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**Opening Extract from...**

# Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus

Written by John Gray

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# MEN ARE FROM MARS, *Women Are from Venus*

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE
TO RELATIONSHIPS

JOHN GRAY

HARPER element

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*This book is dedicated with*
*deepest love and affection*
*to my wife, Bonnie Gray.*
*Her love, vulnerability, wisdom and strength*
*have inspired me to be the best I can be*
*and to share what we have learned together.*

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# Introduction

A week after our daughter Lauren was born, my wife Bonnie and I were completely exhausted. Each night Lauren kept waking us. Bonnie had been torn in the delivery and was taking painkillers. She could barely walk. After five days of staying home to help, I went back to work. She seemed to be getting better.

While I was away she ran out of pain pills. Instead of calling me at the office, she asked one of my brothers, who was visiting, to purchase more. My brother, however, did not return with the pills. Consequently, she spent the whole day in pain, taking care of a newborn.

I had no idea that her day had been so awful. When I returned home she was very upset. I misinterpreted the cause of her distress and thought she was blaming me.

She said, "I've been in pain all day ... I ran out of pills. I've been stranded in bed and nobody cares!"

I said defensively, "Why didn't you call me?"

She said, "I asked your brother, but he forgot! I've been waiting for him to return all day. What am I supposed to do? I can barely walk. I feel so deserted!"

At this point I exploded. My fuse was also very short that day. I was angry that she hadn't called me. I was furious that she was blaming me when I didn't even know she was in pain. After

exchanging a few harsh words, I headed for the door. I was tired, irritable and had heard enough. We had both reached our limits.

Then something started to happen that would change my life.

Bonnie said, "Stop, please don't leave. This is when I need you the most. I'm in pain. I haven't slept in days. Please listen to me."

I stopped for a moment to listen.

She said, "John Gray, you're a fair-weather friend! As long as I'm sweet, loving Bonnie you are here for me, but as soon as I'm not, you walk right out that door."

Then she paused, and her eyes filled up with tears. As her tone shifted she said, "Right now I'm in pain. I have nothing to give, this is when I need you the most. Please, come over here and hold me. You don't have to say anything. I just need to feel your arms around me. Please don't go."

I walked over and silently held her. She wept in my arms. After a few minutes, she thanked me for not leaving. She told me that she just needed to feel me holding her.

At that moment I started to realize the real meaning of love – unconditional love. I had always thought of myself as a loving person. But she was right. I had been a fair-weather friend. As long as she was happy and nice, I loved back. But if she was unhappy or upset, I would feel blamed and then argue or distance myself.

That day, for the first time, I didn't leave her. I stayed, and it felt great. I succeeded in giving to her when she really needed me. This felt like real love. Caring for another person. Trusting in our love. Being there at her hour of need. I marvelled at how easy it was for me to support her when I was shown the way.

How had I missed this? She just needed me to go over and hold her. Another woman would have instinctively known what Bonnie needed. But as a man, I didn't know that touching, holding and listening were so important to her. By recognizing these differences I began to learn a new way of relating to my wife. I would have never believed we could resolve conflict so easily.

In my previous relationships, I had become indifferent and unloving at difficult times, simply because I didn't know what else to do. As a result, my first marriage had been very painful and difficult. This incident with Bonnie revealed to me how I could change this pattern.

It inspired my seven years of research to help develop and refine the insights about men and women in this book. By learning in very practical and specific terms about how men and women are different, I suddenly began to realize that my marriage did not need to be such a struggle. With this new awareness of our differences Bonnie and I were able to improve dramatically our communication and enjoy each other more.

By continuing to recognize and explore our differences we have discovered new ways to improve all our relationships. We have learned about relationships in ways that our parents never knew and therefore could not have taught us. As I began sharing these insights with my counselling clients, their relationships were also enriched. Literally thousands of those who attended my weekend seminars saw their relationships dramatically transform overnight.

Seven years later individuals and couples still report successful benefits. I receive pictures of happy couples and their children, with letters thanking me for saving their marriage. Although their love saved their marriage, they would have divorced if they hadn't gained a deeper understanding of the opposite sex.

Susan and Jim had been married nine years. Like most couples they started out loving each other, but after years of increasing frustration and disappointment they lost their passion and decided to give up. Before getting a divorce, however, they attended my weekend relationship seminar. Susan said, "We have tried everything to make this relationship work. We are just too different."

During the seminar they were amazed to learn that their differences were not only normal but were to be expected. They were comforted that other couples had experienced the same patterns

of relating. In just two days, Susan and Jim gained a totally new understanding of men and women.

They fell in love again. Their relationship miraculously changed. No longer heading toward a divorce, they looked forward to sharing the rest of their lives together. Jim said, "This information about our differences has given me back my wife. This is the greatest gift I could ever receive. We are loving each other again."

Six years later, when they invited me to visit their new home and family, they were still loving each other. They were still thanking me for helping them to understand each other and stay married.

Although almost everyone would agree that men and women are different, *how* different is still undefined for most people. Many books in the last ten years have forged ahead, attempting to define these differences. Though important advances have been made, many books are one-sided and unfortunately reinforce mistrust and resentment toward the opposite sex. One sex is generally viewed as being victimized by the other. A definitive guide was needed for understanding how *healthy* men and women are different.

To improve relations between the sexes it is necessary to create an understanding of our differences that raises self-esteem and personal dignity while inspiring mutual trust, personal responsibility, increased cooperation and greater love. As a result of questioning more than 25,000 participants in my relationship seminars I have been able to define in positive terms how men and women are different. As you explore these differences you will feel walls of resentment and mistrust melting down.

Opening the heart results in greater forgiveness and increased motivation to give and receive love and support. With this new awareness, you will, I hope, go beyond the suggestions in this book and continue to develop ways in which you can relate lovingly to the opposite sex.

All the principles in this book have been tested and tried. At least 90 percent of the more than 25,000 individuals questioned have enthusiastically recognized themselves in these descriptions. If you find yourself nodding your head while reading this book, saying "Yes, yes this is me you're talking about," then you are definitely not alone. And just as others have benefited from applying the insights in this book, you can as well.

*Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* reveals new strategies for reducing tensions in relationships and creating more love by first recognizing in great detail how men and women are different. It then offers practical suggestions about how to reduce frustration and disappointment and to create increasing happiness and intimacy. Relationships do not have to be such a struggle. Only when we do not understand one another is there tension, resentment, or conflict.

So many people are frustrated in their relationships. They love their partners, but when there is tension they do not know what to do to make things better. Through understanding how completely different men and women are, you will learn new ways for successfully relating with, listening to and supporting the opposite sex. You will learn how to create the love you deserve. As you read this book you may wonder how anybody succeeds in having a successful relationship without it.

*Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* is a manual for loving relationships. It reveals how men and women differ in all areas of their lives. Not only do men and women communicate differently but they think, feel, perceive, react, respond, love, need, and appreciate differently. They almost seem to be from different planets, speaking different languages and needing different nourishment.

This expanded understanding of our differences helps resolve much of the frustration in dealing with and trying to understand the opposite sex. Misunderstandings can then be quickly dissipated or avoided. Incorrect expectations are easily corrected.

When you remember that your partner is as different from you as someone from another planet, you can relax and cooperate with the differences instead of resisting or trying to change them.

Most important, throughout this book you will learn practical techniques for solving the problems that arise from our differences. This book is not just a theoretical analysis of psychological differences but also a practical manual for how to succeed in creating loving relationships.

The truth of these principles is self-evident and can be validated by your own experience as well as by common sense. Many examples will simply and concisely express what you have always intuitively known. This validation will assist you in being you and in not losing yourself in your relationships.

In response to these insights, men often say "This is exactly how I am. Have you been following me around? I no longer feel like something is wrong with me."

Women often say "Finally my husband listens to me. I don't have to fight to be validated. When you explain our differences, my husband understands. Thank you!"

These are but a few of the thousands of inspirational comments that people have shared after learning that men are from Mars and women are from Venus. The results of this new programme for understanding the opposite sex are not only dramatic and immediate but also long lasting.

Certainly the journey of creating a loving relationship can be rocky at times. Problems are inevitable. But these problems either can be sources of resentment and rejection or can be opportunities for deepening intimacy and increasing love, caring and trust. The insights of this book are not a "quick fix" to eliminate all problems. Instead they provide a new approach whereby your relationships can successfully support you in solving life's problems as they arise. With this new awareness you will have the tools you need to

get the love you deserve and to give your partner the love and support he or she deserves.

I make many generalizations about men and women in this book. Probably you will find some comments truer than others … after all, we are unique individuals with unique experiences. Sometimes in my seminar couples and individuals will share that they relate to the examples of men and women but in an opposite way. The man relates to my descriptions of women and the woman relates to my descriptions of men. I call this role reversal.

If you discover you are experiencing role reversal, I want to assure you that everything is all right. I suggest that when you do not relate to something in this book, either ignore it (moving on to something you do relate to) or look deeper inside yourself. Many men have denied some of their masculine attributes in order to become more loving and nurturing. Likewise many women have denied some of their feminine attributes in order to earn a living in a workforce that rewards masculine attributes. If this is the case, then by applying the suggestions, strategies and techniques in this book you not only will create more passion in your relationships but also will increasingly balance your masculine and feminine characteristics.

In this book I do not directly address the question of why men and women are different. This is a complex question to which there are many answers, ranging from biological differences, parental influence, education and birth order to cultural conditioning by society, the media, and history. (These issues are explored in great depth in my book *Men, Women, and Relationships: Making Peace with the Opposite Sex*.)

Although the benefits of applying the insights in this book are immediate, this book does not replace the need for therapy and counselling for troubled relationships or survivors of a dysfunctional family. Even healthy individuals may need therapy or

counselling at challenging times. I believe strongly in the powerful and gradual transformation that occurs in therapy, marriage counselling, and twelve-step recovery groups.

Yet repeatedly I have heard people say that they have benefited more from this new understanding of relationships than from years of therapy. I however believe that their years of therapy or recovery work provided the groundwork that allowed them to apply these insights so successfully to their life and relationships.

If our past was dysfunctional, then even after years of therapy or attending recovery groups we still need a positive picture of healthy relationships. This book provides that vision. On the other hand, even if our past has been very loving and nurturing, times have changed, and a new approach to relationships between the sexes is still required. It is essential to learn new and healthy ways of relating and communicating.

I believe everyone can benefit from the insights in this book. The only negative response I hear from participants in my seminars and in the letters I receive is "I wish someone had told me this before."

It is never too late to increase the love in your life. You only need to learn a new way. Whether you are in therapy or not, if you want to have more fulfilling relationships with the opposite sex, this book is for you.

It is a pleasure to share with you *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*. May you always grow in wisdom and in love. May the frequency of divorce decrease and the number of happy marriages increase. Our children deserve a better world.

John Gray
November 15, 1991
Mill Valley, California

CHAPTER 1

# Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus

Imagine that men are from Mars and women are from Venus. One day long ago the Martians, looking through their telescopes, discovered the Venusians. Just glimpsing the Venusians awakened feelings they had never known. They fell in love and quickly invented space travel and flew to Venus.

The Venusians welcomed the Martians with open arms. They had intuitively known that this day would come. Their hearts opened wide to a love they had never felt before.

The love between the Venusians and Martians was magical. They delighted in being together, doing things together, and sharing together. Though from different worlds, they revelled in their differences. They spent months learning about each other, exploring and appreciating their different needs, preferences, and behaviour patterns. For years they lived together in love and harmony.

Then they decided to fly to Earth. In the beginning everything was wonderful and beautiful. But the effects of Earth's atmosphere took hold, and one morning everyone woke up with a peculiar kind of amnesia – *selective amnesia!*

Both the Martians and Venusians forgot that they were from different planets and were supposed to be different. In one morning everything they had learned about their differences was erased

from their memory. And since that day men and women have been in conflict.

## Remembering our differences

Without the awareness that we are supposed to be different, men and women are at odds with each other. We usually become angry or frustrated with the opposite sex because we have forgotten this important truth. We expect the opposite sex to be more like ourselves. We desire them to "want what we want" and "feel the way we feel."

We mistakenly assume that if our partners love us they will react and behave in certain ways – the ways we react and behave when we love someone. This attitude sets us up to be disappointed again and again and prevents us from taking the necessary time to communicate lovingly about our differences.

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**We mistakenly assume that if our partners love us they will react and behave in certain ways – the ways we react and behave when we love someone.**

Men mistakenly expect women to think, communicate and react the way men do; women mistakenly expect men to feel, communicate, and respond the way women do. We have forgotten that men and women are supposed to be different. As a result our relationships are filled with unnecessary friction and conflict.

Clearly recognizing and respecting these differences dramatically reduces confusion when dealing with the opposite sex. When you remember that men are from Mars and women are from Venus, everything can be explained.

## An overview of our differences

Throughout this book I will discuss in great detail our differences. Each chapter will bring you new and crucial insights. Here are the major differences that we will explore:

In chapter 2 we will explore how men's and women's values are inherently different and try to understand the two biggest mistakes we make in relating to the opposite sex: men mistakenly offer solutions and invalidate feelings while women offer unsolicited advice and direction. Through understanding our Martian/Venusian background it becomes obvious why men and women *unknowingly* make these mistakes. By remembering these differences we can correct our mistakes and immediately respond to each other in more productive ways.

In chapter 3 we'll discover the different ways men and women cope with stress. While Martians tend to pull away and silently think about what's bothering them, Venusians feel an instinctive need to talk about what's bothering them. You will learn new strategies for getting what you want at these conflicting times.

We will explore how to motivate the opposite sex in chapter 4. Men are motivated when they feel needed while women are motivated when they feel cherished. We will discuss the three steps for improving relationships and explore how to overcome our greatest challenges: men need to overcome their resistance to giving love while women must overcome their resistance to receiving it.

In chapter 5 you'll learn how men and women commonly misunderstand each other because they speak different languages. A *Martian/Venusian Phrase Dictionary* is provided to translate commonly misunderstood expressions. You will learn how men and women speak and even stop speaking for entirely different reasons. Women will learn what to do when a man stops talking, and men will learn how to listen better without becoming frustrated.

In chapter 6 you will discover how men and women have different needs for intimacy. A man gets close but then inevitably needs to pull away. Women will learn how to support this pulling-away process so he will spring back to her like a rubber band. Women also will learn the best times for having intimate conversations with a man.

We will explore in chapter 7 how a woman's loving attitudes rise and fall rhythmically in a wave motion. Men will learn how correctly to interpret these sometimes sudden shifts of feeling. Men also will learn to recognize when they are needed the most and how to be skillfully supportive at those times without having to make sacrifices.

In chapter 8 you'll discover how men and women give the kind of love they need and not what the opposite sex needs. Men primarily need a kind of love that is trusting, accepting and appreciative. Women primarily need a kind of love that is caring, understanding and respectful. You will discover the six most common ways you may unknowingly be turning off your partner.

In chapter 9 we will explore how to avoid painful arguments. Men will learn that by acting as if they are always right they may invalidate a woman's feelings. Women will learn how they unknowingly send messages of disapproval instead of disagreement, thus igniting a man's defences. The anatomy of an argument will be explored along with many practical suggestions for establishing supportive communication.

Chapter 10 will show how men and women keep score differently. Men will learn that for Venusians every gift of love scores equally with every other gift, regardless of size. Instead of focusing on one big gift men are reminded that the little expressions of love are just as important; 101 ways to score points with women are listed. Women, however, will learn to redirect their energies into ways that score big with men by giving men what they want.

In chapter 11 you'll learn ways to communicate with each other during difficult times. The different ways men and women hide feelings are discussed along with the importance of sharing feelings. The Love Letter Technique is recommended for expressing negative feelings to your partner, as a way of finding greater love and forgiveness.

You will understand why Venusians have a more difficult time asking for support in chapter 12, as well as why Martians commonly resist requests. You will learn how the phrases "could you" and "can you" turn off men and what to say instead. You will learn the secrets for encouraging a man to give more and discover in various ways the power of being brief, direct, and using the correct wording.

In chapter 13 you'll discover the four seasons of love. This realistic perspective of how love changes and grows will assist you in overcoming the inevitable obstacles that emerge in any relationship. You will learn how your past or your partner's past can affect your relationship in the present and discover other important insights for keeping the magic of love alive.

In each chapter of *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* you will discover new secrets for creating loving and lasting relationships. Each new discovery will increase your ability to have fulfilling relationships.

## Good intentions are not enough

Falling in love is always magical. It feels eternal, as if love will last forever. We naively believe that somehow we are exempt from the problems our parents had, free from the odds that love will die, assured that it is meant to be and that we are destined to live happily ever after.

But as the magic recedes and daily life takes over, it emerges that men continue to expect women to think and react like men, and women expect men to feel and behave like women. Without a clear awareness of our differences, we do not take the time to understand and respect each other. We become demanding, resentful, judgmental and intolerant.

With the best and most loving intentions love continues to die. Somehow the problems creep in. The resentments build. Communication breaks down. Mistrust increases. Rejection and repression result. The magic of love is lost.

We ask ourselves:

How does it happen?

Why does it happen?

Why does it happen to us?

To answer these questions our greatest minds have developed brilliant and complex philosophical and psychological models. Yet still the old patterns return. Love dies. It happens to almost everyone.

Each day millions of individuals are searching for a partner to experience that special loving feeling. Each year, millions of couples join together in love and then painfully separate because they have lost that loving feeling. From those who are able to sustain love long enough to get married, only 50 percent stay married. Out of those who stay together, possibly another 50 percent are not fulfilled. They stay together out of loyalty and obligation or from the fear of starting over.

Very few people, indeed, are able to grow in love. Yet it does happen. When men and women are able to respect and accept their differences then love has a chance to blossom.

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**When men and women are able to respect and accept their differences then love has a chance to blossom.**