

How To Get Your Wife In The Mood



Secret Insights Into The Female Sexual Response

By Mike Frazier, MD

Special Reports

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Chapter 1 - What Does This Guy Know?



Here's a quick introduction to me, Mike Frazier.

I went to BYU and majored in Neuroscience.

From there I went to UCLA for medical school and specialized in psychiatry.

I work in private practice, and my beautiful wife, Elizabeth, and I have 5 wonderful children.

Throughout my work and training as a psychiatrist, I've focused on what it takes to create a life of purpose and meaning, to recognize and feel God's love for us, to have loving and fulfilling relationships, to have work that uses our gifts from God to lift other and ourselves, and to be physically fit and financially secure.

I found myself particularly passionate about working with couples during my training. And I discovered that not only did I enjoy it, but the couples were getting results from my work with them.

Besides working with couples, my wife and I have worked through our own significant difficulties.

There were definitely times when I thought our marriage wouldn't make it.

But, we now have the type of bond where we support each other in our differences, love each other unconditionally, work together as a team, and feel like best friends.

I really didn't think that a relationship like this was possible for us.

But it is. And it can be for you, too.

I wrote this book to try to help all of us men understand something that has baffled us for ages: our wives.

What you'll find in here are stories, lessons, and tips to understand where your wife is coming from.

You'll better understand why she acts the way she acts. Why she wants the things she wants. Why she says the things she says.

You'll learn the secrets of how to be more attractive to her and how to make your sex life much, much better.

Most importantly, you don't have to take my word for it. Read on to find out where all this (up until now) secret information came from.

Chapter 2 - What Does Your Wife Want From You? Survey Says...



I felt like my experience as a psychiatrist and husband had given me a pretty good idea of what a wife wanted from her husband to get her in the mood.

But, I wanted to make sure that what I had learned applied to many or most marriages.

So, I had nearly 500 wives fill out a survey composed of these questions:

1. What do you wish your husband knew about how to make you happy?
2. What do you wish your husband knew about helping with kids/parenting?
3. What do you wish your husband knew/did about dealing with conflict in your marriage?
4. What does your husband do (or what do you wish he did) that makes him more attractive to you (clothes he wears, notes he writes, helping out, how to be romantic, etc.)?
5. What could your husband do to have sex with you more often (what gets you "in the mood," how to be romantic, what makes sex more fulfilling for you, etc.)?
6. Anything else you wish your husband knew (or did)? Or that he knows (or does) that you think would be helpful for other husbands to know (or do)?
7. Has pornography use/addiction been a problem in your marriage? If so, what has helped?

The answers were outstanding, and in many cases, surprising.

Also, many were hysterical. I'll share some of my favorites with you throughout the book.

I have gone through all of the survey answers and compiled them into themes to help us husbands better understand our wives.

So, without further ado, I present to you...

“How To Get Your Wife In The Mood. Secret Insights Into The Female Sexual Response”

Chapter 3 - Whose Responsibility is it to Be Happy?



Before we move on to the tips and what our wives want from us, I think it's important to make one point clear.

As spouses, we absolutely have influence on each other.

If we look out for each other's needs, treat each other with love and respect, work to understand and each other, and act like we are partners in life, we are so much more likely to create a successful marriage and find happiness.

If we don't (or if our spouse doesn't) do these things, it can make marriage frustrating and sometimes disappointing.

But, as some of the survey respondents rightly pointed out, it is not the responsibility of one spouse to "make" the other spouse happy.

I think this response captures the idea very well:

I don't consider it my husband's job to 'make me happy.' I get to choose to be happy with my agency. I'm sure that's not what you meant, but I had to say it. I do appreciate when he is aware of how I am doing/feeling & responds with love. I like when he encourages me to do something I enjoy, whether together with him or on my own. I like when we communicate and are working together as a team.

Some of you may be reading this book during a difficult time in your marriage. You are probably hoping that this book will help you to change your spouse.

Wouldn't it be nice if we could do that? Make our spouse, kids, boss, or teacher change their thoughts, attitudes and behaviors to our liking?

I know what you might be thinking. **But I'm right!** Why can't she just see that?

If you remember, there was someone else who wanted to force what was right on everyone. And that's not a good example to follow.

While sometimes we think it may be nice to control others, at the end of the day, we can only control ourselves.

One of my favorite quotes of all time is from The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People by Stephen Covey. He says:

"Any time you think the problem is out there, that very thought is the problem."

If you think the problem is all your spouse, that thought is the problem.

You are taking away your own power. You are becoming a victim instead of an agent.

You can't choose what your spouse says or does, but you **can always** choose your response.

That's what "responsibility" is. The ability to choose your response.

You can decide to make your marriage better right now.

I will tell you the absolute, number one way to do that.

Would you like to know what it is?

Here we go:

Make a consistent, determined, loving effort to deeply understand your spouse.

Get a sense of their hopes, dreams, goals. Understand what happens each day at work or at home. Get to know their beliefs about life and what happens after this life. Learn what makes her feel stressed, relaxed, sad, happy. Learn her favorite foods, colors, movies, actors, artists.

As you are exploring this, be careful not to listen to respond. Just listen to understand your spouse. And be careful not to judge. This is the best thing you can do to start improving your marriage today.

You can choose your thoughts about your spouse. Those thoughts lead to feelings about your spouse. Those feelings lead to ways that you act around your spouse. And those actions create the relationship that you have with your spouse.

Your relationship and connection with your spouse are really just your thoughts about your spouse. Change your thoughts, increase your understanding of your spouse, create a better marriage.

Here's another very important principle.

You are responsible for your **own** thoughts, emotions, actions and results.

You are **not** responsible for your spouse's thoughts, emotions, actions and results.

You don't **make** your spouse do anything, just like they don't make you do anything.

As you learn and apply these principles, try not to make your objective to change your spouse's responses. If you do, you will likely be disappointed. Even if you have success "changing" your spouse at first, it may not last forever, and you will feel frustrated and defeated.

If you make it your mission to just love your spouse, and to see your marriage as an opportunity to learn Christ-like love for someone, even when it's hard, you can start to transform your marriage. Even if your spouse doesn't want to make changes.

That's because you're taking responsibility for your own decisions and being a better spouse because you choose to, not to change your spouse.

You are successful when you make decisions that bring you closer to Christ. And a marriage is a great place to practice that.

To get a list of 20 questions to start getting to know your spouse better, and to start learning how to transform your marriage, even if your spouse doesn't want to, visit mikefraziermd.com/freeresources.

This report will be a good start to help you understand your wife better. But the big payoff will be when you take the time to deeply understand **your** wife, not just the wives who completed the survey.

Here's to a happy, fulfilling, deeply connected marriage! Visit mikefraziermd.com/freeresources to get started.

Chapter 4 - Be a Full Partner at Home (Not Just an Assistant or Contractor)



If there is any one point that came through loud and clear from the wives who took this survey, this is it.

I actually got reprimanded by some of the women taking the survey because of the way I phrased some of the questions.

If you recall, I asked how husbands could “help out” with work around the house and with children.

Here’s one verbal slap that particularly stood out:

Again, with the "helping out" wording. I'm beginning to think this survey was written by a compassionate chauvinist.

I had some difficulty understanding where this anger came from at first.

But as I looked at my questions and wording, and read through all the survey responses, it started to become clear what these wives were asking for.

See if you can pick it up in a few of these responses:

I wish he knew I need help around the house, especially if we have kiddos running through the house like twisters. Some organization helps me to be a better wife and mom.

I love when the motivation for his actions is about love and not routine, or obligation. Also not to expect to be praised to the high heavens for every chore he does just because it's

something he doesn't usually do. If I usually do a certain task and don't get any thanks it's frustrating.

I wish he knew how much acts of service mean to me. It might seem like a bunch of dishes to him, but to me it means an evening of relaxing and not stressing about the kitchen.

I just wish he knew that doing something for me one time helps, but it's not always enough. I just wish I wouldn't have to ask every time.

Cleaning without a special assignment from me is awesome.

I'm not super hard to please. Just cleaning up around the house without being asked and bring me flowers once in a while.

I do wish that he could evaluate what needs to be done in the home and do it without needing to be delegated to do so.

Seeing a theme? If those are too subtle, try this one:

That proactively taking on household responsibilities (cleaning, childcare, etc.) shows respect for my time, and that it's simply part of being a grown up. That waiting for me to ask him, and then remind him, and then remind him again and again and again (but somehow without coming across as "nagging") essentially means treating me like a maid or a secretary.

I was amazed at how often the term "without being asked" showed up when it came to doing tasks around the house and parenting responsibilities.

Then, it dawned on me.

These women were not asking for a "helper" with keeping the house calm and peaceful or a "helper" parent.

They were asking for a partner. A fully engaged, equally invested, partner.

I think it's helpful to think of household responsibilities in terms of job titles.

Around the house, you can be either a "contractor" or a "partner."

Contractors

Contractors are hired to produce very specific outcomes in the course of a bigger project.

If you act a contractor in your role as dad, you might think that there are a few jobs assigned to you, and that's it. Maybe it's cleaning the dishes. Or, maybe you figure your main job is to provide the money to keep the household viable, and that's enough.

If you do decide to extend yourself and help out in other areas, you expect to be rewarded somehow for doing that.

That's what you would expect as a contractor of a business. If you were hired to fix the fridge, you go in and fix the fridge. You don't start sweeping or feeding the baby. You do what's assigned to you, and nothing more is expected. Anything extra would be rewarded, either with praise or with money.

I know I had this mindset going into my marriage. My job was to provide for the family financially, her job was to cook, keep things clean, and take care of the kids. Of course I was willing to help in household duties, but I expected high praise for doing so. And that was true even though my own parents were really pretty equal about splitting responsibilities up around the house.

The funny thing is, I didn't really even realize this until later in my marriage. I had these unconscious beliefs, but they affected the way that I approached my responsibilities as a husband and father.

I think it's possible that a lot of us husbands sort of have this in our minds, even if it's not right at the forefront. After all, The Family: A Proclamation to the World says:

“By divine design, fathers are to preside over their families in love and righteousness and are responsible to provide the necessities of life and protection for their families. Mothers are primarily responsible for the nurture of their children.”

But, sometimes we forget about the next sentence:

“In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners.”

Partners

In business, when you enter into a partnership, you are committed not so much to your individual responsibilities, but to the end result.

If you are a partner in a retail business, your ultimate goal is to buy and resell quality products to your customers, and have them return as customers. If you are a partner in a restaurant, your goal is to provide outstanding food and service to your customers to turn them into repeat customers.

You and your partner will certainly have different skills, talents, and experiences to bring to the table. And you'll probably divide up responsibilities according to those skills and talents.

But, you are willing to shift responsibilities as needed. You are willing to help out your partner when they need it, and are willing to ask for help when you need it.

You bring everything you have to a partnership because you are committed to the end result.

Let me repeat that:

You bring everything you have to a partnership because you are committed to the end result.

This is the biggest distinction between a contractor and a partner in a business. The contractor brings a few skills and gets a job done. Their main interest is their pay.

A partner is with you in seeing the big picture, the big goals, and making them happen, even if it requires working overtime, or adopting extra, unanticipated responsibilities.

When it comes to creating a peaceful, happy, loving home, your wife wants you as a partner.

Not a contractor who gets a job done and expects some kind of "pay."

She wants a partner who is 100% committed to creating a peaceful, happy, loving home for you and your children.

If you are partners in keeping the house reasonably clean so you, your wife and your kids can stay sane (and so a peaceful spirit can be in the home more), you will look around and help get the house to that reasonable level.

If you are partners in creating loving, strong relationships with your children so that they can feel your love and God's love and reach their potential in life, you won't have to wait to be asked to change a diaper or help a child with their homework.

Now, what that partnership will look like exactly will vary from couple to couple.

But, if you can commit to the type of household you want together, neither of you will have to constantly “nag” the other.

You won't be perfect and you may remind each other of things occasionally, but once you get on the same page as partners, life is so much better.

My Change

I can say that I now look at myself as an equal partner in keeping the house reasonably clean and organized. I also see myself as an equal partner in raising our children.

While I'd like to say this change came about in me due to a lot of introspection and revelation, it came primarily out of necessity.

While I was in my second year of medical school, my wife, Elizabeth, had some serious medical issues that required specialized treatment out of state.

This left me with two children under the age of three to care for while trying to keep up on a very difficult curriculum.

Neither of our families were close by. We thank God for an amazing ward who stepped in to care for our little family when we needed it.

At any rate, my daily routine quickly and drastically shifted.

While I used to enjoy time studying, reading, writing, or exercising, I now had the constant interruption of two very young boys.

At first it was frustrating, and it was always difficult.

But, slowly, I began to find the joy in being a dedicated, full time parent.

I started to look forward to picking the kids up from the babysitter after school.

I started to enjoy playing little games with the boys, reading to them, cooking them meals and feeding them.

It was through this experience (that lasted several months), that I really became invested in being a parent.

And, from that time on, I **never** thought that being a stay-at-home mom was easy.

In fact, even though my work is at times difficult, I believe it is far more difficult to be at home with the kids.

There's no break. A lot of what you try to do, especially as far as cleaning, gets undone. It's emotionally challenging to deal with crying and whining and complaining and fighting.

After this experience I better understood why, when I got home from work, Elizabeth would sometimes want to hand over the kids and relax, or even take off for a while.

And, ever since then, I have enjoyed and loved being a big part of my children's lives.

If it weren't for this experience, I don't know if I would have prioritized it as much as I do. But I'm certainly glad that I made the switch.

Outside of my relationship with my wife, my relationship with my kids is the most important and the most rewarding part of my life.

Spending a day/week/month in their shoes

While my situation was somewhat unique, I think that spending some time "in your wife's shoes" can be very helpful and eye-opening.

It will likely make it very clear why she would like a partner in the household work and not just a "contractor."

You'll probably understand better why she would like a text or call from an adult during the day.

Why she really is ready to have you take over with the kids when you get home.

Why it's very difficult to keep the house clean with kids running around, and that it's not as easy as just asking them (or yelling at them) to help clean up.

If I can make one recommendation to you to help better understand your wife's day, it would be this.

Get into your wife's shoes for a few days, or ideally a week

Have your wife take a trip with her friends, or visit family, or at the very least be out from 9 to 5 or whatever your typical work day is.

You stay at home with the kids and do what your wife would typically do.

Make meals. Do dishes. Do laundry. Get the kids ready for school. Take kids to school and pick them up. Keep the house clean. Get the kids to activities. Keep the kids reasonably happy. Manage fighting between kids.

After your week is up, see how your impression of what her day is like has changed and share that with her. A card, flowers, back massage or other “love language” token (more on this in [chapter 6](#)) is optional, but welcome.

This will likely be one of the more eye-opening things that you have done. And one of the best things that you can do for your marriage, especially if being a full partner in household affairs is a struggle for you right now.

What Does Cleaning Have to Do with It?

For some of us husbands, it can seem like a pain to keep the house clean.

This was definitely the case for me at first.

One of the conflicts Elizabeth and I had was about wiping down counters and tables.

To my understanding, wiping down the counters meant getting a wet rag and getting stuff like pasta, pasta sauce, and other things off the table. A wet table when you finished was a good thing.

To my wife’s thinking, I was “rubbing food into the table,” and leaving a lot of streaks on the table.

In her mind, wiping the table meant wiping it with something wet, rinsing it a few times when the rag got dirty, then finishing by wiping with something dry to avoid streaks.

That sounded terrible to me. A lot of extra work for, to me, basically no difference in how the table looked.

But, eventually, I started wiping things down this way.

Did I just cave in, resenting my “having” to do it her way?

No.

I came to understand a few things about cleaning that let me view cleaning to her “level” of clean in a different way.

1. **Doing this “little thing” meant a lot to her.** One of the big themes that came out in the survey was doing “little things” to show our wives we are thinking about them.

What I came to understand was that my refusal to wipe the counters down in “her” way showed her that she wasn’t all that important to me.

It was a relatively small investment of time and effort that I wouldn’t make. And she interpreted that as my saying “I won’t spend a couple of extra minutes on this, even though it’s important to you. I don’t really care.”

Spending those few extra minutes let her know that she was important to me, and I definitely want to always communicate that.

Different people feel love in different ways. For me, it’s more about the words. For my wife, it’s more about the actions and service.

2. **Relieving her stress about a clean house allowed her mind to focus on me.** This was another big thing that came out from the survey. The main point was that in order to focus more on you, mentally, emotionally, and physically, women need to feel that their chores are done for the day. Otherwise there is a running “to-do” list in her head that keeps her stressed and focused on getting things clean and the kids ready to go.

Helping her clear her head of those “To-do’s” and being a true partner in keeping the house orderly has some possibly unexpected payoffs for you. (Hint: If you want to be more attractive to your wife, be a partner in keeping the house clean!)

Here are a few responses that I think will make you see being a partner in keeping the house clean in a new light.

To be more “in the mood” at night, I have to feel relaxed, no worries or chores on my mind.

Figure out my nighttime routine and help where you can. I can’t go to bed without putting away dishes, picking up the house, prepping lunches, and putting the kids to bed. If you step in and help or take over one of my tasks all together, I’ll jump you. Saving me time means more time for him.

If those aren’t clear enough:

Doing dishes is actually a form of foreplay in my book.

CLEAN. THE. HOUSE. Biggest turn on there is.

Choreplay!! Helping around the house and with the kids during the day will make me less stressed and more up for sex at night.

3. A Clean House Actually Does Feel Better

As I worked more with my wife to create a cleaner home environment, I came to realize that I actually preferred to have the house clean.

There really was more peace in the home and a peaceful spirit could be there easier. I may be imagining it, but it even seemed like the kids fought less.

That being said, it would have been just as fine to say “this just isn’t that important to me. I love you, but this isn’t something that I’m willing to do.”

If it’s something that you feel like you just can’t do, then don’t commit to do it. Just be up front about it.

Hopefully you’re starting to see the value of partnering up with your wife in keeping the house at a level of clean you both agree with.

You’ll get a more peaceful home where a peaceful spirit can be there. You’ll get a less stressed wife who can focus more on you. And, you’ll feel good knowing you have taken steps to improve yourself as a husband and father.

What kind of relationship do you want with your kids?

Here we’ve mainly focused on being a partner in keeping the house calm, peaceful and at a reasonable level of clean.

The other big part of being a partner at home is being an engaged father.

This is a big topic, so we’re going to address it in a separate chapter.

For now, though, I’d like you to think about one question:

What kind of relationship do you want with your kids?

Do you want them to know you love them? That you are there for them?

Do you want them to be able to come to you with questions and concerns as they get older?

Do you want them to be honest with you about their mistakes?

Do you want them to learn to set and achieve big goals? To find their passion in life and go for it? To create a life of service?

There are a lot of things to envision, but start thinking about what you want that relationships to be like. We'll get into how to get there a little later.

Household Partnership Agreement

Hopefully we're on the same page now that to create an amazing marriage, a big part of that will be taking on a partnership role in household affairs, including cleaning.

But how do you get started?

You'll want to clearly define what a clean house looks like to both of you.

For example, it might be clean surfaces through the house and things in their place. Sweeping and vacuuming done.

It will vary from couple to couple, and you'll want to work out the details.

Once you have a clear vision of what a clean house looks like, and you both commit to that, you'll want to divvy up some responsibilities.

You'll want the kids involved in this as well.

To figure out how to do this effectively, I've put together a "Household Partnership Agreement" that you can use to effectively work together to create a peaceful, clean home.

You can download it at mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus

Getting kids to do jobs



In our house, we used to go through a pattern that was not very fun.

We would assign jobs to our kids.

Our kids would not do those jobs.

We would get upset and yell or nag until they were done.

Everyone in the house was unhappy.

In fact, I realized something needed to change when one of our sons filled out one of those Father's Day sheets that say stuff like "My dad is _____ tall."

On the part that said, "My dad always says _____" he wrote "My dad always says do your jobs!"

Eventually, we learned a few things that worked for our family, and some principles you can apply to yours.

The biggest one is this:

Make jobs something they want to do

Now, you may think, “that’s impossible! My kids will never want to do jobs!”

We realized that the intrinsic reward of having a clean house just doesn’t matter to our kids.

As adults, we usually feel better in a clean house. But, for the most part, kids don’t care.

So, we needed to find something the kids did care about, so that they would care to do their jobs.

This will vary from family to family and even kid to kid, but there are some common themes that work well.

Having positive (ideally natural) consequences they want and negative (ideally natural) consequences they don’t want will make it much more likely to the the kids will do their work.

If you don’t set up clear consequences, getting kids to do jobs is likely to fail. Or, it’s likely to move to you being upset and always “getting on your kids” to do their work.

For a great book on this with a very detailed system, read *The Kazdin Method for Parenting the Defiant Child: With No Pills, No Therapy, No Contest of Wills* by Alan Kazdin.

We didn’t get as structured with our consequences as Kazdin recommends, but we followed similar ideas.

One good natural consequence we have found for not cleaning up is taking away the toys that are left out. We donate them to charity.

The trick with delivering a consequence, though, is to only tell them one time about the consequence. Don’t start reminding them every few minutes and then getting mad and doing some of the work for them.

Instead, tell them the consequence, give them a time limit, and leave them alone.

When the time runs out, walk in with a bag and put all the toys in it.

Expect a lot of weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth. But don't change the consequence. Put it in the bag and calmly take it to donate.

You also don't need to lecture them about responsibility or anything like that when you're picking up the toys. Just calmly deliver the consequence.

We've also found that having a standing daily reward that gets taken away if jobs aren't done works very well.

In our house, we don't watch TV much, so the kids always are begging for screen time. They had also been asking for later bedtimes.

To align our desire to have a clean house with those two desires, we set up a simple consequence.

We turn on a show and have a treat twenty minutes after dinner.

If your jobs are done when that timer goes off, you get to watch and have a treat. If you don't, you miss out.

We do a similar thing on Sundays at church.

They start church with 3 scoops of ice cream that they get after church. If they are loud or fighting, they lose a scoop.

People are often asking why our kids are so well-behaved at church. Hopefully they're feeling a peaceful spirit and learning, but I think the ice cream helps too.

As kids get a little older, you may start introducing money as a natural consequence for work. After all, when they leave the house, the main result of work is money.

It's a good idea to make that money contingent on a job well done. And, the term "a job well done" should be clearly defined.

Then, you can have your kids start paying for things that they want. For example, in our house, our kids buy their own treats or toys from the store when they want one. They know they can earn money by working if they want it.

For a great book on creating a more elaborate "family economy," I recommend *Teaching Your Children Values* by Richard and Linda Eyre.

Chapter Summary

- Wives in the survey requested that their spouses be partners around the house more than they requested anything else
- Spending some time in her shoes can help you understand what a day with the kids is really like
- Involving kids in jobs is possible, and doesn't have to be painful
- Visit mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus for application tools

Further Reading

- *Teaching Your Children Values* by Richard and Linda Eyre.
- *The Kazdin Method for Parenting the Defiant Child: With No Pills, No Therapy, No Contest of Wills* by Alan Kazdin.
- *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie

Chapter 5 - Be a Full-Time Dad



We covered the idea of being a partner in household affairs in the last chapter.

Just as a reminder, our wives are looking for us not to be contractors or “helpers,” but full partners in parenting.

Here are a few frustrations that came out in the survey:

First of all, that it's not "helping with kids" because they're his too.

I've noticed that a lot of husbands seem to see themselves as helpers when it comes to parenting instead of a responsible party- for example, when they watch their own children they think they're babysitting and pat themselves on the back for doing their wives a favor. It's not babysitting and it's not a favor if it's your own children.

I wish he didn't say, "aren't you glad I helped?" Because they are his kids too! It's not helping it's doing your part.

That just because I have boobs that produce milk does not mean that I always have to be the one to care for the screaming baby and the baby is not always hungry when he is screaming.

This one made me laugh because I know I do this sometimes:

Every time you get stumped with a difficult question or situation don't always resort to “go ask your mother.” Take charge!

A few wives also mentioned that they are hesitant to ask for the full partnership they want, even though they definitely want it.

I'm always too embarrassed or scared to ask for help, especially after you have worked such a long day at work.

I hated having to ask for any help I needed.

So, if you're thinking that your wife does basically everything with the kids and doesn't really care if you take a more active role, you're most likely, well, wrong.

You'll form a much better relationship with your wife as you become a more active and involved dad.

And, you'll be able to form amazing relationships with your children as well.

What Kind of Relationship Do You Want with Your Kids?

Sometimes we might think that good relationships with our children just happen "naturally."

We believe that they know that we love them (because we do), even though we might be hard on them sometimes.

If we're not engaging with them very often, we assume they understand it's because we're working hard to "put a roof over their heads."

While providing the means of life is a big and important part of what we do as dads, we have the opportunity to make it something much better.

I want my kids to see me as a loving guide throughout their life.

I want them to see me as someone that they know will be there for them. Someone who will always listen to them. Someone who will love them no matter what. Someone who can be trusted to advise with love. Someone who will make mistakes, but apologize after, and show love after correcting.

That's who I want to be. Maybe you have some similar goals. Maybe you have things you would add or take off that list.

The point, though, is to make that list for you.

How do you want your kids to see you?

Also, how do you **not** want them to see you?

As a disciplinarian? As someone who is always on their case? As someone who is kind of involved in their life, but doesn't really know what's going on? As someone who will only accept or love them if they act a certain way?

Unfortunately, we sometimes inadvertently create this picture in our children's minds.

In fact, I would argue that creating this picture is the "natural."

It takes a clear vision of the relationship you want to create, then execution around that vision, to make amazing relationships with your children.

It takes some skills, some of which we'll cover here.

A big skill is **listening with the intent to understand**, which we'll cover in more detail in the chapter ["Know How to Fight a Girl."](#)

For now, though, take some time to picture and write down what kind of relationship you want with your kids.

What do you want them to say about you when they're talking to their kids someday?

You want to get very detailed with this and have some kind of image and feeling attached to what you want.

This will be one of the best, most important things that you can do to create an amazing relationship with your kids.

So, don't skip it. Do it and do it right now.

You can find a tool to help you with this life changing exercise at mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus.

Temper, Temper

As dads, sometimes we tend to be "the heavy" with the kids. We are the ones to follow through on the rules, sometimes through various forms of force.

It can happen that we get carried away with this, though.

Here are the voices of some of the wives from our survey:

I wish he could control his frustrations, outbursts can create long lasting psychological damage to young ones

His influence is eternal. Words can be remembered forever, good or bad. Nothing matters more to me than the kind of father he is to our children.

Children want their father's approval SO much. It's what they live for and that's fragile. It needs to be handled with gentleness.

Not double disciplining them. I vent to him, but I handle the problem. He doesn't need to come home and discipline them. It especially crushes my daughter who asks for daddy all day.

When he is sarcastic & rude to the kids, it's a turn off.

The big issue with losing our tempers is that it keeps us from creating the relationship that we want with our wife and our kids.

But, what's the solution?

I think the best advice on this comes from Doctrine and Covenants D&C 121:43-44:

“Reprove betimes with sharpness, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost’ then showing forth afterwards an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy; That he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death.”

What are some of the key points here?

With sharpness. When we're reproofing (letting our kids know they did something that is not consistent with their character as children of God), we want it to be about a specific behavior. For example, if our son didn't do his homework, we don't call him "lazy" or "dumb." We say "Son, you didn't do your homework this week. You're better than that. What happened?"

We focus on the specific behavior, not doing the homework. And, we listen and work together to try to find a solution.

Stephen Covey says that problems like this are opportunities to strengthen a relationship. I like to think of it that way.

When moved upon by the Holy Ghost. When we do correct our kids, we need to be careful that we're correcting and disciplining with the intent to teach and help our child feel their worth and reach their potential as an amazing child of God. If that's our intent, our correction will be "moved by the Holy Ghost" and it will be an uplifting experience.

Of course, if you're like me, a lot of times your "correction" is when moved upon by irritation and frustration, not so much a peaceful spirit.

When you feel that anger boiling up and about to explode, try to remember that anger isn't listed as one of the fruits of a peaceful spirit.

Taking some deep breaths before we "explode," or walking away and talking about the issue when you're not heated definitely helps. Those are the techniques I personally use.

And, when you do go over the top, there's a fix for that. And it's even in this passage from D&C: 121!

Showing forth afterwards and increase of love. Whether you corrected your child with a peaceful spirit of God or a peaceful spirit of anger, showing an increase of love after is key.

What happens if you don't?

The verse makes it pretty clear. You'll start to be "esteemed as the enemy."

And that's not the relationship you want.

What does that look like, though?

Later we'll be talking about love languages, but you'll want to show your child you love them in a way that they feel loved.

It might be with a note, a hug, or a kind word reminding them of how you see them as an amazing child of yours and an amazing child of God.

With my kids, a hug, telling them I love them, then doing something fun together works well.

Definitely if you "corrected" in a spirit of anger, an apology is in order. Something like "Sorry Jonny, I lost my cool. The way I behaved was not right. Do you forgive me?"

Asking for forgiveness is a great way to show love and humility to your child (this is good for your wife too, by the way). It also models to them how to apologize for their own mistakes.

Appreciate, appreciate, appreciate

You heard my story earlier about how I became really committed to being a father.

Basically, it was forced on me! I spent several months doing what Elizabeth typically does.

I recommended it before, but I will strongly recommend it again.

Give your wife some time away and be a stay-at-home dad

Shoot for a week or more. If you can only do a weekend, that's all you can do, but think of that as the bare minimum.

After you do this, you will understand just how hard it is to care for the kids all day.

One wife and mom put it simply:

I often times feel overworked and not appreciated

Being a full-time mom is a difficult and, unfortunately, often thankless job.

I've learned over time that there are a few things that can never be over-said in marriage:

- Thank you
- I love you
- You are beautiful
- You are an amazing wife
- You are an amazing mom

If you haven't told your wife some or all of these today, do it now! You will both be glad that you did.

Get on the same page

Another important aspect of parenting is presenting a "united front" to the kids.

This does something very important for your marriage.

By standing together, you help your wife feel supported and not "standing alone." Parenting is hard enough without feeling like you are doing it by yourself.

That's kind of the big theme, of this chapter, being a partner. But, when it comes to certain rules or "yes" or "no" with kids, being together is a big deal.

Several wives shared these frustrations:

If Jack asks for candy, ask me if he can have one. The little stinker sometimes gets double by asking daddy after I give him a piece.

Please don't say yes when I've already said no. There was a reason I said no. And you saying yes makes it look like your opinion is more important than mine.

Standing together also is much better for the kids. They actually feel safer knowing that there are certain rules that can't be broken.

I'll repeat that. Kids actually feel safer knowing that there are certain rules that can't be broken.

That doesn't mean you create a dictatorship around the house. It means that you allow "freedom within a framework."

It also doesn't mean that you have to agree with everything your wife thinks about parenting. You will have different opinions on what rules to have for the children, and that's ok.

In fact, it's not just ok, it's good. Having different opinions can help bring about even better options than either one of you could have thought of alone.

But, the time to decide is, ideally, before the situation comes up.

Of course, your kids will surprise you at times.

For example, what is the consequence for taking paint into the carpeted playroom and painting the floor? (This actually happened at our house last week).

However, there are some things that are common enough that it will be worthwhile to sit down together and decide what you will do and what the consequences will be in certain situations.

For a list of "rules" you may want to get on the same page with your wife about, visit mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus.

Play, but not too much

Playing with the kids is so much fun. It's the best to come home, chase the kids, play funny games, tickle them, and otherwise "rile them up."

One of my best friends plays a game called “beast vs beast” with his kids, where they each pretend to be some funny monster, like an orange eagle-lizard, then play fight each other.

Our wives love it when we play and are good with the kids!

When I see him being sweet or nice to the kids it makes me want him more.

The problem comes when we become a little too juvenile ourselves with the kids. One wife and mom put it this way:

You can't always be the fun one. The kids view dad as the guy that comes home to play with them, takes them on outings each Saturday, feeds them doughnuts for dinner, and lets them stay up late watching movies, and play video games for hours on end. I LOVE that you play with the kids and do fun things with them, I know you don't want to be a manager at home when you just spent the day being a manager at work. But sometimes I need you to be the one that nags them to do chores, makes them go to bed, and tells them they can't play until they're done with school work. It's exhausting to be the only one trying to have any order in the home. I need you to be my partner, not another child.

It comes back to what we want for our children. We want them to know that we love them. Having a good time together is a big part of that.

But, we also want them to learn values that will serve them well throughout their lives. Like working for rewards that we want, proper nutrition, and finding meaningful ways to use our time.

This is a balance, and not an easy one. But, you and your wife will work together and give each other feedback when parenting seems a little too strict or a little too lax.

This is another good time to talk about what kind of rules you want for your family (the Household Partnership Agreement), which you can access at mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus.

Know what to expect from your kids (developmentally)

Why is he throwing that tantrum?! Why can't she remember her homework?! When can they start helping with chores?! Why does he keep lying?!

Having kids is very tough. They “don't come with an instruction book,” as you sometimes hear.

But, there are some good resources out there that can help you know what to expect when from your kids.

The CDC (Center for Disease Control) puts out a checklist of what your kids can and should be doing by age, up to 5 years old. You can get it here:

https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/checklists/all_checklists.pdf

A few general ideas can be helpful though. These are based on Erik Erikson's stages of development. Ages are approximations but I have found them to be pretty accurate:

Ages 0 to 1 ½

Your baby is mainly trying to figure out if you will be there for her when she needs you. So, pick her up when she cries, read to her, change her diaper, and feed her. The main question the baby is trying to answer is: will someone take care of me?

If your baby learns that the answer is yes, they will be much better off in "attaching" to people down the line. If the answer is "no," they may have problems with relationships with you and with others.

Now, you may be wondering here about sleep. What you decide to do will depend on your family. You may end up very much on the side of being there every time your baby wakes up.

For our family, it was important to have our babies sleeping through the night quickly. This was based on the fact that I do very poorly with little sleep, and as we had more children, having babies wake up all the other kids was not going to work.

You'll hear lots of opinions on how to make this work, but for us (combined with prayer), here's what we did:

1. **Put the baby in a separate room with a baby monitor.** Opinions will vary on when to do this, but we've done it as early as a couple weeks. It can also be helpful to put a box fan in the baby's room, as the sound is similar to what babies hear when they're in the womb.
2. **When you hear the baby cry, set a timer, and turn the monitor off.** The amount of time on your timer will depend on your comfort level. We started with 3-5 minutes when they were under a month or so, then up to about 15 minutes.
3. **When the timer goes off, turn the monitor back on.** If your baby is still crying, he probably needs food or a diaper change. Go take care of that, then go back to bed. If your baby fell back asleep, hooray! You are on your way to more hours of sleep each night.

This system may not work for everyone, but it worked for us five times and got all of our babies sleeping through the night very quickly (within a week or so of starting sleep training).

Ages 1 ½ to 5

This is time for baby to explore and start new things. He will be walking around, making messes, and getting into things.

This is also a chance to start involving him in whatever you can. Have him help clean things up, help with setting the table or washing dishes, and having little jobs.

You want your toddler to start feeling like they have the power to do things.

They still don't understand consequences all that well, and this can be a trying time as they are experimenting and learning.

In her outstanding book *The Magic Years*, Selma Fraiberg, calls kids at this age "little scientists," and that's a good way to think about it. They are trying to learn the rules of this amazing world.

So, they'll drop things lots of times because they're learning about gravity. They'll color on things to see what it looks and feels like. They'll pick up dirt and mud or play in the toilet because they're figuring things out.

Be patient and try to encourage experimentation as much as possible.

The big question they're answering here is: **Can I do things on my own?**

So, let them help and experiment.

Would you like another good tip here to help get rid of annoying behaviors?

This is true for kids and adults of all ages, but becomes important with temper tantrums and other behaviors you don't like.

Ignore what you don't want, praise what you do want

I was called as the primary chorister. In our primary, there were a lot of well-behaved children, and a few who, well, struggled.

Before I learned this principle, I would have focused in on the children who were laughing, singing crazy, or falling on the floor. I would have told them that wasn't reverent and to shape up.

It probably would have worked for a little while. But they wouldn't have been good singers and it would have been hard to get them to enjoy the music.

So, what did I do instead of "whipping them into shape?"

For one, when I saw the "troublemakers" doing a good job, I would make sure to appreciate it right away. "Thank you for singing so well, Jonny." I also pulled them aside afterward to let them know I appreciated their help and spirit when singing.

When they or other kids acted up, I would ignore that and find someone who was acting the way that encouraged a peaceful spirit and good singing and praised them.

It's still amazing to me how well this strategy works.

What about when your kid is throwing a fit in the store?

Just let them flop on the floor. Don't give it any attention. Once they're done, don't reprimand them. Just move on with your day. Later you might talk about better ways to ask for candy at the store, but not right then. And, of course, if they do ask nicely, praise their asking.

This was such a game changer for me when I learned this principle.

The same trick works for food. If your child is picky and doesn't want certain food, don't say "You need to be grateful!" or "Eat that or you go to your room!"

Instead, say "Ok, but you'll be hungry," and that's it. Don't offer other food. If they scream and cry, same principle. Let them do it. Or, ask them to move to a different room to cry if it's disturbing others at dinner too much.

You'll be surprised how fast and how well this works.

Also, **your child does not really understand logic** at this stage.

So, don't spend a lot of time trying to reason with them or expect them to understand what a lie is or why they should or should not do certain things.

They're learning by experimenting and doing and seeing and feeling consequences for things.

Ages 5 to 13

At school age, children are starting to understand some logic. You can make some rational arguments with them. They're starting to understand consequences better.

We understand by revelation that the age of accountability is 8. That means that you can start to expect your child to feel guilty for wrong choices and peaceful for good ones consistently around this age.

So, for a child to understand what a lie is before 7 or 8 is kind of a stretch and don't feel bad if they just don't get it.

Also, abstract reasoning doesn't really kick in until around age 12.

So don't expect your 9 year old to really understand ideas like being "just" or "fair."

Kids are starting to make friends at this age and start comparing their performance to that of their peers.

This is a very key time for you to help your child understand something very, very important.

If you have not read the book *Mindset* by Carol Dweck, go get it right now and read it. It will change your child's life and probably yours as well.

You have the chance to help your child develop a growth mindset instead of a fixed mindset during this time.

A fixed mindset sees being smart or athletic or musical or spiritual as a gift that you have or you don't.

Now, you might say "Well, that's true. Some people do have more 'natural' ability in areas than others." And, maybe you've noticed that your child is particularly "bright" or "musically gifted."

But, according to Carol Dweck, focusing on telling your child that they are gifted actually helps form a fixed mindset. Your child thinks "I'm smart, so I have to keep proving I'm smart. I can't do bad on a math test because that means I'm dumb."

This puts a lot of pressure on your little Einstein to perform, because their identity is tied into their performance. Even if they continue to do well, they are very scared to fail. That keeps them from taking risks or extending themselves. They stay in their comfort zone so they can still be "smart."

Looking back, I know that I had some of this fixed mindset growing up. Even in college I specifically remember choosing a marketing class that was based on standard tests instead of on experiential learning because I didn't want to risk getting a bad grade. I'm sure I would have learned much more in the experiential class, but I missed out because I was afraid to fail.

Now, you may be saying "Well, what am I supposed to do then? Never compliment my child?"

Let me explain what the growth mindset is.

The growth mindset says "I can improve myself in whatever area I choose. I'll make mistakes along the way, and that's part of the process. It means I'm learning and growing."

Isn't that a lot better than "I have to be perfect"?

Ms. Dweck encourages parents to focus on process rather than results.

Instead of praising the 100% on the test, focus on the process to get there. "Wow Jonny, you must have studied really hard to get that grade."

Or, "That performance was really outstanding, Jill. You put in so many hours of practice to make that happen."

You also want to teach your child that they want to be at the edge of their competence. They want to be playing songs where they are making mistakes, because that's how they'll get better. You want them in classes where they don't get 100% (or at least have to work very hard to get it) because that means their brains are growing.

If you are doing things where you are consistently perfect with little effort, that's a bad thing.

Again, if you are doing things where you are consistently perfect (or close to it) with little effort, that's a bad thing.

You want to be pushing yourself to where you are making mistakes so you can learn and grow.

That's the gist of the book, but you'll get a lot more from reading it.

Again, praise process, not accomplishment. And, if it's too easy, that's bad, not good. Encourage them to push themselves.

A big question kids are answering here is: **Can I accomplish what I set out to accomplish?**

Helping develop a growth mindset will help so much here.

Ages 13 to 21

Ah, the teenage years.

Up until now your children have mainly been learning how the world works by following rules (yours and those of others).

In the teenage years, it's time to take a different approach.

Teens learn now by testing and breaking the rules.

What fun.

This is accompanied by major physical changes and hormonal changes that strongly affect emotions.

Moods fluctuate quickly. Friends become much more important than they were in the past. Your child is learning what it will take to be an independent adult.

As I am writing this, my wife and I have not yet entered this stage of parenting, though we are very close and are starting to see glimpses of what is to come.

If my kids are like I was as a teenager, we're in for a rocky road.

But, is it possible to maintain a strong relationship with your children through this phase and beyond?

I know some people who have. The best example is my sister-in-law and her family.

What seems to be the secret?

Listening.

That's right. Listening.

Spending time one-on-one with the kids and finding out what's going on with them.

And that's not asking them a bunch of questions so much. It's listening when they bring things up. And reflecting both the content of what they say and the emotion.

We'll go into this a little more later, but we'll start here.

If your teen comes in and says, "I hate school!" you may be tempted to say something like "Oh, that's ridiculous" or "I felt the same way."

But, this will likely not take the conversation very far.

Instead, try reflecting both content and emotion.

Say "Wow, you're upset about school."

And that's it.

Now let them respond. Maybe they'll say something like "More than upset! I hate it!"

Now you might say something like "Yeah, you really hate school."

Most likely, they will now start to tell you the story about why they hate school.

Your big challenge will be to continue to reflect content and emotion, and not give any advice or interpretation of what they say, until they ask for your opinion.

Maybe it turns out that they are having a hard time in science class. Don't tell them to get a tutor until they ask you what to do. Instead, just reflect. "Wow, it must be hard to be struggling in that class."

Usually what happens is they start to solve the problem on their own. They may come up with tutoring or a group study session or something else. Just reflect until they either ask for advice or solve their own problem.

It's one of the hardest things to do, but it will pay off a million times over.

Your relationship will improve exponentially once you really try to understand where your son or daughter is coming from.

Chapter Summary

We covered a lot in this chapter! The main takeaway points are these:

- Be a full partner in raising your children
- Envision the relationship you want with your children, and what you want them to be ready for when they leave the house, and work to achieve it
- Work together with your spouse to achieve those goals and support each other in it
- Understand what to expect from kids at what age
- Compliment the good, ignore the bad
- Praise process, not “gifts” or results
- Listen by reflecting content and emotion
- Visit mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus for application tools

Further Reading

- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey
- *Mindset* by Carol Dweck
- *The Magic Years* by Selma Fraiberg
- *How to Win Friends and Influence People* by Dale Carnegie

Chapter 6 - Speak Her (Love) Language



Jack and Mary are having some trouble. Jack says that his wife “just doesn’t care” about him. Mary says that Jack “doesn’t listen.”

Each day, when Mary is making dinner, Jack comes up and gives her a kiss. Mary gets annoyed, and Jack gets hurt. Jack plays with and riles up the kids while Mary cleans up dinner. Mary gets upset by this, but Jack can’t figure out why. After all, Mary said that she wanted Jack to spend more time with the kids.

Mary recently saved up some money to buy Jack a nice watch that she thinks looks great on him. Jack didn’t look too happy when he opened it, and now never wears it.

Jack and Mary are both trying hard to show love to their spouse, but it just isn’t connecting. What’s going on here?

An Introduction to Love Languages

In 7th grade I took a semester of French. It felt fun to learn new ways to say things, but also awkward. And, since I never practiced it, now I don’t remember much besides how to sing “Frere Jacques.”

Learning love languages can be similarly awkward at first. But, it is one of the most important things you can do to get the kind of deep, meaningful relationship with your wife that you want.

Learning love languages, and becoming “fluent” in your wife’s love language, is one of the most important thing you can do to get the kind of deep, meaningful relationship with your wife that you want.

Why is that?

Love languages are the way each of us receive love.

If you want your wife to really know that you love her and feel that love for her, you must communicate it to her not in your language, but in hers.

If your wife speaks only French, but you keep telling you that you love her in English, the message will not get through.

And you’ll both get frustrated because you’re trying to show love, but it’s not being received.

For her (and for you) to feel deeply loved, you each need to “hear” it in your own love language.

What are the love languages you ask? And how many are there? Read on!

The 5 Love Languages

Thankfully, there are not thousands or even hundreds of love languages. There are just 5.

And they are much easier to learn than Chinese.

This idea comes from Gary Chapman and his book, *The 5 Love Languages*. It’s a great read if you want more information on this topic.

The premise is that people accept and feel loved in different ways. When we feel loved, our “love tank” is full and our relationship is great.

When we don’t feel loved, our love tank is empty, leading to stress and distress.

While most of us will accept or feel loved in each of these ways, Chapman argues that we have a “primary” love language. I’m not so sure about there being one primary, but I think we definitely respond to some more than others.

Without further ado, here are the 5 love languages (in no particular order).

Quality Time



This means spending time together. Date nights, taking walks together, that kind of thing.

Chapman also says that you might know if a love language is important to you by how hurt you feel if the opposite is done. So, if your wife really loves you bringing lunch to her at work or making sure you have date night, she might have quality time as a love language.

If your wife gets really hurt by you spending more time with friends than with her, quality time might be her love language.

Tip: Planning a date will make you golden in her book.

Gifts



This one is pretty self-explanatory, though there are variations. My wife likes gifts. She says that “it shows me that you were thinking of me.” I think that’s a pretty common reason that people with gifts as a love language appreciate it.

If your wife really lights up at a gift, and feels badly when people forget a gift on a special occasion, gifts might be her love language.

Tip: Flowers, candy, or a little trinket that reminds you of her are great ideas. It doesn’t have to be something big, just something that shows she was on your mind.

Touch



Sex is part of this, but also hugs, kisses, holding hands, massages. And for a lot of women, the non-sexual touch is more important to show love (more on this later).

If holding hands or hugs really helps your wife feel loved and she feels emotionally distant when you are physically distant, touch might be her love language.

Tip: A hug, kiss, dance in the kitchen, or light touch on the arm will show your wife you love her.

Words of Affirmation



If your wife really loves a kind word in a card, note or email, or just a sincere compliment, words might be her love language.

If criticism seems to hurt her more than it does most people, words might be her love language.

Tip: A love note, kind text, or poem would be great for your wife.

Acts of Service



If cleaning up the house or picking up dinner for your wife really melts her heart, she might have acts of service as her love language.

If your wife feels especially hurt and angry by you neglecting helping around the house or with kids, acts of service may be her love language.

Tip: Cleaning things up that are typically “her” job or getting kids ready for school will take you far.

Take some time to figure out what your love language is and your wife’s. It will be one of the best investments that you can do to create a great marriage.

Letting your wife know your love language is also going to be a big help. She may be telling you all the time how much you mean to her, but you may just want her to buy you something nice once in a while.

There are even categories within these categories. For example, Elizabeth really likes when I bring certain foods home, which would be considered a “gifts” love language. But she doesn’t care as much for flowers.

Take the time to find out what “dialect” of love language your wife speaks and you are on your way to a much more fulfilling marriage.

The Golden Rule Does (Not) Apply

Learning about Love Languages was a big paradigm shift for my husband. He had always tried to show love in the way he likes it, but he eventually realized "the Golden rule" didn't seem to be working. He loves gifts, but I really don't. I could appreciate the effort and thought, but then hated feeling obligated to pretend I loved whatever he bought me. Through some frank discussions I was able to help him realize that I'd much rather spend an evening in good conversation with him, rather than him wasting time at a store, spending money on something I probably didn't want while I sat home alone. Once that clicked- Game Changer!

This is tricky because my husband KNOWS my love language, but still won't speak it. He prefers speaking *his* language. I wish he *really* REALLY understood that love languages are real, and they are what fills the other person to their core. I wish he didn't just figure "Eh, it's all going to fill the need.", because it isn't true. I NEED *my* specific need met in a specific way.

Have you ever tried to do something nice for your spouse, only to find out that they didn't really care?

I like surprise parties. My two favorite birthdays of all time have both been surprise parties. So, early in our marriage, I decided to give my wife the best party: a surprise party!

I put a lot of time and effort into getting people invited, food made/brought, arranging everything for the surprise event. As we walked up to the door to the surprise, I couldn't wait.

But, once she opened the door, her face told me that she didn't like this kind of thing as much as I did. She was nice about everything and kind, but the end result was a lot of stress for Elizabeth.

If we don't think about it and make a conscious effort, we tend to show love in the way that we like to receive it. This is normal and natural, but doesn't lead to the best connection or "full love tanks" for spouses. Usually, it just leads to frustration as you feel like you're showing love, but it isn't received.

It takes conscious effort to determine your wife's love language and yours, then to speak that language in a way she recognizes and appreciates.

Quiz

The following are real responses from wives in the survey. See if you can figure out which “love language” each woman speaks. Some are trickier than others and some are saying more than 1 love language:

1. Just simply saying I love you every day.
2. I have shared with him how important it is to me for us to talk without distractions. He knows it's important to turn off the TV, our down his phone, and talk with me about any subject. He's also learned the power of chocolate to make me happy! He brings home treats for me when he knows it's been a hard day.
3. I wish he would just listen. I am pretty open about what I want yet that doesn't seem to matter because he doesn't show love that way. Example: I don't want flowers I want a clean house....I still get flowers because that is nice of him.
4. Talk to me, pay attention to me, dance with me, be intimate without expecting intercourse
5. Flirt with me and hug/kiss me more

Here's the answer key:

1. Words of affirmation
2. Quality time
3. Acts of service
4. Probably quality time and physical touch
5. Physical touch

#4 is probably the trickiest. If your wife gives you an answer like this, you may want to explore more with her which of the love languages resonate with her.

Also, we'll get into this elsewhere in the book, but emotionally connecting with your wife through deep communication is one of the biggest things wives crave from their husbands.

If you feel like you don't know how to do this, don't worry. You'll learn how in this book.

Just when you thought you had it figured out...

The most attractive thing that he has done, & continues to do, is realizing that my love language changes over time & changing his expression to suit it. Love languages are fluid not concrete & it has meant more to me than I can ever express that he stays aware of me to notice when they change without me having to tell him (sometimes I don't realize they change either!)

Our love languages can and do change over time. So, if all of the sudden your gifts of flowers aren't doing it for her, don't automatically assume something is terribly wrong. Your wife's love language may have just shifted.

It's a great topic to bring up with your wife and to discuss how you both feel most loved in the present.

Discovering your love languages

Hopefully you can see just how valuable learning your love language and your wife's can be.

You can download an exercise to help learn your love language and your spouse's here:

mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus

You can also take the test straight from the 5 Love Languages Website here:

<http://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile/>

This, by the way, is a great exercise for a date night.

If for some reason your spouse doesn't really want to participate in this, that's ok. You can do the exercise on your own.

Also, feel free to experiment! Try each of the love languages and see how your wife responds. You'll likely be able to pick up on what means the most to her.

Consistency is King

Once you learn the love language, make sure you keep it up and stay fluent. Speak it often to keep your wife's "love tank" full.

One of the biggest findings from the survey was that while some men knew their wife's love language, they didn't consistently speak it.

That's like knowing your wife speaks Chinese, but continuing to speak to her in English.

It's going to be hard for her to feel loved.

I've found it helpful to set reminders on my phone to do certain things my wife appreciates, like send a text during the day.

Chapter Summary

- Each person feels loved in different ways
- A helpful framework to understand how we and others feel loved is by using The 5 Love Languages
- The 5 Love Languages are gifts, quality time, acts of service, physical touch, and words of affirmation
- Make sure you're expressing love in your wife's language, not yours
- Visit mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus for application tools

Further Reading

- *The 5 Love Languages* by Gary Chapman

Chapter 7 - Know How to Fight a Girl



If two people agree on everything, one of them is unnecessary.
-Winston Churchill

Two intelligent people will occasionally have disagreements. This is normal and natural. Unfortunately, a lot of us have not had good training on how to deal with disagreements, but especially in romantic relationships.

What can happen (and often does) is that people get into negative patterns of dealing with conflict that can cause serious problems in marriage.

“Demon Dialogues” and Fight or Flight Responses

Before Elizabeth and I learned about some of what I’m teaching you tonight, we had a very common pattern in our fighting.

Something would start bothering me. Early in our marriage, it was how much time Elizabeth was spending with her family. I felt like it was too much. She felt like it was ok.

At other times, it might be that I thought she was spending too much money.

Still other times, I felt like we weren’t having sex enough.

I would let the anger and a feeling of disconnection about this build in me for a while, until finally one day, I would decide to tell her about it.

I would say something like “Hey, we really don’t have sex very much and I’m getting tired of that. Why can’t we do it more often?”

Usually, her response would be to go quiet. Not really say anything.

I would feel like she was pulling away, so I would talk to her more.

“Hey, why can’t we talk about this? This is important to me!”

She would say something like “I don’t want to talk about it right now.”

I would say “Well, you never want to talk about it! We never figure things out! Everything keeps staying the same!”

She would then either get tearful and leave, or sometimes finally break down and tell me why things were so hard on her, leaving me to feel bad and kind of stupid.

We were in a common pattern of conflict in marriage.

It’s called “pursue withdraw” or as I like to call it “fight vs flight.”

Let’s break it down into what’s happening at a deeper emotional level.

What are we really looking for?

When we enter into fights or arguments with our spouse, usually we’re not looking for who is right and who is wrong.

That can be the content of the fight, but it’s really not what we’re trying to find out.

One of the great marriage therapists, Sue Johnson, explained very well what we are really asking each other when we have conflict in marriage. In her words:

“Underneath all the distress, partners are asking each other: Can I count on you? Are you there for me? Will you respond to me when I need, when I call? Do I matter to you? Am I valued and accepted by you? Do you need me, rely on me?”

I would add to this, “Do you understand me?”

Ideally, our spouse is that “safe harbor” for us. Someone that we can turn to in distress.

Someone who “has our back” no matter what.

When we feel that support is not there, we go into a “fight or flight” mode.

This has been studied in many different ways. When we feel disconnected from our spouse, we actually feel and respond like we are being faced with a threat.

Believe it or not, it’s the same chemical response in our bodies that we would feel if we were being chased by a lion. It’s the “fight or flight” response that our bodies use to respond to danger.

That’s why conflict and disconnection between you and your wife can feel so stressful. Because it is!

Depending on our own wiring, we respond to that feeling of disconnection, that “fight-or-flight” response, in a few predictable ways.

Fight vs Flight

Fight/I need connection

This is the way that I’m wired to respond to the disconnection. I try to push a response out of my wife. When I ask for something and get no answer, or one that doesn’t satisfy me, I keep going until I get some kind of response.

I’m nervous that Elizabeth isn’t responding to me. I feel like she’s pulling away from me. Like what I’m asking for doesn’t matter to her.

That brings me to the conclusion that I’m not important to her.

Now, logically, I know this isn’t true.

But, at an emotional level, that’s what I’m experiencing.

And, that puts me into “fight or flight” mode.

My wired-in response to that feeling is to pursue a response until I get one, even if it means making her mad enough to respond.

I’m thinking “the more she tries to not acknowledge me, the more I’m going to press. I can’t let her escape.”

My fear here is that I'm losing emotional connection with my wife.

You may recognize this pattern in your wife. She may want to "talk about things," but you really don't want to.

Flight/Don't disapprove of me

Anytime I try to bring up a controversial topic or something I'm concerned about in our marriage, he says he isn't in the mood to talk.

Talk to me! He doesn't talk! He will just look upset and play a game or do something to avoid me or ignore me.

I wish my husband understood that it's ok to fight every now and then. Every time my husband and I get in a minor argument he thinks it's a sign that our marriage is headed down the wrong road, even though our marriage is in a great place. I think sometimes he doesn't say anything about something that bothers him if he thinks it will mean we fight about it, just because he's associated fighting with automatic divorce. Bottom line - I wish he would bring things up about things that bother him instead of just internalizing it. It scares me that he does that.

A "flight" response to conflict is to avoid the conflict all together.

Usually it means "shutting down," walking away, or saying "I don't want to talk about it."

This is my wife's wired response.

When I bring something up, she feels like she's going to be hurt. She feels attacked and panic sets in. She wants to get away from the situation as fast as she can so that she doesn't do something wrong again or so that I can't keep making her feel attacked.

According to Sue Johnson, she is "trying to avoid my disapproval at all costs."

In Sue Johnson's words, I'm "protesting Elizabeth's distance" and Elizabeth is "trying to avoid my disapproval."

So, we used to go around and around in this circle. Over and over again. Rarely making much progress.

This "pursue withdraw" or "fight vs flight" pattern is very common.

"Nagging" usually has its roots in this.

The person doing the nagging feels disconnected and is trying to make a plea for connection, though in a not very effective way.

The person being nagged tries to get away from the nagging, creating more anxiety for the person nagging.

So, what's the solution? One of our survey respondents helped us out here:

My husband & I have learned that we communicate differently. I need to walk away to think things through while he needs to confront them right then & there (how he was raised). He would corner me & try to work through things but it would make me just yell at him. We had to learn that it was ok to walk away & come back more level headed to discuss problems & that I needed to come back sooner. It needs to be a give for both of us. We now haven't had the "cornering and yelling" in literally YEARS (about 10 years) because we finally figured this out!!!

Fight vs Fight

Another pattern of disconnection is fight vs fight. These are the couples who get into screaming matches with each other.

When either feels a disconnection, or feels attacked by the other, they go into attack mode themselves.

Couples in this pattern are always looking for what the other partner is doing wrong.

Flight vs Flight

If both spouses are wired for flight, both will separate from each other at times of conflict, leaving long silences and "never talking about things."

Recognizing Your Pattern

It's very important to be able to recognize what type of pattern you fall into when you fight.

Are you someone who tends to pursue/fight? Or do you tend to run away/flight?

Do you fear emotional disconnection in those moments? Or do you more fear disapproval of your spouse?

There can definitely be some overlap between them, but most people are wired one way more than the other.

Knowing your own response is crucial to working through difficulties.

To help you with this, I've created a tool you can use called "Fight vs Flight" at mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus.

Ok, so there are patterns to this. Now what?

There are 5 main steps you can take to overcome your marriage conflicts. They are:

1. Recognizing when you're getting into these patterns
2. Giving the pattern a name
3. Stopping before you go too far
4. Figuring out what you're really feeling/looking for
5. Expressing that to your spouse

Recognize, Name, Stop

When you start getting into your typical pattern, your first challenge is to be able to recognize it as just that: a pattern.

Naming your pattern of conflict allows you and your wife to focus on the pattern as the problem instead of each other.

Don't skip this step. Give it a name.

You can use my names or give your pattern names of your own.

Sue Johnson likes to call fight vs fight "find the bad guy," fight vs flight "the protest polka" and "flight vs flight" "freeze and flee."

Some couples have just called it "that thing we do."

Some get more creative. You could call it "the beast," "the tornado," "Ethel" or "McDonald's" if you wanted.

The idea is to be able to recognize when you're entering that pattern, then stopping before you go through the whole thing.

Eventually, you will get to where you can recognize the pattern before it starts, figure out what you're feeling and needing from your partner, and express it to them in a way that's helpful to both of you.

Figuring out what you're really feeling/wanting

I wish my husband understood that sometimes I get mad or sad, and I don't really fully understand why I'm feeling that way. I'm not trying to hide why I'm upset, and I'm not lying when you ask and I say, "I don't know". Sometimes, I'm just as confused as he is, and that frustrates me even more.

This is probably the hardest part, and what lots of couples struggle with.

Like this wife said above, sometimes we don't really know why we're feeling a certain way. And, when we're in that "fight or flight" mode, it's almost impossible to really figure it out.

There's a biological reason for this.

When you're in that fight or flight mode, there are chemicals in your body that interfere with higher brain function.

Your prefrontal lobes, the ones that help you think logically and check your impulses, get less blood flow.

That's because your body is getting ready for you to run from or throw a spear at a tiger. Your body is not getting you ready to explain why you're upset with the tiger or why it's unkind to try to eat you.

So, when we're in that mode, we end up getting defensive, yelling at each other and saying things we don't mean, or retreating until things "blow over." We're fighting or fighting.

What's the solution then? How do we figure out what's really fueling our anger, sadness, or fear?

Take a chill pill

First, we will need to do something to relax our bodies. We need to start clearing out the "fight or flight" chemicals that are coursing through our veins, getting us ready for a battle.

Different people do this in different ways. Exercise is a great way to naturally calm down these chemicals.

Slow breathing is another proven way to break the "fight or flight" cycle. Tensing and then relaxing your muscles also helps.

I have a set of relaxation exercises that you can access to practice slow breathing and progressive muscle relaxation. These can also help you sleep!

You can get them at mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus.

The 5 Fold Why

There is a way to figure out why you're feeling the way you are and what thoughts are fueling those feelings.

It's a simple but very effective tool.

When you look back at why you were feeling angry, sad, or hurt by your spouse, take a minute and ask yourself "why."

Once you get your first answer, go a little deeper. Ask "why" again or "what does that say about me?"

This will help you get to what therapists call the "hot thought." That's the thought that's triggering your emotional response.

Here's an example of what this might look like:

Situation: My wife was out with her friends.

Emotion: Mad

Q: Why did I get mad?

A: My wife spends too much time with her friends.

Q: Why/what does that say about me?

A: Because she prefers to spend time with them instead of me.

Q: Why?

A: Because she likes them more than she likes me.

Q: Why?

A: Because I'm not as important to her as I thought.

That's probably about where you can stop. When you write a thought that really connects with you and stirs up that emotion (sad/hurt, anxious/scared, angry, happy), you've probably reached the "hot thought."

Remember, a lot of times anger is masking sad/hurt or anxious/scared. So try to find out if one of those is really at the core of what's bothering you.

wives want us to share what's going on with them, like in these responses:

I wish he was more open about his feelings and frustrations.

I'm always more in the mood after we've had an emotional conversation with each other. When we've had a nice heart to heart about something and we're able to connect emotionally first.

The 5 Fold Why can help you understand what's fueling your anger or sadness, so you can share it with your spouse.

You can get the 5 Fold Why Tool at mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus.

Once you understand what you're feeling, it's much easier to share it with your spouse.

A more detailed tool

If you want something with a little more detail to help you understand your thoughts and feelings even better, you can use a thought record.

That method is called a thought record. It is a proven way to help you sort through your emotional reactions to things.

It's been used effectively by professionals for years to help with connecting thoughts and feelings.

It goes through a specific sequence of questions to help you examine why you were feeling a certain way at a certain time.

You'll want to fill this out after you've calmed your body down somewhat using the tools we just covered. You want the higher functions of your brain ready to work at full capacity when you're filling this out.

The columns of the sheet are:

- 1. Situation.** Briefly describe what was going on when you were feeling upset. When was it, where were you, what happened, who was there.

2. **Feeling.** Sometimes people want to put thoughts in here, but it's just a feeling. And really, there are only a few basic emotions. Anger, sadness, fear (anxiety), happiness (love, joy), and disgust. Typically for conflict, you will probably feel angry. But, be careful. Often anger is a mask for sadness or fear.
3. **Thoughts.** What thoughts were going through your mind during the conflict? You want to get to the thought that really brings up your feeling of anger, sadness, or fear the most. We call that the "hot thought." The "5 fold why" described earlier is a great way to get to that "hot thought."
4. **Evidence for this thought/how is it useful.** In this column, you try to figure out how this thought is helping you, or what evidence you have for it. In the example of your wife spending time with friends, you might put that in this column.
5. **Evidence against this thought/how is it not useful.** Here you get to analyze how this thought is working against you, or how it is not true. For example, you might write something like "My wife tells me I'm important to her" or "My wife makes food I like" or other evidence you have that your wife is important to you. You can also realize that this thought is causing separation in your marriage.
6. **Alternative thought.** This is something you could tell yourself instead when this situation arises. Maybe something like "My wife spending time with her friends helps her feel happy, and doesn't mean she loves me less."
7. **Action plan.** This is where you think about what you might do differently next time. Maybe you can choose to make sure your date night is scheduled so you have time together, but also that she has scheduled time with friends.
8. **How could my spouse have helped me?** Now, looking back, how could your spouse have helped you in that moment? In this case, it may have been just reminding him that she really does love spending time with him and that spending time with friends helps her feel like herself and be an even better wife.

Chapter Summary

- We are wired in different ways to respond to feeling distant from our spouse
- Identifying your pattern can help you stop it
- Take time to calm down so your rational brain can help you express yourself
- Sort out your thoughts and feelings, and share them with your spouse
- Eventually you can jump right to sharing those thoughts and feelings and avoid the conflict!
- Visit mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus for application tools

Further Reading

- *Hold Me Tight* by Sue Johnson

Chapter 8 - How to Reach an Agreement When it Seems Impossible



In the last chapter, we learned about our patterns of conflict and how to step out of them and understand what we're thinking and feeling.

As you start working out your feelings and figuring out the deeper issues in your marriage, you'll find points where you disagree.

Some disagreements are less important than others.

If you disagree over what to have for dinner, it's pretty easy to find some kind of compromise.

Other conflicts, however, have very deep emotional roots.

Here are some of the most common deep conflicts couples experience:

- How to best raise kids
- Religion
- Sex
- Money
- How to deal with in-laws

Why are these so difficult?

Each of these issues have very deep emotional connections to us. Depending on how we were raised, we often look at these issues very differently, and sometimes even in an opposite way.

Thankfully, there are techniques we can use to reach an agreement that's better than either one of us thought of on our own.

These techniques are the key to reaching an agreement even when it seems impossible.

These principles are from the book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey, which is an excellent read. These are habits 4 and 5, condensed and focused on marriage conflict.

Think Win-Win

Thinking win-win isn't the same as compromise (though sometimes it can be). Let's get a better sense of what we mean by "win-win."

The Win/Win Continuum

When we try to reach a resolution to a conflict, there are different outcomes we can go for. What we go for depends on the situation and how important things are.

We'll go through them quickly here with an example of a disagreement over where to go for dinner. Let's assume that Elizabeth wants to get Chinese food and I want to go to pizza.

Win-Lose

Here, we go to pizza. I win, my wife loses.

Lose-Win

We go to Chinese. I lose, Elizabeth wins.

Lose-Lose

We can't decide, so we eat a can of chili. This is also sometimes called "compromise." It's something that neither person really wants.

Win-Win

After discussing why we want to go out, we realize that we really just want to spend the time together.

So, we decide to make a meal together, which we both think is better than pizza or Chinese. This is a simple example, but here's the point.

When you go for something that is "win-win," the agreement is this:

Whatever we decide on needs to be better than what either person came up with on their own.

That's the difference between compromise and win-win.

A compromise is less than what either person wants.

A win-win is better than what either person could have thought of on their own.

Getting to win-win often takes some time, especially about larger issues. Sometimes you won't even get there after one sit-down conversation. But, it is worth committing yourself to getting there.

Also, sometimes you don't really have time to get to win-win.

If you just have to decide on dinner, we might just go with Chinese because it's closer, even though I might prefer pizza. In this case, the win is just getting the decision made.

So, how do you get to win-win?

It's by using a principle that we talked about a little before.

If you do nothing else from this book, implement the next principle in your marriage.

It will be the single most important thing you do to improve your marriage.

By the way, it also works great for kids, at work, with friends, at church, and with any other relationship that is important to you.

Seek first to understand, then to be understood

Some of the wives in the survey felt that they sometimes were not really understood by their husband.

This wife explained how she felt quite well:

I wish he took the time to think about my perspective and try to understand where I'm coming from. Every woman I know puts mental and emotional labor into trying to see things from her husband's perspective. Far too few husbands seem to return the favor.

Along with creating an emotional connection with your spouse, understanding your spouse at a deep level is essential if you and your spouse are at odds on a very important issue and need to reach an agreement on it

This is a simple thing to say, but a difficult thing to do.

The main idea is this.

One person (let's say the husband) starts explaining his side of the issue.

The wife listens with the intent to understand.

The wife **cannot interrupt**, give a reason why the husband is wrong, etc.

Once the husband is finished, the wife tries to restate the husband's point of view **to the husband's satisfaction**.

That means, the husband has to really feel like his wife gets his point of view based on what he said.

Once the husband feels his wife understands him, then it's the wife's turn to explain her side and the husband's turn to listen.

Again, the husband just listens until the wife is done, then the husband tries to restate his wife's point of view.

Sometimes it can help to use an object to remind each other of the rule that one person talks at a time.

Again, the rule is simple. The person with the object talks. The person without the object listens.

The Native Americans used a stick that they passed in their meetings. I once attended a seminar where we passed a ball around. (I found myself reaching to take the ball from someone's hand during a discussion about academic policy).

This principle is so simple, but so powerful. And often, so difficult.

We are very used to listening with the intent to respond, rather than to understand.

How this can work for differences in faith - a personal story

To help explain the power of listening with the intent to understand, I'll share a very personal story from my own marriage.

Let me preface this by saying that everything I share about my family in this book is done with Elizabeth's knowledge and approval. She's an amazing woman and I'm lucky to be married to her.

Recently my wife explained to me that she had some questions about our faith. To me, this was really devastating. I felt like she was abandoning me. Like she was saying that I wasn't important to her. I pretty much shut down and didn't want to listen to her. I was really hurt. It took me a long time to kind of process and deal with this hurt.

Eventually, I decided to really listen to her point of view. I came to understand that it wasn't something against me at all. She had questions that she was trying to figure out and her main concern was keeping herself at peace while keeping our marriage happy. She loved me very much and wanted us to be together. But, what I came to understand by listening is that she basically felt like I would love her less if she wasn't as "into" the church as I was. And that was scary for her and actually made her less interested in doing "church stuff."

I explained why it was important to me, which was basically that I wanted our family to be together in this life and after and felt like she was discounting that. She did a good job listening and understanding that aspect of it. But, she reassured me that it wasn't that she didn't want to be with me, just that she wasn't sure about certain aspects of the church.

Unfortunately, when I really looked at myself, Elizabeth was right. My picture of the ideal wife and relationship was very closely tied to church things. My fear of her leaving the church (and thereby leaving me in my mind) was influencing most of my interactions with her. I was trying so hard to make her see church things the way I did. I even tried to be kind of sneaky about it. I would teach church things to the kids when she was around that were really aimed at her, like family night lessons. (By the way, this is not a great idea.)

Eventually I realized that I needed to change my point of view. If I wanted my spouse or my kids or anyone really to believe in my faith like I did, I couldn't approach it from a place of fear. I needed to live what I believed myself so that I could show people how much it helped me. I needed to teach people what I believed, but then let them decide on their own and have faith in them and their decisions.

I also needed to have faith that things would work out ok in the end no matter what if I stuck with what I believed.

I also found comfort in words of the prophets and in scriptures. “The Hope of Eternal Family Love” by Henry B. Eyring in the August 2016 Ensign was particularly helpful, especially this quote:

“A prophet of God once offered me counsel that gives me peace. I was worried that the choices of others might make it impossible for our family to be together forever. He said, ‘You are worrying about the wrong problem. You just live worthy of the celestial kingdom, and the family arrangements will be more wonderful than you can imagine.’”

I needed to replace my fear with faith. Previously, I sort of pictured Elizabeth not going to church like she was falling off a cliff, and my role was to grab her to save her.

As I thought about it and pondered on it, I realized that it’s not my work, but God’s, to bring people back to Him. He is with my wife and other people that I love. He will guide me to know how to help in His work, but it’s not my work. I can trust that He wants her back with Him even more than I do.

This was one of the biggest changes of my life and one of the most important. And strangely, as I let go and trusted Elizabeth and God more, things went much better for me and for our marriage. I also felt much better about other people I loved, including my kids, as I decided to be a part of God’s work instead of trying to do it for Him.

Now there were some logistics to figure out with how we would teach the kids about church things, but once the big things were understood between us, these became relatively easy to work out.

And that’s typically how it will work with these big things. Once you really understand each other’s point of view and why you feel the way you do, some of the logistical work becomes relatively easy to decide on.

So, on these difficult issues, really first try to understand where your spouse is coming from. Then, try to help them understand where you’re coming from.

Then, reach a logistical agreement of how you will work together to reach a solution that was better than either of you could have come up with on your own. I believe that when we do this a peaceful spirit can be there and it’s really a process of revelation to find that new solution.

You can do it!

What do I really want out of this conversation?

This tip comes from the book *Crucial Conversations* by Joseph Grenny and others.

When you enter into a difficult conversation with your spouse about a deep and difficult issue, it can also be helpful to continually ask yourself:

What's my goal in this conversation?

If you can visualize the outcome you want, you can continue to work towards it.

Hopefully, it will be to better understand your spouse, to have her understand you, and to work towards a solution that you both agree is better than what either of you came up with on your own.

It can get easy to get sidetracked because your spouse will say things that get your emotions revved up.

You'll want to respond to that, which can derail the whole conversation.

So, when you're approaching these difficult topics, just keep reminding yourself of what you want. And, use your relaxation techniques at mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus!

Money Matters

Money is a common point of contention between spouses.

There are different reasons for this, but a lot of it has to do with your personal relationship with money.

That's right--whether you know it or not, you do have a relationship with money!

You may not have thought about it that way before, but the way you look at money may not be the same as your spouse's.

The principles to work this out are the same as what we already covered. Think win-win and seek first to understand, then to be understood.

But, it can be helpful first to take a good look at how you feel about money.

What have you been brought up to believe about money?

How does it make you feel to have money? To not have money?

Is it a scarce resource or is there enough to go around?

I've included a tool that you can use to examine your relationship with money at mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus.

Over time Elizabeth and I also discovered a few basic principles that have worked for us:

- **Keep track of your money.** See how much you have and how much you are spending. You can do this by hand, or use software. We use mint.com.
- **A part of what you earn is yours to keep.** Whenever you make money, you need to pay yourself some of that money. If you don't, someone will be more than willing to take it from you. That percentage varies from family to family, but somewhere around 15 to 20% is a good target.
- **Set aside some “play” money.** This may not work for everyone, but it has worked for my wife and me. My relationship with money is to see it as a way to security and freedom. The more we have stored up, the better. My wife sees money as a way to get the things that make us happy. There's truth to both of these thoughts, but for a while we struggled with this. Our solution was to have Elizabeth have a set amount of cash each month that I didn't track or pay attention to. It was hers to use as she pleased. This has worked really well for us because I'm not stressing about her spending and she's not stressing about my monitoring her spending.

If your budget is very tight, it may be time to start looking for ways to increase your income. This can come in the form of learning new skills for your current job, or starting a side business. *The 4 Hour Work Week* by Tim Ferriss is a good place to start if you're thinking about a side business.

Service businesses (such as mowing lawns, washing cars, or cleaning houses) are also relatively easy to start and require very little money up front.

In-Law Issues

This is another common raw spot in many marriages. Here's a difficult situation explained by one of the survey respondents:

I wish our marriage was only between me and him-we have a 'leave and cleave' problem. His mother wasn't ready to let go of him after his mission, and has taken her anger out on me consistently. She has sent horrible messages to me, rallied her friends and sisters to do the same, but he refuses to stand up for me. Often he'll turn on me, wishing I would let it go because 'that's just how she is.' He'll go over to his family home on his days off because his mom needs 'family time' (though it's my day off too and I'm not welcome), and his behaviour gets even more hostile towards me after those days. He would rather make his mom happy and calm, than protect his wife. This seems to happen in so many marriages! Please teach the men that they need to love and cherish their wives, instead of allowing their mothers to hurt and damage their marriage! It's okay to have boundaries with mama.

Again, there are deep emotional issues for this that need to be sorted out.

Using the thought record can be helpful to figure out why certain situations with in-laws really set you off. Again, you can access that at mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus.

Often the discussion is about setting appropriate boundaries with in-laws.

How much time is too much at their houses? What do we want to do for holidays? How close to we want to live to our in-laws?

There's no one right answer, and this takes a lot of thinking win-win and seeking first to understand, then to be understood. As you do this, you will be able to arrive at answers you feel are best for your family.

That may mean stepping on some in-law toes, but it will be worth it to your marriage in the long run.

Early in our marriage, Elizabeth and my mom had some, well, issues. Some of it revolved around my family's sense of personal boundaries. Most of my family had no problem coming into someone's bedroom or bathroom without really asking or sometimes even knocking.

Early in our marriage, this seemed normal to me. I guess I was just used to it. But this privacy invasion really gave Elizabeth a hard time. She's also someone who needs a private space to get away to when she needs a break, and when my family would come to town she really didn't have that space, especially since it would sometimes get invaded.

After doing some win-win talking, we decided that it would be best if we asked my parents to stay at a hotel when they came to town. It was one of the hardest calls I've had to make.

Fortunately, they took it well, and I think they enjoy having some space on their own too when they come to town.

So, think win-win, and also remember that your marriage needs to be the #1 relationship. If you're going to make someone uncomfortable, it's better your birth family than your wife. After all, you live with her 24/7!

Sex

This issue is big enough that the last chapter of this book is dedicated to it.

Here's a quick hint, though.

If you are wishing that your wife would have sex with you more often, pay very close attention to the chapters of the book that we've gone through so far.

It's much more about being a partner at home and doing "the little things" (next chapter) than specific things you do in the bedroom.

A quick word about body positioning

When you and your wife do decide to sit down and try to talk out a sensitive issue, your body positioning is more important than you think.

As we heard from one of the wives in the opening quotes, we want the feeling to be you and your wife against the problem, not you against your wife.

Sitting across from each other when you talk can set up an adversarial body language. It looks and feels more like a showdown.

Instead of facing each other, try facing the same direction. Sometimes it can also be good to be moving as you're talking. Maybe on a drive or a walk together. This gives a sense of moving toward a solution together.

This might seem weird, but it really does make a difference. Put yourselves as a united front against the problem instead of you vs. her.

Chapter Summary

- When things seem impossible to solve, commit to a win-win deal. That means that what you agree is better than what either one of you could have thought of alone.
- Before trying to get your own point across, really try to understand your spouse's point of view. It gives them "psychological air." Without it, your spouse will fight for understanding and it will be difficult to reach any kind of agreement.

Further Reading

- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey
- *Hold Me Tight* by Sue Johnson
- *Crucial Conversations* by Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, David Maxfield, Ron McMillan, and Al Switzler

Chapter 9 - You Are Always on My Mind (Decoding “The Little Things”)



If there was one phrase that came out more than anything else when we asked wives what they wanted, it was this:

Do more of the little things

I feel like this is almost an anthem or mantra among most women.

I don't know if you feel the same way, but to me this phrase is infuriating. It doesn't really tell me anything!

But, thankfully, our wives gave us the key to understand what they mean by this.

Here are a few answers that can give us some clues:

It's intentionally doing the simple things. Whether it's listening, actually participating in the conversation, bringing home a soda for me- not because I asked but because he thought I might need a little boost.

I'm not super hard to please. Just cleaning up around the house without being asked and bring me flowers once in a while.

Take photos of me, too! I'm always trying to make sure there's photos to have memories of him with our kids but there's only pics of me if I take a selfie. It's little, but it means you see me and care that I'm there.

Cologne, suit with no tie, little love notes and remembering to write cards for Valentine's Day, my birthday or whenever.

I wish he would bring me little things that say, "I was thinking of you today."

I wish he'd touch me more.

Looking at me fondly

Are you getting an idea? Here's probably my favorite explanation:

I love when he does small, sweet things for no particular reason that let me know that he is aware and concerned with my comfort and well-being.

Ex:

-when he throws my towel in the dryer while I shower then hands it to me while it's nice and hot when I'm ready to get out.

-when he picks up a chocolate bar for me on his way home because I'm on my period

-when he buys flowers for me because he had a rough day at work so he wanted me to be happy because that's what makes him feel happy (literally what he told me)

-when he sends me texts throughout the day to see how mine is going

- when we were dating he started buying my favorite flavor of gum and always keeping it on him because I was constantly forgetting mine and would always ask "Does anyone have gum?" (So silly and kind of embarrassing for me to look back on but I love the sweetness of this gesture.)

-when he reads a book I'm reading and really into so that I can discuss it with someone

-when he cares for and about my parents and siblings

-seeing him support, love and teach our kids to love God and to always show respect to me as their mother.

Another **big** theme that came out was texting or calling during the day just to "check in" or say, "I love you."

As I read through these answers, I came to understand what these wives were really asking for and wanting.

Our wives want to know that

1. We are thinking about them
2. We know them
3. We will use that knowledge for good and to serve them (ideally without them asking)

Now, for number 3, we won't necessarily know what our wife wants or needs before we spend time on #2, getting to know them better.

And, to be fair to husbands, it's probably not very fair or realistic for wives to expect their husbands to do specific things without asking for them.

For any wives reading this, you are **much more likely** to get what you want from your spouse when you clearly (and ideally lovingly) request it.

The idea that your husband will magically know what you want from him and do it is very romantic, but unfortunately, not very realistic.

In fact, I think this is a good time to bring up an important point.

Hollywood's vs God's Purpose for Marriage

If you go watch a romantic movie, you will find a common story.

A man and a woman meet. Often, they are at first repulsed by each other, because they seem so different.

But, as they get to know each other better, they find that their strengths and weaknesses complement each other perfectly.

This is captured by the famous line from Jerry Maguire when Tom Cruise says to Renee Zellweger "You complete me."

The idea that a man also knows and does exactly what the woman wants done, even if she didn't know it herself first, is also very commonly portrayed in movies.

While men and women definitely have strengths and weaknesses that complement each other, the idea that the main purpose of marriage is to have all of your needs met by your spouse creates unrealistic expectations and typically, misery in your marriage.

For men, there is sometimes an unconscious (or conscious) expectation that their wife will meet all their sexual needs and desires at any time.

But, here's the truth.

The Hollywood "purpose" of marriage (having your spouse meet all your emotional and spiritual needs), does not match God's purpose.

God's purpose in marriage is the same as his overall purpose: to help us become more like Him.

When we get married to someone and they don't meet all our needs or expectations, it is disappointing.

But, remember, that disappointment comes from our belief in the Hollywood script, that our spouse is **supposed** to meet all our needs.

Instead, what if we think of God's purpose in marriage--to be more like Him.

When our spouse doesn't live up to the model we had in our heads, we can look at it like this:

What a great opportunity to learn to love someone!

If we're going to try to become more like God and Jesus, we are going to need to learn how to love people even when it's difficult.

We are trying to become like the man who healed His captor's ear when it was cut off.

The man who forgave the people who crucified Him.

We can always choose to love our spouse, even when it's hard.

That doesn't mean that you let your spouse treat you poorly or fail to set appropriate boundaries. You need to love yourself too. Sometimes we forget the "as thyself" part of "love thy neighbor as thyself."

But, it does mean that we can choose to overlook our spouse's little errors and see the amazing person that they are.

It means we can find ways to serve them in ways they appreciate. Not just to “make them happy” or “change them,” but because it’s a Christ-like thing to do.

The funny thing is, when we do it this way, it is also the most likely way to help them feel happy, because they will feel your love for them. And, feeling that love is the most likely way that they will change.

One of those crazy paradoxes of love and life!

Let’s continue with what wives want in terms of “the little things.”

What Women Really Want (According to Research)

When marketers and social scientists have studied what women want in terms of relationships, it comes to two main things:

Security and Romance

Before we go into how to provide these feelings, let’s define both:

Security: the state of being free from danger or threat

Romance: a feeling of excitement and mystery associated with love

I think it’s helpful to think about providing these two things across the four dimensions of a person: body, mind, heart and spirit.

Physical

For physical security, you’ll want to make sure you’re providing the necessities of life. Food, clothing and shelter. And, if you can, maybe some of the comforts of life.

You’ll also be a partner in household work, including cleaning, cooking and caring for children. You’ll also protect her physically if there were ever a physical threat to her.

For physical romance, you’ll be getting her flowers, chocolate, or other gifts she appreciates. You’ll keep yourself looking and smelling good.

You’ll be scheduling and arranging dates together. You’ll also be giving loving touch through the day, as well as providing a fulfilling sex life (more on this later).

One of the wives from the survey put it this way:

I wish he would plan fun date nights, send me flowers for no reason, make me dinner.

Mental

For mental security, you'll let her know you appreciate and value her thoughts and ideas. You'll also stand up to anyone who tries to break your wife down mentally. For mental romance, you'll be letting her know how important she is to you and how much she loves you. You'll tell her that she's beautiful.

He randomly tells me I'm beautiful, and I can tell he means it. He calls and texts me throughout the day.

I really appreciate the sweet daily texts, random notes, kind words of affection

Emotional

For emotional security, you'll listen to her feelings and support her through difficulty. You'll also know and support her hopes and dreams and help her achieve them. You'll keep her confidences and stand up to those who try to break your wife down emotionally. You'll also support her having healthy relationships with other women, which is extremely important for her emotional well-being. For emotional romance, you'll share your thoughts and feelings with her as well and become the person who knows and loves her best.

He knows when I need a mental break, he listens to my ideas and praises me with specific appreciation.

And listen to what I say, don't try to read in-between the lines. I don't always know how I feel or what I want but that doesn't mean I'm just telling you that to avoid telling you what's really wrong.

Spiritual

For spiritual security, you will live a life of integrity to your beliefs, and you will allow your wife to do the same. You will take the lead in spiritual matters in your home if you are both (such as scripture study, prayer or other religious ceremonies). For spiritual romance, you might attend the temple or place of worship together, pray together, or do other things that draw you both closer to God or the universe of your beliefs. Serving others is also a big one here. Serving others together is a great way to draw closer. You will also continually encourage and challenge your wife lovingly to be her best self.

I wish he understood as it's very important for me to have children and him delaying it and giving empty promises it makes me feel less of a woman

I like when he encourages me to do something I enjoy, whether together with him or on my own.

On another point, you'll also want to provide mental, emotional and spiritual security to your children. This is very romantic to women. As one survey respondent put it:

When I see him being sweet or nice to the kids it makes me want him more.

Does this seem like a lot to do?

Yes, it does. And it is!

The trick is to not get too overwhelmed. Take it one thing at a time.

You are much more likely to make changes when you choose just one thing at a time.

It's also worth mentioning that some women will have a higher need than others for either security or romance. Experiment and talk with your wife and see what means the most to her.

Remember, this is a big exercise in understanding your wife better, which is what will make the most difference in improving your marriage.

Thinking about security and romance across these dimensions (body, mind, heart and spirit) will help you understand what it is that your wife is secretly (or not so secretly) hoping for.

You are always on my mind

Many of the wives surveyed wanted to somehow know that their husband was thinking about them during the day.

It reminded me of the song "Always On My Mind," by Willie Nelson.

That's what many wives want your song to be for them. And the way you show that does depend some on their preferred love language.

Now, they didn't necessarily say directly that they wanted to know you were thinking about them. But, some did. For example:

I wish he would bring me little things that say, "I was thinking of you today."

Since this particular wife was asking for her husband to bring something, her love language is probably gifts.

Gifts are romantic because they are both exciting and mysterious. If it's presented as a surprise, even better.

Many wives asked for text messages, calls, or love notes. These women probably have words as their love language. Wrapping the note or hiding it somewhere also adds some romance (excitement and mystery).

Leave me notes, send me texts, write me cards... so I can reread them later.

He sends me a text message on his way to work when he rides the bus every morning, he calls me every morning and afternoon for a few minutes just to tell me that he loves me and is thinking of me

I know that it's easy to get wrapped up in work and be in "work mode" through the day.

To help you remember your wife at home, it can be useful to set little reminders up.

Set an alarm on your phone to text your wife. I did this and it worked really well!

You could also post a sticky note somewhere at work to remind you, or add to your calendar to pick up something for your wife or plan your date night.

You don't need to let your wife know that you're using these things to remind you. Remember, that removes some of the "excitement and mystery."

Getting to Know You

We know that our wives want us to show that we're thinking about them. We've also seen that the best way to show that depends on our wife's love language. And, even within that love language, your wife may prefer to have things shown a certain way.

For example, my wife really likes it when I bring her home her favorite soda (IBC root beer). But, she doesn't appreciate it as much if I bring home flowers.

The strange thing is, earlier in our marriage she really liked it when I brought her flowers.

The point is, you need to continually update your understanding of how your wife prefers that you be "romantic."

That will take some experimentation and creativity. Or, you could take a shortcut and ask your wife explicitly!

A good question is “what could I do to show you how much I love you?”

Just asking that will win you big points and open up a great discussion. Don’t expect her to have an answer right away. She might, but she might also think of some other things down the road.

You can also ask “What am I doing that makes you feel not as loved or important?”

Only ask this question when you’re ready for the answer, though.

For a list of 20 questions to get you started on knowing and understanding your wife better, visit mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus.

Getting to know your wife at a deeper level does require a commitment of time and energy. You’ll want to set apart time to consistently connect with each other.

My recommendation (and what Elizabeth and I do) is to have a set time every day to talk, then a longer time once a week, ideally on a date night.

This lets you find out what’s happening to each other physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually on a day to day basis, while giving you time to delve even deeper once a week.

By the way, date nights were one of the most requested things from our wives. We’ll get to why in a little bit.

Getting to anticipate your wife’s wants and needs (it’s not as tough as it sounds)

This ask from our wives seems very difficult. It seems like they’re asking us to read their minds.

And, like we talked about earlier, this may be a little much of an ask.

Wives, you are much more likely to get the things you want from your husband if you ask directly and kindly for them.

But, husbands, if you’re ready for the challenge of anticipating your wife’s needs, let’s look a little closer at what they’re asking for.

Let’s review our survey respondent’s answer one more time to see a great example of anticipating needs:

when he throws my towel in the dryer while I shower then hands it to me while it's nice and hot when I'm ready to get out.

In this case, the husband knows that his wife likes a warm towel when she gets out of the shower. So, he provides that for her.

when he picks up a chocolate bar for me on his way home because I'm on my period

You may not have known this, but many women crave chocolate more on their period. This husband is aware of this, and also knows when his wife is on her period.

-when we were dating he started buying my favorite flavor of gum and always keeping it on him because I was constantly forgetting mine and would always ask "Does anyone have gum?" (So silly and kind of embarrassing for me to look back on but I love the sweetness of this gesture)

Here the husband paid attention to a repeated request. His wife may not have even been aware of asking this so many times. He could have responded by telling her "Hey, why don't you just buy some gum?" Instead, he saw a way to show that he noticed and cared.

when he reads a book I'm reading and really into so that I can discuss it with someone

Here the husband is paying attention to her interests. He goes one step further by supporting her in her interest and joining with her.

What's the common thread here?

This husband is doing two main things to anticipate his wife's needs:

1. **Paying attention.** He's watching for needs and interests of his wife so that he understands her physical, mental, emotional and spiritual state.
2. **Putting himself in her shoes.** Now that he understands his wife's needs and interests, he thinks "what would my wife want done for her?" This is a little different than saying "what would I like done for me," since different people like different things. He may not like a warm towel, but he knows his wife does.

Now, this particular husband has really gone above and beyond to connect with his wife. He is providing security and romance across all dimensions, body, mind, heart and spirit.

And I'm sure that it is paying dividends in his marriage with a wife who feels extremely lucky to be married to him.

My guess is that this husband did not develop all of these habits at once. He learned little things one at a time that his wife wanted and needed, then learned what helped meet those wants and needs.

So, start now to try to pay attention to things that your wife likes, wants, and needs.

One thing that I've done is started a list on my phone of things Elizabeth likes. It is aptly titled "Elizabeth Likes." This is a good go-to for gift and date ideas.

You can also make lists of things your wife doesn't like, or little things to remember (like the husband with gum or hot towels).

Remember, you don't need to do it all at once. Just try to notice one want or need and meet it. Then build from there.

Planning Dates - Why it Matters (A Lot)

Anything that took thought and planning means the world. Organize a babysitter!! Make decisions so that we don't have to. Choose the restaurant. Choose the activity. Just tell us where and when and we'll be there.

when you plan a date, find the babysitter too. Not every time, but getting someone to watch the kids is half the work and kinda ruins the gesture.

If he literally would plan a date, that would be hot!

I wish he would take more initiative. He's always worried about planning or doing something I won't like but honestly, I have to plan and make so many decisions all the time for our family that I wouldn't even care what he planned. It would just be so nice to not have to make a decision or plan for a few things here and there.

Does this ever happen to you?

You finally find a time to get out for a date. You get in the car and say "All right honey, what do you want to do?"

You're met with silence or "I don't know."

Eventually you end up going to dinner at the same place you always go, then maybe watching a movie or even going home to watch something on TV.

Now, getting out on the date is definitely good. And dinner does give you a chance to talk and connect with each other, which is excellent.

But, it's not romantic to not have a date planned out.

Why?

Let's remind ourselves of the definition of romance.

Romance: a feeling of excitement and mystery associated with love

When you ask your wife what she wants to do, it's not that exciting. In fact, it's kind of asking her to do work for the date.

You've also removed any mystery from the equation.

Our survey respondents made it very clear: planning a date is very attractive.

It also goes back to the big idea of what a woman wants from a man.

At a very basic level, women are attracted to strength.

You could say that it goes back to ancient times, when a man literally had to fight to protect his family.

These days, it's rare that you have to physically protect your family (though it's good and important to know how).

So now women judge strength based more on character traits like assertiveness and confidence.

Planning a date shows that you have taken decisive action. It shows that you are a strong person and that you have chosen to show your wife a good time.

You are also introducing some elements of romance: mystery and excitement.

When you plan a date and just bring your wife along for the ride, you have also given her a needed physical, mental, and emotional break from her work, particularly if you have children.

In short, by planning a date, you have showed your wife that you are strong, thoughtful, and romantic.

And that is very much what wives want.

Chapter Summary

- Let your wife know you are thinking about her through the day, ideally in her love language
- Women want security and romance. Romance is a "feeling of excitement and mystery associated with love."
- Planning dates is a great way to be romantic and to show that you are strong, thoughtful and romantic. And don't forget to arrange the babysitter!

Chapter 10 - How to Be Irresistible to Your Wife (It Starts Way Before the Bedroom)



I know that some of you, husbands, who are reading this book have one big question in mind:

How do I have more sex with my wife?

The good news is, our survey respondents left little doubt as to what gets them more “in the mood” for sex.

They also shared with us things that make sex more fulfilling for them, including some important do’s and don’ts.

If you skipped the other chapters and jumped to here, I understand.

But I recommend that you go back and review the earlier chapters.

Why?

For women, getting in the mood for sex starts way before the bedroom

For most women, having a great sex life is an extension of having a great marriage.

It's doing those things that we've talked about in the other chapters of this book. We'll review some of them now.

The quotes in this chapter come from wives' responses to the questions: "What would get you more "in the mood" for sex? and "What would make your husband more attractive to you?"

I am not making up these responses.

What was surprising to me was how little of it had to do with the physical act of sex itself, or even looking "fit" or "buff."

Those were part of it, but **much** less important than two big things:

1. Creating emotional intimacy
2. Being a partner at home (clearing her mind of "To do's")

These wives made it very clear: **the brain is the woman's main sex organ!**

When she sees and feels you caring for her and taking things off of her "To do" list, she is much more open to physical intimacy.

There are some things you should know to make sex more pleasurable for her as well, and we'll cover that.

But the biggest key is getting her brain in the mood for sex by helping her feel you care about her as a person.

It's a paradox.

If you focus mainly on having sex with your wife, you will probably have sex less.

If you focus on caring for your wife emotionally (and physically with massages, etc.), without the express intent to have sex, you will almost certainly have more sex.

This wife put it very well:

Having less expectation for every nice physical act to turn into sex. I love it when my back is rubbed or I'm cuddled, but I can't really enjoy it as much because I subconsciously know it's an installment to lead to sex, not just to be nice. I wish not every nice physical act was expected to turn to sex. Ironically, I think it more often would if the expectation wasn't at the forefront

A woman wants to give herself to a man who cares for her entire person.

Show that you're that man and your sex life will almost certainly improve.

Emotional intimacy first

We just talked about this, but it bears repeating.

For your wife to connect with you physically, she needs to connect with you emotionally first.

I know what some of you might be thinking.

When we hear say "share your feelings," I can almost see your eyes rolling.

I think it's mainly because we don't really know what it means or what our wives are asking for when they ask to "connect emotionally."

Let me break it down into some of the things that she needs to know.

She needs to know that she matters to you. That you will treat her gently, with respect and love.

She needs to know that you value her opinions, which you show by listening to them.

She needs to know that you know her dreams and goals and want her to achieve them.

But, don't take my word for it. Here are the responses from wives:

Foreplay to me is entirely non-sexual. My love language is quality time, after being with kids all day, I want some serious stimulating adult conversation! Make me dust off my brain and think! I want to know that he appreciates how I think and that I'm not just a body to him. That is how I connect.

Of course, when we are able to talk together and connect on an emotional level. That's attractive.

If he used more words of affirmation, or just talked to me about my dreams and goals like he really cared, I would be more attracted to him.

He randomly tells me I'm beautiful, and I can tell he means it. He calls and texts me throughout the day.

The way he speaks to me kindly does it for me every day.

Thoughtful notes, surprises, sincere compliments, and appreciation and validation for the sacrifice made to be a mother.

This emotional connection and trust is particularly important if your wife has any sexual trauma in her past.

Being a sexual abuse survivor I have to be 100% feel loved before I can even go there sexually. We spend the first 20 minutes cuddling talking about our day and how grateful we are for each other as people... We don't plan this but thinking about it now that is what always happens... and then well DOT DOT DOT!!!! FEELING loved as a person before emotionally sets the hormones up great

When we get to know our wives better and connect with them more, we also want to advocate for them to be their best selves.

Being a wife and mother can be very draining, and sometimes it can feel like you are losing your identity as a person outside of wife and mom.

I wish my husband encouraged me to maintain my identity. As a wife and mother, I naturally and willingly put everyone first so that now I just can't seem to spend a day just for me and feel entitled to do that. I'm sure if he were to say, "I love to hear you play your flute", "why don't you spend stay home and write while I take the kids out" or "I saved some money on that purchase, go and treat yourself to something." It would have made a big difference to me!

You want to be your wife's biggest cheerleader. Help her to spread her wings and become the best person that she can be.

Emotional strength and connection

To connect emotionally with your wife (and children) keeping your temper in check is essential.

Remember, women are attracted to strength. Emotional strength is keeping your temper, understanding your emotions, and listening to and valuing your wife's emotions.

It's not strong to yell and scream. That's what children do when they're mad.

It also means being a loving, caring parent to your children.

I have a really hard time getting in the mood, when I've had a rough day or he has just yelled at the kids or been hateful with me.

Words can be remembered forever, good or bad. Nothing matters more to me than the kind of father he is to our children

Sharing emotions - Not just for women

Besides listening to her, supporting her, keeping your temper, and helping her be her best self, she wants you to share with her what you are feeling.

And I know, that sounds frightening or unimportant or “girly.”

I used to think that way. I didn't really tell Elizabeth what was going on in my life. Probably partly because I wasn't paying enough attention to what was going on emotionally. And probably partly because it wasn't “manly” to share my thoughts, feelings and ideas.

But, at some point, I started to open up more.

Here are some of the things that I started to share:

1. **Emotions.** We can get overwhelmed or turned off by that word, but really there are only a few emotions. Those are happy, sad, anxious/scared, and angry. You might put love on its own as well. Having those five words makes it pretty easy to share emotions. “I was mad at work because...” or “I'm anxious (worried) about...” or “It made me mad when...” Letting your wife know what's going on with your emotions (and listening to hers) brings a whole new level of connection between the two of you.
2. **Hopes, dreams and goals.** I started to tell her more about what I wanted for our family. What I wanted to achieve through my business. What kinds of cars or houses or vacations I wanted. And, I listened to hers more.
3. **Worries and fears.** This is a harder one to open up about sometimes, but I was surprised at how my wife could help me through some of those things.

By sharing these things, I can say now that my wife really knows me better than anyone else. And I feel like I can tell her anything.

It's a level of connection I had never experienced with anyone else, and one that I honestly didn't think was possible.

I feel very grateful that we got to this point. You can too!

I've included a tool to help you get started sharing at this deeper level with each other. It's one of the best things that you can do to improve your marriage (and your sex life!). You can get these 20 questions at mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus.

Be a Partner at Home (help her clear her mind of “To do’s”)

We already talked about this quite a bit in earlier chapters. But, it came through loud and clear: being a partner with cleaning, child care, and cooking sets the stage for a great sex life.

Here are just a few of the responses:

Any help with the house and kids is the best kind of foreplay ever...!

Doing dishes is actually a form of foreplay in my book.

Being a good dad is actually a type of foreplay. When I see him being sweet or nice to the kids it makes me want him more. When he is sarcastic & rude to them it's a turn off.

it's easier for me to be in the mood when the house is clean, but I didn't do it all by myself. And I need him to spend some time with me before sex - I never want to jump right in as soon as I wake up or as soon as we get home from work. And I need to be relaxed - a massage or a bubble bath makes all the difference.

Figure out my nighttime routine and help where you can. I can't go to bed without putting away dishes, picking up the house, prepping lunches, and putting the kids to bed. If you step in and help or take over one of my tasks all together, I'll jump you. Saving me time means more time for him

I think this comes back down to the mental load. I'm definitely more of an emotional and mental person. So I'm way more attracted to him when he takes part of that mental load from me without asking. When I come home and the baby has been fed and bathed, or the dishes are done and the bedroom is clean, or when I've been meaning to vacuum for DAYS and just haven't gotten around to it and he does it.

Putting our infant to bed at night. I love it when he actually cleans the entire kitchen. We have a deal that I cook, he cleans but he hardly ever does ALL the dishes and VERY rarely wipes down the counters. But it's incredibly attractive when he cleans the entire kitchen and table without me asking. It's also really attractive when he helps our four-year-old clean his room or has silly play time with our boys. I love seeing the fun interaction between them, it's very attractive.

It's loving our children and thoughtfully foreseeing my needs that is most appealing.

What I found intriguing here was how important it is for wives to have some time to mentally transition from “mom mode” to “wife mode.” This wife put it very well.

Especially after helping with kids and getting them to bed, I need a break. Give me time to take care of myself physically and to take a load off mentally. Women need to be able to transition their mind set for mommy mode to lover.

For men, making the mental transition from anything to sex is often pretty easy. A view of some skin or a touch in the right place is about all it takes.

For a woman, though, it's about much more than that.

It's about creating 3 different things prior to starting sex:

1. Emotional connection
2. Mental relaxation
3. Physical relaxation

Once those three things are met, your wife is more able to readily move her mental and physical focus to sexual connection.

Being a partner in household work creates the mental and physical relaxation your wife needs to be open to physical intimacy.

Foreplay 101

Ok, so you've created emotional connection, you've helped her relax mentally and physically.

Now it's time to have sex. Right?

Yes.

But, a woman's body responds differently than a man's when it comes to sexual arousal.

For a man, touching the penis in just about any way will lead to an erection and eventually orgasm. Some forms of touch are more pleasurable than others, but you almost can't go wrong.

A lot of men apply this same logic to their wife.

Most men understand that breasts and genitals are sexual organs on the woman, so they go straight for them, hoping that any kind of touch or fondling will lead to the same excitement.

Unfortunately, it doesn't usually work that way for most women.

Let's learn a little more about the sexual response cycle.

The Female Sexual Response Cycle

William H. Masters and Virginia E. Johnson (Masters and Johnson) were researchers in the 1970s who extensively studied the human sexual response cycle.

They broke it into four stages: excitement, plateau, orgasm and resolution.

For men, these stages look something like this:

Excitement: Erection, increased muscle tension and heart rate, scrotum tightens, begins secreting lubricating fluid

Plateau: Testicles draw upward, increased muscle tension, breathing and heart rate.

Orgasm: Highest heart and breathing rates, involuntary muscle contractions at the base of the penis, ejaculation

Resolution: Loss of erection, general sense of well-being and intimacy, fatigue.

Men have a “refractory period” where they are not able to have another erection and orgasm for some period of time.

A man can get through these stages very quickly, sometimes within minutes.

For women, the process is more complex and can take quite a bit more time to get through the stages.

It's also very important to understand female anatomy.

Female anatomy crash course

Each woman is a little different, so you'll need to get to know your wife's private area. It can be a fun exploration for the two of you!

The areas you'll want to identify are:

1. **Labia majora.** These are the “large lips” that are around the vagina. They have hair on them if they are not shaved or waxed.
2. **Labia minora.** These are the “smaller lips” that are smooth (no hair) and enclose the vagina and urethra
3. **Vaginal opening.**
4. **Urethra.** This is where urine exits.

5. **Clitoris.** This is the area that is most sensitive and responsive to sexual stimulation. It is covered in varying degrees by the “clitoral hood.” The easiest way to find it is to follow the inner labia towards the belly button. Where they meet or just above will be the clitoris. (Technically it’s the “clitoral glans,” similar to the “glans” (head) of the man’s penis).

If it helps you to see images, you can search for “female genitalia drawings” if you prefer diagrams.

If you prefer actual images, you can search for “female vulva” or “female genitalia.”

These searches are less likely to turn up porn, but make sure your “safe search” is on.

Knowing your wife’s anatomy is essential to creating a fulfilling sex life for her.

Take the time for both of you to get to know these sacred parts of her body.

Here are the physical changes that happen in women through the sexual response:

Excitement: Swelling and lubrication of the vagina and inner labia (labia minora, the “smooth lips”), swelling of clitoris. Nipples become hardened and erect. Heart rate and breathing quicken. **Can last anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours depending on the woman.**

Plateau: Clitoris becomes more sensitive and **withdraws slightly**. More lubrication, sometimes tightening of the vaginal opening. **Purplish color of vaginal walls and labia minora (“sex skin”).** Increased breathing and heart rate. Increased muscle tension.

Orgasm: “pulses of sexual pleasure,” rhythmic contractions of the vagina and sometimes uterus (why sex sometimes stimulates labor), breathing and heart rate at their highest, release of sexual tension

Resolution: General sense of well-being and intimacy, sometimes fatigue.

A woman’s body is actually designed in an amazing way, where it is possible to return very quickly to plateau and orgasm.

There is no “refractory period” where a woman cannot continue in the sexual response cycle and continue to experience sexual pleasure and orgasm.

A word about the clitoris

A woman’s clitoris is the developmental equivalent of the man’s penis.

Most of the woman's nerve endings responsible for sexual stimulation are located in the clitoris, and particularly in the glans (or head) of the clitoris.

The clitoral head, again, is the developmental equivalent of the glans (head) of the man's penis.

It will be nearly impossible for a woman to enjoy sex and reach orgasm without stimulating her clitoris.

Imagine trying to have an orgasm without touching your penis. It will be basically impossible.

While intercourse feels best to you, it's typically not the most stimulating for the woman.

That's because during intercourse, the clitoris is getting indirect (or even zero) stimulation.

You will need to experiment to find the ways that your wife most enjoys and responds to clitoral stimulation.

Using some kind of lubricant (like K-Y Jelly) can be important as the clitoris is very sensitive and touching it roughly is more likely to irritate than stimulate her.

Some couples also find that using sex toys, like a vibrator, can give the clitoris very enjoyable stimulation for the woman.

If you're operating in the dark, the easiest way to find the clitoris is to feel for the smooth inner lips (labia minora), then follow those up (toward the belly button) to where the lips join together.

During sexual arousal, when the woman is coming close to orgasm (in plateau phase), the clitoris will retract slightly into the clitoral hood.

This is a good sign. That combined with a purplish color of the labia minora mean she's very close to orgasm (in plateau phase). Keep doing what you're doing!

Our sexual relationship changed when he began taking an interest in learning how to turn me on and helping me climax. When sex moved beyond just having him orgasm and he made sure I was satisfied that is when I became more interested. I have had to learn more about myself and expand my knowledge about sex, but that is what has helped increase our intimate relationship.

A great book for further reading on this subject is *The Act of Marriage* by Beverly LaHaye and Tim LaHaye. They are Christian authors and treat the issue of sex directly, but with respect.

Breasts and clitoris as dessert, not appetizer

Now, for some of you reading, you will focus on the idea of the clitoris being the equivalent of the man's penis and figure "great! Just jump straight there and we'll be good to go!"

While this may work for some women, for most, going straight there (or straight to the breasts) without your wife going through enough of the excitement phase will more likely irritate than stimulate her.

Here's what a few of our survey respondents had to say about this:

I love sex and want more but going straight for the nipples or crotch every single time we're alone doesn't do it. Talk to me and make out with me first. It will get you what you want 95% of the time.

Just grabbing my breast and playing with my nipples is not key. It's a gamble and most of the time just annoying. I know my husband is not the only one who does this. Seriously guys, touch our hearts and you'll get the green light to touch everything else.

Can I tell you what doesn't get me in the mood? Maybe it's the next question, but if it isn't...lightly playing with my breasts - don't get me wrong. I love to have them played with during intercourse, but lightly tracing on them with your finger. It makes me itchy and I hate it (and can't bring myself to tell him)

When I want a back rub- I really do mean I want a back rub. Not a 10 second back rub that turns into a breast rub

Don't just grope me and expect that to turn me on. I'm touched all day by kids and you pawing at me doesn't make me feel wanted it makes me feel "over" stimulated

While you may wish your wife would come up and just start fondling you, that typically won't work for your wife.

So, what does help create that physical excitement phase?

The Right Appetizers Before Sex

Physical Foreplay

There were 5 things that were mentioned over and over by the hundreds of women who took the survey.

Again, several wives mentioned that these precursors to sex are better done without necessarily “needing” to have sex follow.

You may have times where you just get to “first base.” But, just like in baseball, getting to first base more often greatly increases your chances of scoring.

Here are the 5 most mentioned physical “appetizers” that women appreciate to get them more “in the mood” for sex (in other words, what helps them build up through the excitement phase):

1. Look good, smell good

I was surprised at how little the physical fitness of a husband came up as an answer to how to be more attractive to wives.

It did come up as an answer, and it’s smart to keep physically fit for health reasons, but it was definitely not the most mentioned way to be physically attractive to your wife.

Instead, far and away the theme was to **dress nicely, be groomed well, and to smell good.**

I appreciate that he keeps his hair trimmed and like it when he wears a button-down tucked in shirt and cologne.

I LOVE when he gets a haircut. I wish he'd do that more frequently instead of waiting till he looks like a shaggy person before getting it cut again. A nice untucked button up shirt always makes me want him

I wish he brushed his teeth better but that could be pregnant hormones talking.

I wish he took more care about his appearance/clothes.

Wearing well fitting, fashionable clothes. - Keeping beard and body hair neatly trimmed. - Brush teeth before intimacy

He looks really great when he wears nice jeans and any shirt that is not from 10 years ago. I also really like it when he gets a good haircut and grows facial hair.

Impeccable hygiene is all I need physically.

Don't think it's sexy to be dressed and smell like an oily toilet

He takes the time to make sure he is well groomed and smells good

I wish he would wear nice shirts and not the ripped-up band tees from high school.

Don't tell me about the trip to the toilet. Wear cologne I love.

That last answer reminded me of another theme, which was to avoid talk about bodily functions and habits like picking your nose. Women aren't typically into those kinds of behaviors.

Let's face it, men and women are different! Women like things...well...not gross! If you want your woman to be into you, don't let her see you pick your nose, or scratch your balls. Showers and brushing your teeth are DAILY habits, Haha.

2. Kissing (making out)

Kissing and making out were the **most mentioned** physical thing that men could do to get their wives more in the mood (besides hygiene as mentioned above).

He could make out and kiss me more

I would love for him to make out with me more

A good make out after the kids go to bed. A peck on the lips just isn't enough

Actually make out with me without trying to have sex right away

More kissing. It's like we got married and we quit kissing he just rubs, grabs and does the deed. He does foreplay but I want it to include the passionate kissing like we were forbidden to have sex and that's all we could do was make out. The passion is amazing then.

I'm a very kissy person when it comes to him, so I'm always down for a makeout session, with or without sex.

The mouth and lips have some of the most nerve endings in the whole body. Kissing activates large portions of the brain and leads to more arousal throughout the body.

3. Back rubs (that you don't demand or expect to turn into sex)

Back rubs came up in two ways. One was to not expect every back rub to turn into sex. The other was that it was a great way for wives to be more in the mood for sex.

What's the takeaway? Think of a back rub as a way to increase physical touch and sensuality with your wife. A way to get to first base. Don't expect it to always be a home run, but don't be surprised if it does.

More foreplay. Back massages.

Massage then kissing.

Back rubs. As silly as it sounds, back rubs turn me on so much. But he shouldn't make it obvious that he wants sex out of it.

Having less expectation for every nice physical act to turn into sex. I love it when my back is rubbed or I'm cuddled, but I can't really enjoy it as much because I subconsciously know it's an installment to lead to sex, not just to be nice. I wish not every nice physical act was expected to turn to sex. Ironically, I think it more often would if the expectation wasn't at the forefront

He could use his hands to caress my skin and not try any funny business before I am ready and initiating sex. This always makes me feel appreciated and loved and women want to give themselves to a man who loves them

Back rubs show physical attention and increase physical intimacy. They also cause physical relaxation, which is an important part of a woman's preparation for physical intimacy.

Massage also starts increasing blood flow throughout the body, which starts to prepare the body for more sexual touch and intimacy.

4. Hugs from behind

I don't know why but giving me hugs from behind always gets me in the mood.

Continue to be spontaneous in acts of desire. For example, he'll surprise me with a hug from behind

He could sneak up and hug me from behind (it works 90% of the time).

This particular technique was also verified by a female couple's therapist with 20 years of experience, Charise Casiano-Medeiros, who recommends this technique to her men who are wanting to have more sex with their wives.

5. Showers together

I love back massages and taking showers together. That is an immediate turn on.

Women love shower sex

Getting in the shower with me unexpectedly!!

Write me notes, do the dishes, shower with me

Flirt early in the day.. send romantic texts... candles in the bedroom.. jump in the shower with me.. a good makeout session

Physically, showers increase blood flow due to the warm water. Directing that warm water to the breasts and genitals can increase arousal and make shower sex that much more enjoyable.

Setting the Stage - Mental Foreplay

As we mentioned before, the brain is the woman's most important sex organ.

The wives who took this survey helped us understand how to start building anticipation for sex throughout the day.

Most of this has to do with creating emotional intimacy, as we've already discussed.

The more that your wife sees that you care about her emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, and that you want to be close to her in those ways, the more open she will be to sex.

One of the biggest themes that came out was to use your phone to connect with your wife, instead of having it create disconnection.

Sending messages through the day:

Just remembering to say I love you or telling me I'm pretty. Simple things throughout the day make me happy.

If he'd show more simple gestures like hugs and kisses throughout the day. Send me sweet, not suggestive, messages on the phone.

For me... I need to be scheduled. If he gives me hints throughout the day then I'm good when he gets home.

Texts, hint dropping, surprise kissing

Texting more during the day, more compliments and more soft and tender touch throughout the day.

He randomly tells me I'm beautiful, and I can tell he means it. He calls and texts me throughout the day.

Eliminating phone distraction:

I also would appreciate if he would put down his freaking phone!

Spending time with just me. No phone or Ipad.

He knows it's important to turn off the TV, turn down his phone, and talk with me about any subject.

A big problem is his and or my phone. It's so engrossing. It prevents us from having sex more often and noticing when each other needs help.

Use your phone to connect with your wife through the day. Show her that she's on your mind in ways besides sex.

That will lead to her being more open to your sexual advances.

Spiritual Foreplay? Yes, it exists

We'll remind ourselves again that women are attracted to strength.

One of the most important strengths in the faith (and most religions) is strength of character.

That means making and keeping promises. Being a man of your word. Being of service to other people. Making a contribution in the world.

In the faith, it also means taking the lead in spiritual matters in the home, such as scriptures, prayer and family home evening.

Here's what wives had to say about spiritual foreplay:

He sometimes asks which of his underwear I like for sexy times. He has no idea that I find his garments the sexiest. It all has to do with the man he is and the covenants he's striving to keep. That's sexy

He's most attractive to me when he's fulfilling his church calling and using the priesthood.

Having drive, motivation, and morals are sexy.

Anytime I see him interacting with someone else in a truly selfless way, thinking of their well-being entirely before his own, with no thought to what the cost will be to him- that just melts my heart.

He wears his armor of god every day. He is so diligent in praying and reading his scriptures. It puts me in awe everyday.

I find him most attractive when he's using the Priesthood. I love that he is worthy of it, and I love to watch him be able to help others with it. I also love to watch him interact/play with our children!

You heard it here first. Being a stand-up member of the Church is great for your sex life.

The Final Word by Jeffrey R. Holland

I kept the chapter on sex for last because at its best, sex is the physical manifestation of complete connection, trust and love with your spouse.

When you build a great relationship across the mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, a great physical and sexual relationship is the physical manifestation of that.

In his talk “Souls, Symbols and Sacraments,” he makes this amazing point:

...may I suggest that human intimacy, that sacred, physical union ordained of God for a married couple, deals with a *symbol* that demands special sanctity. Such an act of love between a man and a woman is—or certainly was ordained to be—a symbol of total union: union of their hearts, their hopes, their lives, their love, their family, their future, their everything.

When I read this the first time, I felt like I finally understood what sex is supposed to be.

I understood why we wait until marriage to truly “give ourselves” to each other.

It's the symbol of total union between two people: body, mind, heart and spirit.

Treat it this way and your sex life will be better than you could have imagined.

Chapter Summary

- To be “in the mood,” most women need to feel emotional connection first, and to have their minds clear of “To do’s.” Connect and help clear those “To do’s” to help “set the mood.”
- Engage in physical, mental, emotional and spiritual foreplay throughout the day
- Understand the female sexual response cycle, and act accordingly
- Treat sex as it’s meant to be: a symbol of total union between you and your spouse

Further Reading

- *The Act of Marriage* by Beverly LaHaye and Tim LaHaye
- Souls, Symbols and Sacraments by Jeffrey R. Holland, BYU Address,
https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/jeffrey-r-holland_souls-symbols-sacraments/

Chapter 11 - What Do I Do Now?



After going through this book, I imagine there will be a few different responses.

One will hopefully be:

Wow! This was really great. I understand my wife (or myself) better now and this really helped our marriage.

If this was your response, that's great! Take the following steps:

1. Visit mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus to apply these principles and learn about how to take your marriage to the next level.
2. Send me an email at dr.mike@mikefraziermd.com to let me know how this helped you. My purpose in all of this is to help marriages, and I love to hear when that happens!

Another will likely be:

Geez, Dr. Mike. My wife is asking too much of me! This is overwhelming!

1. Allow yourself to feel overwhelmed for a little bit
2. Choose **1 thing** you'd like to try to help improve your marriage. Choose one that you feel like you can follow through on. Making a small, successful change build on itself, allowing you to build on that success and make bigger changes.
3. As a member of The Super Man System, we will be doing just this. So, stay tuned and work with us as we improve one thing, one month at a time

4. Let your wife know you're working on that one thing
5. Visit mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus for tools to help you follow through and create a happier, more fulfilling marriage

Finally, you might think:

This is all great, but I need more help in my marriage.

1. Congratulate yourself for recognizing this
2. Visit mikefraziermd.com/member-bonus to get some tools and resources you can start using right away
3. Contact me at dr.mike@mikefraziermd.com to see if individual or couples coaching would be a good fit for you
4. Continue to work The Super Man System. One month at a time, one aspect of becoming a stronger man at a time.

Thank you and here's to creating the marriage that you want to last forever!

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