents to guide them, girls would still cuddle, touch, make friends and play with dolls, while boys would compete mentally and physically with each other and form groups with a clear hierarchy.

*The wiring of our brain in the womb
and the effect of hormones will
determine how we think and behave.*

As you will see, the way our brains are wired and the hormones pulsing through our bodies are the two factors that largely dictate, long before we are born, how we will think and behave. Our instincts are simply our genes determining how our bodies will behave in given sets of circumstances.

Is it All a Male Conspiracy?

Since the 1960s a number of pressure groups have tried to persuade us to buck our biological legacy. They claim that governments, religions and education systems have added up to nothing more than a plot by men to suppress women, colluding to keep good women down. Keeping women pregnant was a way of controlling them even more.

Certainly, historically, that's how it appears. But the question needs to be asked: If women and men are identical, as these groups claim, how could men ever have achieved such total dominance over the world? The study of how the brain works now gives us many answers. We are not identical. Men and women should be equal in terms of their opportunities to exercise their full potential, but they are definitely not identical in their innate abilities. Whether men and women are *equal* is a political or moral question, but whether they are *identical* is a scientific one.

*The equality of men and women is
a political or moral issue; the
essential difference is a scientific one.*

Those who resist the idea that our biology affects our behaviour often do so with the best of intentions – they oppose sexism. But they are confused about the difference between *equal* and *identical* which are two completely different issues. In this book, you will see how science confirms that men and woman are profoundly different both physically and mentally. They are *not* the same.

We have investigated the research of leading palaeontologists, ethnologists, psychologists, biologists and neuro-

scientists. The brain differences between women and men are now clear, beyond all speculation, prejudice or reasonable doubt.

When weighing up the differences between males and females discussed in this book, some people may say, 'No, that's not like me, I don't do that!' Well, maybe they don't. But we are dealing here with *average* men and women, that is, how most men and women behave most of the time, in most situations and for most of the past. 'Average' means that if you are in a room full of people you'll notice that men are bigger and taller than women, in fact 7% taller and an average 8% bigger. The tallest or biggest person in the room may be a woman, but overall the men are bigger and taller than the women. In the *Guinness Book of World Records 2001*, the biggest and tallest people have almost always been men. The tallest human on record was Robert Wadlow from Alton, Illinois who, in June 1940, measured 2.72 metres (8 feet 11.1 inches). The tallest person in the year 2000 was Radhouane Charbib of Tunisia who stood 2.35 metres (7 feet 8.9 inches). History books are full of 'Big Johns' and 'Little Suzies'! This is not sexist. It's fact.

Where We (the Authors) Stand

Reading this book, some people may begin to feel smug, arrogant or angry. This is because, to a greater or lesser extent, they are victims of idealistic philosophies that claim women and men are the same, so let's clarify our position on this now. We, the authors, are writing this book to help you develop and improve your relationships with both sexes. We believe that men and women should have equal opportunity to pursue a career path in any field they choose and that equally qualified people should receive equal compensation for the same effort.

Difference is not the opposite of equality. Equality means being free to choose to do the things we want to do and difference means that, as men or women, we may not want to do the same things. We usually choose different things off the same list.

Our aim is to look objectively at male and female relationships, explain the history, meanings and implications involved and to develop techniques and strategies for a happier and more fulfilling way of life. We won't beat about the bush with suppositions, politically correct clichés or scientific mumbo-jumbo. If something looks like a duck, sounds like a duck, walks like a duck and there is enough evidence to prove it's a duck, then that's what we'll call it.

The evidence presented here shows that the sexes are intrinsically *inclined* to behave in different ways. We are not suggesting that either sex is bound to behave or should behave in any particular way.

The Nature Versus Nurture Argument

Melissa gave birth to twins, a girl and a boy. Jasmine, she wrapped in a pink blanket, and Adam, in a blue one. Relatives brought soft fluffy toys as gifts for Jasmine, and a toy football and a tiny football jersey for Adam. Everyone cooed and gooed and talked softly to Jasmine, telling her she was pretty and gorgeous, but it was usually only the female relatives who picked her up and cuddled her. When the male relatives visited, they focused mostly on Adam, speaking noticeably louder, poking his belly, bouncing him up and down and proposing a future as a football player.

Such a scenario will be familiar to everyone. It does, however, raise the question: Is this adult behaviour caused by our biology or is it learned behaviour that is perpetuated from generation to generation? Is it nature or nurture?

For most of the 20th century, psychologists and sociologists believed most of our behaviour and preferences were learnt from our social conditioning and our environment. However, we know that nurturing is a learned phenomenon – adoptive mothers, whether they are human or monkey, usually do a superb job of nurturing their infants. Scientists, on the other hand, have argued that biology, chemistry and hormones are largely responsible. Since 1990, there has been overwhelming evidence to support this scientific view that we are born with much of our brain software already in place. The fact that men were usually the hunters and women the nurturers even today dictates our behaviour, beliefs and priorities. A major study at Harvard University shows that we not only behave differently towards boy and girl babies, we also use different words. To baby girls we softly say, 'You're so sweet', 'You're a little sweetheart', 'You're a beautiful little girl' and to baby boys we raise our voices and say, 'Hey, big boy!' and 'Wow, you're so strong!'

Yet giving Barbie Dolls to girls and Action Men to boys does not create their behaviour; it simply exacerbates it. Similarly, the Harvard study found that adults' distinctive behaviour towards baby girls and boys only accentuated the differences that already exist. When you put a duck on a pond, it starts to swim. Look beneath the surface, and you'll see the duck has webbed feet. If you analyse its brain, you'll find that it evolved with a 'swimming module' already in place. The pond is just where the duck happens to be at the time and is not causing its behaviour.

Research shows that we are more a product of our biology than the victims of social stereotypes. We are different because our brain is wired differently. This causes us to perceive the world in different ways and have different values and priorities. Not better or worse – different.