MARS VENUS

Dating
For Couples and Singles

Hip relationship advice from the girl who learned it with her ABCs

Forward by John Gray, Ph.D
author of Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus

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Mars Venus Dating
Hip Relationship Advice From
The Girl Who Learned it with Her ABCs

Lauren Gray
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I have read this book again and again, and each time I marvel at Lauren’s clarity, simplicity and brilliance in answering the most frequently asked questions about dating and romance. In the first part of Mars Venus Dating Lauren answers questions from Venus and in the second she answers questions from Mars. The insights throughout, however, are valuable to everyone on Earth.

By responding to readers in her online blog at MarsVenus.com for the past five years, she has been able to reveal and articulate new relationship insights to overcome the unique challenges we face today.

Although many of the insights in this book about men, women and relationships are directed at dating singles, if you are already married or in a serious relationship her practical and pithy answers will also apply to you. Reading each page you will smile or laugh out loud as you see yourself or your partner described in such a playful manner. You will feel comforted to know you are not alone. By taking her wit and wisdom to heart you can avoid much of the frustration and disappointment in your pursuit of a loving relationship.

Mars Venus Dating is a companion book to Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus. It’s so much fun to see the insights that I have been teaching for over thirty years applied in such a modern and relevant manner. Sharing these ideas through the lens of her own personal experience and from the female perspective, Lauren has added a much needed new dimension to the now classic ideas of Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus.

Her voice is unique, real and authentic. Her compassionate insights will change your life forever. As you turn each page you will feel like she is sitting next to you like a big sister or wise sage supporting and guiding you in your journey to find love.
Lauren has grown up in a family where Mars Venus insights are as common as water is to a fish. She’s my daughter, after all. She was two years old when she first attended one of my Mars Venus seminars while being held in her mother’s arms in the back of the room. Years later in high school she was asked by her drama teacher to give an impromptu presentation imitating someone she knew. She stood up and playfully imitated me teaching Mars Venus. She got an A and later told me what she said. I was amazed that the examples she shared I had not talked about since that first seminar she attended fifteen years before. She said the words just flowed out of her.

I am now convinced that every generation can be an improvement on the previous one. After reading her words, I think you will be convinced as well. Wisdom in, more wisdom out. Although her ideas resonate with mine, they are hers and completely original. Lauren’s words and insights flow so effortlessly you will not be able to put this book down and I am sure you will want to read it again and again and share it with all your friends. Enjoy!
Let’s start at the very beginning, a very good place to start…Do Re Mi, A-B-C, men and women are different. That’s pretty much where all this genius started.

In 1993 my Dad wrote a book that changed the world. *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* introduced a brand new context to think about the genders. Men are from Mars and women are from Venus; two completely different planets with different languages, different customs, different brains, different hormones, different genitals...the list goes on. The problem, he said, was that we moved to earth to be together and forgot that we are fundamentally different. Now, today we can either use those differences to our advantage, as was our original intention in “moving in together,” or we can keep trying to pretend like our partners are just like us and suffer the consequences.

What consequences you may ask? Well, it’s not the G-D will smite you down kind of consequence and you won’t be swarmed by locusts but at times it can feel just as painful. When we forget our partners are different from us, when we forget to give them the space to be different, when we put them in a little box of how they should behave according to our limited intuitive understanding, we suffocate the authentic soulful light and potential of romance as it is meant to be. When the light goes out we suffer from dissatisfaction in our relationships, the pattern of ‘good in beginning then it goes south’, not being able to make a lasting connection, not feeling like your partner is your biggest ally and bestest friend...etc. These aren’t realities we should settle for. This is isn’t how love is supposed to be. This is an unnatural state for romantic relationships. We may be from different planets but the universe brought us together for a reason, we are MFEO (made for each other).
So how do we get that perfect ideal love? I’m going to go out on a limb and say that you’ve probably already tried everything you can think of but still the opposite sex remains a mystery. They just don’t respond to you the way they’re supposed to! Some claim the definition of insanity is doing something over and over again and expecting different results. This is not technically the definition but if you’ve ever been in a relationship with someone then you know, doing the same well-intentioned thing over and over again and still watching the chasm between you and your sweetie widen despite those best efforts, well, it can definitely drive you insane. (In which case, you’d technically “be in a state of madness.”)

So let’s STOP THE MADNESS!!! We have to learn right now that our instincts don’t serve us when it comes to the opposite sex. In fact, some of the things I will teach you will feel completely counterintuitive. But you just have to keep reminding yourself that you’re partner isn’t “crazy,” your date isn’t trying to give mixed signals, and the opposite sex is not out to get you. They’re aliens.

Some of us find security in the face of conflict by blaming the other guy. You can righteously comfort yourself with phrases like, “Well, I’m being a loving partner,” “I was right to say what I did,” “It’s not my fault that s/he’s sensitive, overreactive, and touchy.” But when you’re all alone, brokenhearted or you still aren’t happy in your relationships, those phrases get less and less comforting. After all, if it’s always “the other guy’s” fault, then you’re not really in control to change anything for the better.

The first step toward creating the love life you want is to take responsibility for your part in the relationship and learn what you did to contribute to the current dynamic; whether that’s being single not by choice, repeating bad dating patterns, fighting with your partner, not speaking with your partner, or not having sex. The second step is to learn what to do differently in order to inspire the best out of your partner, which will in turn bring out the best in you. The third step is to relish in, appreciate and celebrate in your happy ending (literally and figuratively.) There you go, steps 1-2-3, Do-Re-Mi, A-B-C. It sounds simple and I’ll make it as simple as it gets but I’m not going to lie: this is a journey, this takes practice, you will make mistakes and that’s quite all right.

But if you can, why make your own mistakes when you can learn from someone else’s? That’s what this book is for. I’ve been writing dating advice for 5 years now and these are some of my favorite Q and A’s, some of which have never even been made public! Here you can benefit from the lessons learned from real life scenarios, dramas and heartaches without actually having to sweat them out yourself. My advice may be
pointed toward these specific stories but the teaching points I share are relevant and applicable to everyone wanting a better understanding of the opposite sex.

The Mars Venus material has been criticized for being too “heady” as in you have to think “too much” before you talk. People have accused this method as being inauthentic. To put this criticism in perspective I would like to pose a question: did you take a language in school? I took Spanish and when learning a new language I had to think about the translation before I opened my mouth to talk so that I could communicate my point clearly, not accidentally offend anybody and ultimately so that I could get what I wanted whether it be an A grade or a trip to the bathroom (Puedo ir al bano por favor?) I’m not asking you to do anything more or less than that.

I promise you that the advice you’ll find here will support ideals like following your heart, sharing your true authentic self and acting from a place of love. The difference is that you’ll have the practical tools to get results out of those ideals. I’m going to teach you how to receive love the way your partner gives it, how to give love in a way you’re your partner can receive it and how to train your partner to love you the way you want to be loved. I’m going to show you how to get what you want and love what you have.

Men and women are different. Fact. These fundamental differences can drive you crazy, bring you down, and spark a cycle of anger, disappointment, and resentment. But because we are different, we are potentially complementary. We are uniquely capable of supporting each other to be the best version of ourselves in the world. Do you want that for you, your partner and your relationships? I can teach you how to get that…with the help of Jenna, Kyle, Heather, Patrick, Kennedy etc. You’ll meet them later. ;)

Ladies First
The Pick Up

You don’t need a clever pick-up line to get a guy interested. The art of attracting a man isn’t through being aggressive but rather through being proactively receptive to a man’s advances.
Hey Lauren,

I guess I have always avoided becoming intimate with a guy because I was full of fear. But now I feel like as I am growing up and getting over these issues that I am ready for a relationship. I am a little on the shy side and am just wondering how I can attract a guy or a situation for an opportunity to be asked or ask a guy out?

-Jenna

Hi Jenna,

Congratulations on opening yourself up to a relationship. Believe it or not, the time you’ve spent alone will actually help to serve any future relationship you have. You see, your partner should be your dessert not your main meal and when you spend time creating a life full of hobbies, work, school, family and friends, you ensure that you don’t rely on your partner for everything. This is a great beginning for a relationship. Now you just need the guy.

When it comes to getting asked out, you’ll be surprised how easy it is. Once you put out the intention that you want a man, they become more aware and attracted to you. You don’t need to hunt or flirt aggressively to land a date. You don’t need to get hair extensions or wear tight revealing clothing either. (You’ll certainly get attention that way but it’s probably not the kind you’re looking for.) You just need to be pro-actively receptive to the men around you; they’ll do all the work, you just need to give them the go-ahead. Even that small invitation can be nerve wracking if this is brand new so here’s how to attract a man in 3 easy steps:
Okay, those “easy” steps actually look pretty daunting laid out like that so let’s talk about them. I want you to make eye contact with everyone. Throw your shoulders back and smile at everyone. Confidence and friendliness are extremely attractive. When you are in line at the grocery store, sitting at a coffee shop, at the bus stop (wherever) strike up conversations with everyone. I say everyone because, as a fellow shy person, the second I think a guy is cute I completely clam up and act aloof, like I don’t care what he thinks. This is purely a defense mechanism so that I am not vulnerable to being rejected. But when you practice flirting (in the form of open, friendly looks and communication) with everyone then it becomes easier to do it around the guys that interest you.

It’s worth it to know that most guys are terrified of approaching a woman. They genuinely have no idea what to say. So when you talk to them, don’t worry about sounding smart or funny or even relevant; say anything and they will be eager to chat back. Just remember to keep it light and positive. Men are attracted to happy women.

My technique for starting conversations with people is I always give them more information than they ask for. For example, when someone says, “How are you?” I say, “Great. I just spent the weekend at a beach house with some friends. We made a bonfire and ate s’mores. Don’t you love s’mores?” Or when someone says, “How is your day going?” I say, “It’s been lovely but I have this song stuck in my head and it’s driving me crazy. Do you know it?” and then I hum some of it. It may sound crazy and outlandish but people love conversations that open up for fun and silly communication. Especially men. If they act cold and aloof, you can be sure that they are absolutely terrified of talking with you. So if they don’t respond, don’t take offense. Brush it off; pat yourself on the back for practicing your new skills in “pro-ceptivity” and move on.

If you do wind up in a longer conversation and find you have something in common, like hiking, music, sports, cooking etc., suggest that you get together and do that common interest sometime (preferably meeting in a public place for safety’s sake.) Give him your number and say, “Cool, I look forward to hearing from you.” At this point, let it go. If he doesn’t call, no worries. If he does, fantastic!
The important thing to remember is that you have to put out a lot of lines before a fish (worthy of your love) will catch. So stay positive, practice being friendly and outgoing, and be patient. Best of luck and don't forget to have a little fun!
Hooking Up

Just because you feel a mutual attraction and connection to a man doesn’t mean he wants a relationship with you.
Dear Lauren,

I met this guy (a professional surfer!) over vacation. Things got a little crazy and we ended up sleeping with each other that night. Then we met up at the bar the next night and ended up in bed again. The next morning he said, “It was very nice meeting you, I’ll call you when I come to your hometown next month.” He was passing through for a surfing tournament. The next month rolled by and I sent him a text, but nothing back! Did I do something wrong? How do I read guys and not let it get to me emotionally? Or if I did do something wrong, how can I prevent it from happening next time?!

-Julia

Hi Julia,

You did nothing “wrong,” as long as your intention was to have a super fun casual hook up. You both had a great time, after all. A hot fling with a studly surfer? Sounds fun to me! However, if your intention was to create a lasting connection with this man then, yes, you did something “wrong.”

Here’s the deal, just because he didn’t call you doesn’t mean he was never interested. He was; he genuinely enjoyed your company. But now he’s over it. And that’s okay. Don’t take it personally. It has nothing to do with how pretty, charming, smart, or sexy you are. It has nothing to do with something you said that he might have misunderstood or took offense to. It has nothing to do with you! Casual affairs rarely last. It’s just the nature of the game. He probably met someone else in the mean time or just moved on.

You mentioned that this type of rejection gets to you emotionally. There are two ways to avoid being vulnerable to those feelings. One: you can come into the fling with zero expectations of the other person, fully
living in the moment, and fully prepared to move on after you part. Or two: you don’t play the game in the first place.

Men don’t move on because they’re douchebags and they can’t keep their dick in their pants. They move on because you haven’t taken the time to nurture a connection with them. Men bond to women by pursuing them, taking them out on dates, learning how to make them smile, how to meet their needs, etc. The more of a courtship there is, the stronger that bond grows.

This just wasn’t done here. You never gave him a chance to bond with you. So, the minute you were out of sight, the bond broke. I’m not surprised. After only two nights of drunken sex, it was flimsy to say the least.

When you are serious about wanting a lasting relationship, build your connection through going on dates and allow the man to pursue you before you jump into bed with him.

Men are always going to want sex. It’s the first thing they think of when they see a beautiful woman. Sure, sex can lead to a relationship, I’m not saying otherwise. But when a man has sex with a woman without a bond, he genuinely doesn’t know if he’s interested in pursuing things further. Having sex with him today is no guarantee he will want you tomorrow.

John Gray always says, “If you give men what they want, they don’t realize they need you.” Yes, when a guy comes on to you, it’s flattering. It’s only natural that you’d like to make him happy by hopping into bed and making all his wildest dreams come true. I’m sure it would make you happy too. But if you want a lasting connection, if you want to imprint yourself on his heart so that he cannot forget you and he cannot live without you, then don’t jump into the sack before the bond is forged.

No matter what you are looking for, I suggest that you don’t look at this event with regret. It lead you to write in and learn from your situation so that you could be more aware of the pattern you were creating and should you choose to, break the pattern altogether. Good luck.
Feeling Communication

When a woman is upset, a man will try to make her happy by donning his heroic suit of armor and interrupting her with solutions.
Dear Lauren,

Every time I try to talk to my husband about my day, it’s a failed experiment. I ask for him to listen but after 2 minutes his eyes begin to glaze over. It’s just not worth it. What I really want is for him to be interested in what I have to say, and there’s just no way to ask for that if the interest isn’t there. What do I do to get him to care about me?

-Heather

Hi Heather,

It’s true. He probably isn’t interested in hearing about your day or the problems you’ve faced that day. But that doesn’t mean he doesn’t care about you. Women show love and caring by listening to one another and supporting one another by making little noises and faces to show empathy. Men show love by protecting you from lions, tigers, bears, stress, sadness, fear, starvation etc. They show love by solving your problems.

He may not be interested in what happened to you that day but I guarantee he is interested in making you happy and problem-free. He loves you even if it doesn’t feel like it sometimes. You cannot change what he wants and what he is interested in, no more than you could change his taste in movies or food. It is what it is. But you can work with it.

Ask your man to give you 10 minutes to talk about your day. Tell him he doesn’t need to solve your problems; just the fact that he is listening to you will make you feel better. Suddenly he has a job to do and he is happy to fulfill it...as long as it makes you happy.
In return you must express your relief, appreciation, and joy at being able to share your day with him. This will make him feel needed and important and the heroic act of helping the woman he loves will bond him closer to you.

It may be hard to jump for joy just because he sat, looked at you, and gave you a couple nods for 10 stinkin’ minutes. Believe me, I get it. But if you want him to listen to you on a regular basis, you have to muster it up. The structure and promise that it won’t last forever will help condition him to be a better listener more often and for longer stretches of time.

I went to Dad’s talk the other night and he had me in stitches with his example of how to get a man to do what you want. He said, “Look, it’s not complicated. Men are like horses. You can climb on and get in position but they’re not going to go anywhere for you unless you do three things. One: Kick him. Two: Use the reigns and direct him. Three and most importantly: Feed him.”

So let’s make this more relevant to you and your situation. You marry the guy, you do everything you’re supposed to do to be a good wife, you are in the position of power but he just won’t do what he’s “supposed” to do as a husband. So, you need to do three things.

**One:** You need to kick him and wake him up by telling him you need his help for 10 minutes and then you'll give him an apple, umm, I mean the gift of your gratitude and happiness. It goes something like this, “I’ve had such a hard day. I would feel so much better if you listened to me kvetch for 10 minutes. Would you? It would make me feel so much better.” If he grumbles, repeat exactly what you said again like it is the first time. Again and again if you have to. You’ve seen people try to start to start a horse...sometimes you need to kick him a few times before he’ll budge.

**Two:** Direct him as to how you’d like him to listen. It’s kind of unbelievable how many men don’t even know what listening entails (to the standard of a woman of course. I’m sure his male friends think he’s a great listener) Use the reigns to show him how you want it done. It goes something like this, “I don’t need you to solve anything or fix anything. Just having you sit quietly, looking at me and listening to me talk is all I need to feel better.” As he masters the basics you can start adding in more advanced requests like, “Would you nod at me occasionally like you understand, make little uh huh noises, interject empathetic sayings like ‘that sounds so hard,’ get me a tissue if I’m crying, hold my hand? That would feel really good. I’d love that.”
**Three:** A starved horse isn't going to listen to you. Why bother listening when he's been trained that there's no treat at the end. So make sure to feed your man when you are done talking. It goes something like this, “Oh my goodness. I feel so much better. Wow honey, that helped so much. I've been so stressed, thank you for listening to me.” In case you don't know, you will feel better when you're done. Talking and sharing stimulates the hormone oxytocin, which lowers stress levels in women. Once you've said those magic words, kiss him, hug him, and smile at him. He'll be that much more eager to jump into action the next time you kick him.

Now here's the "kicker:" if a man has been yelled at or nagged in a relationship, your appreciation may not do anything for him at first. He's in resentment mode. But with these three easy steps you will find that over time, your appreciation will chip away at his resentment and your gratitude will once again become the food he thrives on.

I will say that because I have followed these three steps since the get go with my boyfriend, he's a great listener and we don't need to stop at 10 minutes. When I talk, he feels honored that I trust him enough to open my heart and share my feelings and life experiences with him. Feeling my trust, being there for me, and then receiving my gratitude makes him feel closer to me. Sharing my feelings with him makes me feel closer to him. In fact, it's become such a pleasurable intimacy that he says listening to my voice is one of his favorite things to do. (Let's take a moment: Awwww...) The other night I cried for an hour as I processed some intense feelings of self-doubt and you know what he did? He sat there on the couch with me and held my foot, just witnessing and being there for me. That is such a profound connection and if you follow my advice, you can create that too.
A woman experiences intimacy through sharing her feelings, positive or negative. A man feels love through her appreciation feelings. But when he’s confronted with her disappointment feelings, he feels unloved.
Dear Lauren,

How can I communicate my feelings to my partner in an effective manner that doesn't make him feel like a failure? As soon as I approach him with my feelings he quits trying to make anything work and dwells on how poor of a boyfriend he is. Instead I would like him to see how his actions hurt me and how his effort means the world to me!

-Donna

Hi Donna,

What a wonderful question! It's important to understand that a man thrives on success and feels your love through your appreciation. When he fails, and he comes in contact with your disappointment, he feels unloved. At this point a man will either pull away from the relationship by creating physical distance, push away by becoming defensive and mean or shrink away by dwelling on how bad a boyfriend he is, how he doesn't deserve you, and how you’d be better off without him.

At this point you're called upon to comfort him and say, “No. You’re a wonderful boyfriend.” This doesn't allow you to experience the frustration, disappointment and concern you are feeling. You’re now sacrificing your feelings for the comfort and well being of your man. Dunt dunt duh....

The only relationship where it is appropriate for a woman to sacrifice for a man is a mother and son. He is not your son. It is not your place to sacrifice for him. If you do, you can say goodbye to all romance and sexy time. So how do you change this dysfunctional dynamic and start making some actual progress in your relationship?
First off, it’s important to communicate your feelings in a way that is not critical. Rather than tell him what he does wrong, ask him for what you want instead. If he’s not succeeding on his own then give him the information he needs so that he has the opportunity to succeed. Any man will tell you that this chance to succeed is GOLD.

If he’s not very romantic, rather than telling him so, ask him to do something specific that you consider romantic. For example: ask him to take you out “parking:” to drink hot chocolate, dance under the moonlight and make out in the car. When he delivers on your request, give him lots of appreciation. This positive response will train him to do more romantic things in the future. But just like training a dog, you may have to ask several times and give many treats before you get results.

If he never remembers to put the toilet seat down, just ask him nicely every time he forgets. “Hey Hon, would you put the toilet seat down when you’re finished in the bathroom? I’ll appreciate it so much.” My dad forgets all the time when he visits my place and since he’s not my boyfriend, I carelessly say, “Daaad! You left the toilet seat up again. I hate that! I almost fell in.” He says, “I’m sorry. I forgot. But I never get any credit for all the times I do it right.” And that’s the key. So now, when my dad remembers, I thank him, I acknowledge and appreciate him. In return, he’s gotten better and better at remembering. All men respond to this kind of training, even dads.

Most women process things verbally, so when you feel hurt or frustrated it’s natural for you to want to express that hurt to your partner. But if your complaints are about your man then he is the wrong audience to process with because he will have a reaction. Save that kind of emotional processing for your friends; that’s what they are for. Once you are calm and prepared with a polite request, you are ready to communicate with your boyfriend. The reward will be worth the trouble, I promise.

I will add that as I’ve incorporated these techniques in my own relationship, my partner is giving me more and more space to experience sadness, hurt and frustration around the relationship without him reacting to it as much. I’ve made it clear that listening to me and holding me actually makes me feel better and he trusts that I will always give him an opportunity to succeed by asking for what I want at the end. I am not recommending that you complain to your boyfriend about your boyfriend but as you practice these skills and apply them to your relationship, you’ll find that you have a lot more freedom to express yourself down the line.
Men have something called “the efficiency gene” which dominates their brains into only doing the work that they have to do. For ex: “The roof is leaking onto my computer, I should fix the roof.” So, when a woman wants something from a man that is anything less obvious than water damage to his favorite electronics, she should ask for it because he probably won’t think to volunteer his services. (No matter how much he loves her.)
Dear Lauren,

My boyfriend used to live with me and pay rent by working on the house 4 days a month. He got behind by many months and this hurt me. He doesn't live with me anymore but recently I helped him for 4 weeks to prepare for a craft festival. I got behind with my jobs in that time but he never offered to help. He only offered to catch up with the days of work he owes me. Why can't he just help me with intent from his heart regardless of the days he owes me!? I told him I'm sad he's not offered and I got mad. He fled for the night and won't own it! What to do?

-Lori

Hi Lori,

A woman would see another woman struggling with her workload or being overwhelmed and she would offer her help. Men are not this way. Men are great at doing what you ask; men are great at fulfilling their job description. I know he doesn't have a perfect record of this but he is trying.

He stormed away because he is mad that he is being punished for not doing something that wasn't part of his job description and he didn't know you wanted him to do. In his mind, it is unjust and unfair. How could he know you wanted help? You didn’t even give him a chance to make you happy; you just got mad when he didn’t. Men thrive off of making their woman happy; the sun shines when she is happy and he can take credit for it. But when she is unhappy and he sees it as his fault, he feels like a complete failure and he has to retreat to the safety of his cave.
If you want him to do more work then he is doing then ask him. Don’t tell him he owes you. Where’s the glory in that? How can he take credit for your happiness then? Just ask, “Hey, would you do me a favor and help me with this today? I’d really appreciate it. Thank you so much.”

He would love to make you happy and grant you a favor. Especially when you show him appreciation for what he’s done. Men love to feel your appreciation in any form: hugs, thank yous, make outs, sexual favors, high fives, laughter, wonder, relief, smiles; that is how they receive love. So your job is to connect with what you need, ask for what you need, and then acknowledge him for being there for you in whatever capacity he can.

If he responds to your request with an attitude like, “Jeez I can’t believe you’re asking me that” or if he blows you off and says, “I’m busy,” don’t let it go. Don’t get mad. Stay calm, sweet, and ignore his teenage “eye roll” attitude. Keep saying things like:

• “It would make me so happy if you’d do this for me.”
• “I know you have so much on your plate right now, would you help me anyway?”
• “I feel so overwhelmed with all the things on my plate, I would so appreciate your help and support right now.”
• “I’m just so overwhelmed. It would make me feel so much better, so much more relaxed if you would help me with this.”

Keep a smile on your face and don’t give up. The more you ask, the more he has a chance to succeed and the more he’ll get addicted to your appreciation. It may take you asking five times at first but after a while one time will do the trick. He’ll just know any effort he puts towards doing things for you is justified because of the love and happiness he’ll feel in return.

This is great advice for handling things in the future. But what about now? We’ve got to wipe the slate clean after this last interaction. I know this is the last thing you want to do right now but my advice is to apologize to him. Say, “I’m sorry I got mad about you not helping when I didn’t even ask you for help in the first place. That wasn’t fair of me. I didn’t give you a chance to succeed. In the future I promise to ask for your help when I need it. Thank you so much for understanding. I love you.”

Make sure you are in a place where this apology can be authentic. If you still need time to be angry, then spend time with your friends and vent. Write in your journal and express your hurt, anger, shame and then
end with what you hope for and what you want. This will move you into a place where you can apologize to him and make things better.
The Self-Esteem Challenge

A man is with a woman because he’s attracted to her. But it will be a far more pleasurable experience for both of them if she finds herself attractive as well. “Sexy” is the outward expression of the inner feminine confidence, it’s just a state of mind.
Dear Lauren,

I am not a large girl, but my boyfriend’s friends’ girlfriends are all a size zero and extremely fit, causing me to become extremely insecure of my own body. Also, I’m the only one amongst the girlfriends who works and doesn’t stay home cooking and cleaning. Recently, all of this has been making me feel like less and less of a woman, and when I try to seek out reassurance from my boyfriend, he doesn’t understand and can’t seem to just tell me that he still finds me attractive. Instead, he is trying to help me plan my diets, and when he says he likes my motivation to work out and lose weight, I get snarky and say that it’s so I can match up to the other girls. How can I help him understand that I need him to show that he still finds me feminine and attractive?

-Kennedy

Hi Kennedy,

Oh no. That situation sounds awful. I know he’s trying to help but he’s really making it worse. Even someone with a strong sense of self-esteem is bound to feel a little beaten down by that kind of messaging. Well, here’s my advice:

1. **Femininity is not determined by lifestyle.** Do not compare yourself with other women to determine your femininity, that’s not an accurate scale. A woman is completely capable of working and still being a woman. In the workplace it is totally appropriate to rock your masculine side, be independent, competitive, capable and kick ass. This works as long as when you get home, you soften, connect with your femininity and let him do things for you. It’s no longer survival of the fittest. When you walk through that door, you are goddess. Ask him for help. Ask him to take you out on a date and pamper you. Ask for a
massage. When you receive his attentions and appreciate him for it, it’s like catnip to him. You couldn’t be more feminine. Just think about an orgasm. When a guy can make a woman orgasm it is the most attractive thing in the world, she is the most feminine woman in the world to him. All because he did something to make her happy and it worked.

2. There’s a world of sexy outside of a size 0. Do not compare your body with other women’s bodies. We are all made differently. But you have to realize that there is a reason your man is with you and not with a size zero. He loves your body and is attracted to it. Men don’t pursue a woman that they are not attracted to. Attraction comes first. Your body and looks were the first things he liked about you. That doesn’t go away.

Listen, I know it’s hard to shake insecurity about your body. I’m not a size zero either and right now that’s all society has room for when it’s talking about beauty, femininity and sexuality. But you and I, we’re not dating “society;” we’re dating men who love us and are attracted to us. Unfortunately, our partners, no matter how much they love us, cannot make us love our bodies. That’s our job. So if looking in the mirror is psyching you out and making you self-criticize, then stop spending time in front of the mirror. Spend more time admiring the parts of your body that you love. Buy some new clothes that make you feel sexy and that emphasize your assets. Whenever you are feeling low self-esteem throw on one of these outfits and you’ll be flaunting and loving your sexy self in no time. Once you take responsibility for loving your body then it’s much easier for the man in your life to “say the right thing.”

3. Guys think you’re looking for solutions, not reassurance. At this point when you express your insecurity, your man throws on his handsome suit of armor and rides to your rescue with a solution of diet and exercise. When you complain, his brain works as fast as it can to suggest something that will make you happy again. He thinks offering the support of diet and exercise solutions will make you happy. When it doesn’t, he gets more and more frustrated and confused.

That’s why you need to ask for what you need. Ask your partner specifically for what you want to hear when you express self-doubt. Give him the words. I promise he will mean them. Say, “Right now I need to vent about my insecurities. I want you to listen and hold me and when I’m done I want you to reassure me and tell me that you love me and that you are attracted to me just the way I am. Tell me that I am the woman of your dreams. Tell me I am sexy and talk about all the wonderful naughty things you want to do to me. I need to hear this right now and I will feel so much better.”
When he gives you what you want, receive it and thank him. Sometimes when you spoon-feed a guy a line, it’s hard to take it seriously; it’s hard to believe he really means it. This is something for you to practice. When he gives you the reassurance you are asking for on demand, appreciate it and show him with a smile that it worked. As time goes on, he will begin to say these things of his own volition and you will be able to receive authentically every nice thing he says to you, even if you are the one to prompt it.
In order for a man to take care of himself, stay balanced and happy, he needs to take time away from the relationship or growing intimacy. This is called “cave time.” And it is no cause for alarm.
Dear Lauren,

I’ve been dating a guy for 4 weeks, everything is going well - we’ve spoken everyday either by text, email or telephone and have been out every week. He has in the last couple of days gone quiet and distant, (giving me straight answers to any questions but nothing more.) He also cancelled plans we had to meet up today as he had promised his family he would help them with painting their house and “forgot.” I don't know what to do next, should I just leave him until he contacts me or pursue and be direct, asking him if there is something wrong - or pretend I haven’t noticed?

-Angie

Hi Angie,

Great question. He’s in his cave right now. He’s taking some time for himself. This is totally natural. On Venus, if a girlfriend dropped off the scene for a while, it would be rude to ignore it. We would call her and ask, “Are you all right? Do you need anything?” We would express worry and concern. And we would be rewarded. That’s what good girlfriends do.

But in a relationship with a member of the opposite sex, you need to be a different kind of “girlfriend.” You need to take a quick trip to Mars and learn the mysterious ways of men. If a guy drops off the scene it’s because he wants to be alone. He needs to balance the stress of life with the peaceful solitude of playing video games, going to a sports bar to yell at the TV, or just painting the house: getting dirty and drinking a cold beer. He needs time away from his woman and other responsibilities to reassert his autonomy and his sanity.
If you obey the Venus protocol and follow him into his cave, you don't get rewarded. You don't get credit for being a good girlfriend. You get the cold shoulder.

When he's ready to come out of his cave and play, he will let you know. He'll give you a call and act like nothing weird ever happened. If you're smart and you want to continue to pursue this relationship, you will too. Don't make him wrong for taking time for himself; don't drop any passive aggressive, “I guess I'm not important enough to you...” nonsense. Just connect to the authentic part of yourself that is truly happy to hear from him and act from that place.

In the meantime, don't ask if he's all right. Just ignore the fact that he's cancelled on you and has dropped off the radar for a while. The last thing you want to do is chase after him. You'll just chase him away.

Now, I know it’s hard to be patient with a man in his cave. It can make you feel unimportant. The more you feel like he’s ignoring you, the more pissed and hurt you’ll get. So it is key to stay busy; fill up your life with girls nights out, movies, dinners, hobbies, the gym, crafts, cooking, sports...whatever blows your skirt up and keeps you happy. You were happy before this man came along, and you’ll be happy without him now too.

If you ignore him and focus on yourself, he will return to you a happier more generous lover than ever before. If you learn this lesson now, the rest of your relationship(s) will be much smoother.
Now For The Gents
Being clingy in a relationship will turn off your partner. A man needs to be careful that he pursues a woman while not coming across as needy.
Dear Lauren,

I think I might be one of those “clingy” guys and I definitely don’t want to turn anyone off. I am in a relationship and I am always doing things for her, buying her flowers, stuff, toys, etc. I don’t get moody or upset when she goes out with her girlfriends or is away on business. I do get upset when we are both in town and I don’t get to see her except maybe once a week. I have been waiting for her to ask to see me, is that the wrong thing to do? I really care for this girl and don’t want to chase her away. How do I determine if I am a clingy guy and if I am how can I get help and learn to stop this behavior?

-Kyle

Hi Kyle,

This is a great question for anyone in a relationship to ask themselves, whether you are male or female. It is always okay to ask for what you want. How you respond to your partner saying “no” to your requests determines if you are clingy or not. If you pout and guilt-trip her when she says “no” to you then you are a clingy and needy partner. At this point, she is more likely to say “yes” to you because she doesn’t want to hurt your feelings than because she actually wants to spend time with you. However, I do not think you are “one of those clingy guys,” and I’ll explain why.

I want to put your mind at ease about what you are getting upset about. It’s all right to want to see her and it is all right to miss her when you are apart. This doesn’t make you clingy. My personal opinion is that time apart makes the time together that much better. Your sex life stays passionate, romance remains a priority, and it’s damn hard to take each other for granted.
However, when you want to see her you should call her. Do not wait for her to call you. She may be busy, she may not be that into you (yet), or she may be waiting for the phone to ring thinking that if she called you then you would think she was needy. Unfortunately the female sex has a nasty reputation for being clingy. Those un-clingy women sometimes question their every move so that they may avoid being grouped in with that stereotype. Dizzying, isn’t it?

I understand how confusing this is for men. I really do. Women want to be pursued but we lose attraction when a man is clingy. When does pursuing a woman morph into chasing her away? When does the knight-in-shining-armor become that creepy guy who can’t take a hint?

It’s all in how you ask her out and what you do if she says “no.” Rather than saying, “Lets get together” or, “I’d like to spend more time with you,” (which can come across as needy) ask her to attend a specific event with you that you think she will like. Look around, do some research; see what bands are playing locally, what sports games are coming up, check out if there are any art gallery openings or festivals going on. Even something as small and ordinary as a farmers market is okay. Just as long you PLAN SOMETHING.

Occasionally go one step further and buy tickets in advance for something you would like to do and think that she would like too. Let her know you are going and would like her to join you. If she says “no,” don’t be upset. Just let it go and bring one of your buddies. That way later on, you can say what a great time you had and that you missed her company. This amplifies the impression that you are fun to hang out with. It is human nature to undervalue something until it is lost to us. When she hears what a fun time you had, she will be intrigued. Next time she will be more likely to say yes, not so she doesn’t “reject” you or hurt your feelings, but so she doesn’t miss out.

By calling and asking her out on specific dates, you are not cornering her or chasing her away. You are merely showing your interest in a way that flatters her and gives her plenty of room to make her decisions. This is extremely attractive to a woman.
Let's Talk About Our "Feelings"

For women, talking and sharing is a form of intimacy. For men, taking action for his woman, physically doing something for her is a form of bonding.
Hi Lauren,

I've been with this girl for 2 months and it's great. The problem is that our communication styles are worlds apart and she has asked me to share with her how I 'feel' about things. This is not something I am accustomed to but I've been trying. For example: last night I asked her how her day of teaching at a new school went and I listened for an hour about the ins and outs of her day. Then she asked me how my day was and before I even started she shut me down, and said, “Look I know you hate talking about stuff, so don't even bother.” I was shattered. I really like this girl but she's not even giving me a chance and it pisses me off.

Any suggestions?

-Jared

Hi Jared,

I understand your frustration. You are trying to meet her needs and yet you are being punished for not meeting her expectations. A man thrives off of making his woman happy, so disappointing her can feel devastating. On top of that you're confused. And I don't blame you.

Here's what's going on: she feels hurt that you don't share as much as she does. Women bond by sharing their feelings, that's how she feels close to you. When you don't share the way she does, she feels like you don't feel close to her, like her love and trust is not reciprocated. She feels hurt that you don't love her and rather than expressing that vulnerability she lashes out passive aggressively and shuts you down before you have a chance to potentially hurt her again. Unfortunately, this doesn't really leave you any opportunity to succeed either.
She doesn't understand that the way a man bonds with a woman is by taking action to make her happy: giving her his jacket when it's cold, planning and taking her out on a date, helping her up a steep climb on a hike. Men don't bond through talking and sharing their feelings; they bond through action, through what he physically does for her.

Here's the kicker, if you start sharing all your feelings like she wanted you to, she would lose her attraction to you. When men share too much of their feelings, women feel responsible and want to help them. They take care of the man, sacrificing their needs and comfort for his. This puts her in a maternal role. Once a woman steps into a mother role, she loses attraction for her mate, as he becomes more of a son than a partner.

So, the best thing you can do is shoot for balance. Share just enough that she feels included in your life and your daily experience but not enough that it starts to sound like complaining. Here's the trick: when she asks you about your day, instead of sharing your feelings, share what you physically did that day.

Most men don't think their day warrants that much telling, after all unless the sky fell or you got a promotion, it's not really worth talking about. So, I want you to throw away the idea that your day isn't interesting and tell her what you did. What did you eat? Where did you eat? What did you see? Were you late to work? Early? Who did you talk to? Any gossip you can share? And after you give her a few specific insights into what your day looked like (you don't have to report on everything, just the things you feel comfortable sharing), say something like, “And then I couldn't wait to get home because I knew I'd get to see you.” She'll LOVE it. This way you've avoided talking about your feelings (yay!) and she'll feel like you reciprocate her love and trust because you've shared about your day.
In a conversation, the time it takes for a man to listen, analyze, feel and plan for action is called, "Mulling it over". A woman's brain cycles through these so fast we don't even have a name for it.
Hi Lauren,

My girlfriend and I have been together for a year. We’re totally happy but this one thing drives me crazy. Anytime we are in a fight and she asks me how I feel about something or whatever she never gives me the chance to answer her. Or I’ll be halfway through a response, thinking, and she’ll interrupt me and be mad like I wasn’t answering her at all. How is my side supposed to be represented in these “heated discussions” when she won’t even let me explain myself?

-Lucas

Hi Lucas,

It is the most irritating thing in the world when a woman asks for what would make her happy and then doesn’t leave you a chance to give it to her. I hear ya. In your case, she interrupts you mid-figuring out how to give her what she wants. This is actually quite common and is frustrating to both men and women. I already have a column about men interrupting women but let’s focus now on women interrupting men.

Why would she do it? You are clearly trying to come up with the words to express something meaningful for you. You are clearly trying to access a more vulnerable part of you. You are clearly trying to give her exactly what she wants. Right? It is clear, right?

Actually, here’s what it looks like from the girl’s perspective: she asks you a question and looks to you for the answer. Your face goes blank, no emotions cross your features, no words come out of your mouth, no eye contact is made, there is no indication that you’re thinking of an answer or that you’ve even heard her at all.
Can you imagine how that might irritate her a little? If there is insecurity on her part, she might lash out at this point and assume the worst or even say something like, “Never mind. Don’t even bother.” If she is totally secure, she might say something more benign like, “Did you hear me?” or “Do you want to talk about this later?” Any of these responses will drive a guy crazy. After all, underneath that blank exterior there’s a whole lot of effort going on. The least she could do is be quiet and give you a chance to think!

In order to solve this little misunderstanding, we need to look to the brain and how it works differently for men and women. The brain has different areas that are in charge of different things like listening, analyzing, planning, emotions, etc. These areas are called “grey matter” areas. Blood flows to the particular grey matter area when you are activating it. A man’s brain has more grey matter. But a woman’s has more “white matter,” which connects the grey matter together. This means that while men have an incredible capacity for listening, analyzing, planning, emotions, etc. it’s hard to do more than one at a time. Women, on the other hand, can have blood flow to multiple grey matter areas simultaneously because they have more white matter.

This means a woman can listen, analyze the information, feel her reaction AND plan what’s she’s going to say almost simultaneously. Which means she’s wicked fast in a fight and she takes it for granted. It’s going to be hard for a man to process the situation and express himself as quickly because he has to run around his brain a few laps before words can actually come out of his mouth.

So next time you have a conversation with your sweetie, ask her to give you more time to come up with your response. Let her know that when your face goes blank, you are actually doing a kick ass job listening to her, analyzing the situation, digging for feelings, and planning what you’re going to say next. In Mars Venus lingo, we call this athletic feat, “mulling it over.” Time flies when you’re busy running around your head, you don’t notice the seconds tick by. But she does and they feel like hours. Ease her mind by clueing her in on what is going on in your brain and she’ll understand. And ultimately, she won’t interrupt you anymore.
Women find the “little things” extremely romantic and without the little things you can’t get that one big thing you’re after.

(SEX.)
Dear Lauren,

I’m in a long-term relationship. My love has long said that I’m not very romantic. We’ve had many discussions regarding that. So, wanting to be better, I’ve asked what can I do? She states that it’s “the little things.” I’ve tried numerous things. Some work, some aren’t recognized. It’s very discouraging. With a busy schedule for us both, it’s tough to plan and one-up myself each time. What can I do?

-Patrick

Dear Patrick,

Great question. Romance is a mystery to most guys. I mean...what’s the point? “I love you, you love me, we’re both busy, let’s have sex and be merry” Right? Unfortunately, without romance it’s harder for a woman to get in the mood and give you what you want. So she asks for more romance and she tells you it comes in the form of “the little things” but she’s not responsive to your gestures. What gives?!

You are not the first guy who has a given a woman exactly what she’s asked for and yet still doesn’t get the prize. And you won’t be the last. But you should know that you are making headway.

“The little things” strategy works, I promise. Women don't need large gestures and fancy things (unless it’s an anniversary or birthday and then it doesn't hurt!) They just need to know that you love them, that they are desired and important to you. Small acts of kindness show them you care. Unfortunately, it may take time for this strategy to start working.
When a woman feels like she’s been deprived of romance for a while, she will hold out on giving you appreciation for those little things. She resents the fact that you haven’t given to her in the past and so she doesn’t feel very generous with her love and appreciation for your efforts. It’s kind of like a “too little, too late” situation. Now this is hard because it’s her appreciation that inspires and motivates you to come up with new fun ideas to romance her socks off. To this, I can only say, keep at it! Don’t worry about one-upping yourself. This is not a competition.

After some time, you will wear down her resentment (which she may not even be conscious of) and she will begin to show you how much those little things mean to her. This will inspire you and give you more energy towards the cause. Your relationship will blossom like you never thought possible. Women respond to romance. Men respond to making a woman happy. Your stress will decrease, communication will improve, and your sex life will prosper.

In the meantime, here are ten ideas for quick and easy “little things” that will break down her wall of resentment and open the floodgates of love and appreciation.

1. On your way to work, send her a text saying, “I heard this song and thought of you and that time we danced” (or whatever...just reference something.) She’ll like the fact that you are thinking of her during your day and remembering a time you shared together.

2. Before you see her, pick a flower from the yard outside and when you see her, tuck it behind her ear, look at her and say, “Absolutely stunning.”

3. Do the dishes (without her asking.)

4. Make her a cup of tea (without her asking.)

5. Take the trash out (without her asking.)

6. Give her a massage (foot, back, neck, hand, leg.) Touching without the intent of sex is extremely romantic for a woman. So hug her, hold her, hold her hand, massage her...without the expectation that it will lead to sexy time.

7. When she’s talking with you remember one thing that she said and one thing she was wearing at the time she said it. When the subject comes up again at a later date, show off your knowledge. You have no idea how impressive this is.
8. Leave her a note (in her sock drawer, in her makeup bag, in her wallet, in the utensils drawer, on her grocery list…) saying “Can’t wait to see you again,” “I love you,” or “Thank you for being mine,” or even “You’re smoking hot.”

9. Call her one day and say, “Don’t worry about dinner. I got it under control.” Get her favorite meal “to go,” bring it home, set the table and light a candle. Candles make all the ladies say, “Awww…”

10. Buy tickets to a concert of an artist she likes way in advance or even just ask her out to ice cream a week in advance. The key is to plan things way in advance so that she can look forward to the event. Every time she thinks about it, you get credit all over again. This is a way to score more points per little gesture.
Sex

Testosterone is the “let’s make sexy time” hormone and on average men have 30 times more than women.
Dear Lauren,

Within the couple, who is supposed to initiate sex?

-Ramit

Hi Ramit,

Both. Everyone. I think the majority of the responsibility lies with the man because it is both romantic and sexy when a man is “in charge.” A woman connects with her sexual/sensual side when she feels wanted, admired and desired.

In addition, testosterone is the “let’s make sexy time” hormone that fuels one’s sex drive. Men on average have thirty times more testosterone than women. Which means you will probably want sex more often than your female will. It is your job to convince her through seduction and romance that she wants to have sex too.

Part of this job is accepting that you will be rejected sometimes. It has nothing to do with how attracted she is to you or how much she loves you, she just doesn't have as much testosterone and so won't be in the mood every time you are. It's important to understand this and not take it personally. Many times after a woman rejects a man, a man will start to give up. He figures, if she is saying “no” so often, then he'll just wait around for when she wants to initiate sex. As a professional I am telling you: don't go there. Don't give up. Never surrender. If anything, work harder on your seduction skills.

Who Initiates Sex?
While this hormone imbalance between men and women exists, it is important for both parties to initiate sex. Men consider it extremely sexy when a woman initiates sex. Just make sure to appreciate these moments as a treat and not expect them to be the norm.

It’s important for women to let their man know when they are available for or wanting sex. If you are too shy to go up to your man and whisper in his ear, “I want you to f**k me” then there are other more subtle ways to go about it. You can throw on some sexy underwear and greet him at the door when he comes home one day, he’ll get the “hint.” You can work out a code where you light a candle in the bedroom and that means you are open to and wanting to be seduced. Just because you initiate sex, doesn’t mean you have to give up the position of being the one who is wanted, admired, and desired. You’re just giving him the green light to do all the naughty things to you that he’s been dreaming about all day.
Taking Space

Both men and women need time alone to balance autonomy and independence with intimacy and relationship in order to be loving partners.
Hi Lauren,

I started a new relationship 2 months ago. We’ve spent a large amount of time together in bliss and we both seemed to really enjoy the attachment. My girlfriend has recently had out of town family members come to visit and between them and me had little time for herself. Is it appropriate and healthy for the relationship if she indicates she needs time apart from the relationship to take care of herself? It also seems on other occasions when she wants to take time for herself she pushes me away. She may say things that are hurtful just prior to or during our time apart. Is this normal?

-Mitch

Hi Mitch,

Yes, it can be healthy for the relationship. While it’s not as common for women to go into “the girl cave,” it definitely falls under the “normal” umbrella. Usually when we speak of “the cave,” the man is the one pulling away to regain his sense of self and independence. This is no surprise since Martians love autonomy and Venusians love community. But this doesn't mean men exclusively love being alone and women exclusively love being in relationships. Sometimes, women feel the urge to pull away from a relationship when the intimacy gets too intense too quickly or the couple spends “too much” time together. At this point, she needs to reassert her sense of self and independence. And here’s why...

It feels wonderful to a woman when a man is attentive to her needs, when he takes care of her and makes her happy. He is literally sweeping her off her own two feet. But without solid ground beneath her, a woman can get lost in the strength and comfort of the arms holding her up. At this point, the danger lies in...
becoming dependent upon her partner’s love for her. She loves herself through his eyes, and forgets to do the work to love herself through her own. Because he makes her happy, she becomes dependent on him to make her happy. With him taking care of her, she forgets to exercise the muscles she needs to take care of herself. At this point, the man has no room to make mistakes or pull away because her sense of worth and happiness is tied up into how well he loves her.

Let’s be honest, no matter how perfect you are, you are going to eventually make a mistake, have a bad day, say the wrong thing or pull away for your own cave time. And when that happens in this dynamic, shit is gonna hit the fan. Nobody wants that. So it is a woman’s responsibility in the relationship to create a sense of balance so that she can be receptive to your love but not become dependent upon it.

You are lucky. You landed a woman with a built in alarm system. At the times she gets a little too comfortable with you holding up her weight and her “self-love” muscles start to weaken, a little alarm goes off in her subconscious. Uh-oh…the beginning of dependency is rearing its ugly head…BEEP BEEP BEEP!!! The moment she hears her alarm go off, she jumps out of your arms and lands on her own two feet, determined to strengthen the muscles that have weakened through disuse. She pulls away to reassert her joy in taking care of herself, her capability to fulfill her own needs, and to remind herself that she is more than just a relationship: she’s a full exciting person with lots going on and lots to fall back on should you ever pull away. Or you know, to continue the metaphor, should you ever drop her!

The reason she is so bitchy about pulling away is because she doesn’t yet understand this need or her alarm system. She’s in the moment with you, feeling shmoopy and intimate and suddenly she gets whiplash and has to get away from you. WHAT is going on?! So she lets little things you do get on her nerves so that she can justify her bitchiness, which in turn pushes you away. Tada! Mission accomplished! She has time to herself! It certainly gets the job done but it’s far from graceful and it leaves you very confused with a little lingering whiplash of your own.

Instead of lashing out, it’s her job to set her boundary by asking for what she needs: time and space. Of course, at the moment, she doesn’t have those tools and she probably doesn’t know what’s happening to her. On a surface level it appears you’ve suddenly gotten more annoying. But that’s not really what’s up. So it’s your job to have her read this column and initiate the conversation of finding a good way for her to set her boundary that works for both of you.
I recommend her saying something like this (with a smile and a hug,) “I am so enjoying my time with you. But I need to take some time for myself. It’s not that I don’t want to spend time with you, it’s that I need time alone. I love it when you make me happy and I also love making myself happy and right now I need to indulge that part of me. I would really appreciate if you respected this boundary and didn’t call or text me for a while. I promise to let you know the minute I’m ready to be close again.”

Now Mitch, the next part is the most important. You need to respect her boundary. If you pout, show any signs of having your feelings hurt, if you try to talk her out of it, or become needy and follow her into her cave, you will pay the price. She will feel guilty and will sacrifice her own needs to make you happy. This is not what a woman does for her man; this is what a mommy does for her son. She will lose attraction to you and you can kiss your sex life goodbye.

So handle her with care, sweep her off her feet until she feels the need to walk on her own. Then let her go. Just remember, the more balanced she feels, the more confidently she can fall in love with you. (And the more freedom you have to make mistakes!)
When a woman trusts that a man will listen to her express her feelings without interrupting or judging, she feels safe to open up, soften up, and lead the way out of an argument.
Dear Lauren,

We are in the middle of an agonizing argument. I want her to talk but she says she is too angry.
What do I do?
-Todd

Hi Todd,

Sorry to hear you’re in the “doghouse,” dude. It’s hard to move on when she won’t even let you know what’s going on with her, let alone how to make it better.

Women have 8 times more blood flow to the emotional center of their brains then men. Practically speaking, this means that something “small” can set her off in a big way, at any time. She’s like a land mine: a hot, sexy, beautiful, emotional, passionate, feminine land mine. As you are experiencing right now, sometimes when you’re faced with her cold charged silence, you start begging for the actual explosion. It sounds totally counter-intuitive but getting her to yell at you is often the way to peace. At least things are moving rather than staying stagnant, festering and building the infection of resentment. Gross.

You want that explosion because the moment she starts yelling, the story starts to unfold, the tears start to flow and the meat of the matter reveals itself. She opens up about her feelings and her needs. The only trick at this point is to shut up and listen. If you do, you will learn what’s up and what she needs to move forward from this agonizing argument. Only then can you navigate your way back home and out of the Dog House.
Of course, getting her to talk can sometimes be the hardest part. You can’t rush it. You can only honor her experience and make it a safe environment for when she feels she can open up to you again.

Right now, the best thing to do is let her cool down. Suggest that she talk to her friends about what’s going on. Expressing herself will allow her to work through the anger and move on to some other emotions like sadness, fear, regret, and hope. Once she gets in touch with these emotions she can be more vulnerable with you and open up about what’s going on.

Your job is to assure her that whenever she is ready to talk, you will sit quietly and listen. You will not interrupt her, solve her problems or become defensive. You want to know how she’s doing and you are eager to come up with a solution that works for both of you, together. Your arms are ready to enfold her at a moment’s notice and your hands are there to hold hers should she want them. Just make yourself available.

When she is finally ready to talk, follow through on your promises. This may be difficult to do in the heat of the moment but I promise you that biting your tongue is worth it. When she sees that she is safe to express her feelings without you trying to solve her problems ("Why don't you just do this..."), minimize her feelings ("Don't be angry about that...") or belittle her experience ("You're over-reacting...") then she will drop her cold hard shell, move quickly through the heat of her anger and move on to other easier-to-work-with emotions. If there’s nothing to push up against, she'll stop pushing. At which point she will move on to being your wonderful, vulnerable, feminine partner and you will be able to do the work to get through this argument together.
Did you like this advice? Share it with your friends, apply it everyday, and follow me on Facebook and Twitter to see how I apply it in my own love life. It takes time to build our own destructive patterns in relationships and it will take time to reverse the damage. But if you apply this advice to your life, you’re going to see a difference.

In the beginning as you are learning this new language, you may feel confined, limited, like you’re not free to just be you and speak from the heart. This can be frustrating. But as you practice working with this new perspective there is something you will notice. You may not feel like you are expressing yourself naturally but you will notice that your partner is finally receiving the messages you’ve authentically meant to give them. You will find that less love will be lost in translation, communication will become more efficient, more truthful and love will become more potent, and more connective.

I’ve been raised with this information since I was a kid...ABCs remember? But of course as a teenager I had to rebel against my father and do it my own way. I followed my heart and my instincts and I pushed away the first love of my life by unintentionally giving him the message that he was a failure. Every time I’d try to chase him and show how much I loved him, I pushed him further away and he felt less loved. This was one of the most bizarre experiences of my life. The more I tried, the more I failed. He dumped me after school one day and my heart broke for the very first time. I cried through the nights for 6 months. Then, privately and without admitting it to my parents, I finally sat down and read *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* cover to cover, and I was floored. I had made every well-intentioned rookie mistake in the book.
Ten years and 3 relationships later, I am living with my significant other and I am still learning how to do this. I put what I know into practice every day and every day I am rewarded for it. Communication is safe between us, we make efforts to speak each others languages, respect each other’s differences, we ask ourselves and each other how we could say/do it differently next time so that we both feel even more loved, so that both of our needs are being met.

I know this Mars Venus material works, not because the book was a bestseller for a decade or because it’s printed in 50 different languages. I know it works because my partner is my biggest ally and my bestest friend and he can say the same. The proof is in the puddin’. So when you walk away from this book remember at least two things: men and women are different and we are absolutely no doubt about it MFEO.
Lauren Gray writes an advice blog at MarsVenus.com where she shares advice on dating, relationships, sex, love, communication and more. She’s the daughter of John Gray (author of Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus) and relationship know-how runs in the genes.

She teaches the Mars Venus material from the unique perspective of a woman and that of a young person in the dating scene herself. Lauren wakes up every morning with a purpose and passion to show men and women how to create fulfilling relationships by leveraging and understanding their differences.

Mars Venus has helped millions of people all over the world find true love. Lauren continues to prove that when we learn how to accept, honor, and find compassion and humor in our differences, we create more peace, equality, mutual respect, and profound love in ALL our relationships.

If you’d like to work one-on-one with Lauren on YOUR relationship goals, ambitions and aspirations, she is currently taking clients with her Email Advice Package. Learn more here.