

GENDER CONFUSION

Many girls wish to be like boys because some don't see their mother as a positive role model and some believe that boys have more fun. Males seemingly have more power in society, they are not as emotional and have no menstrual cycles. Males have more permission to be adventurous, to be loud and playful.

Some males strongly identify with the feminine. They may express this by being soft and gentle, some may wear dresses and make-up or by being gay. Some abandon their masculinity if they are over-mothered or if they find the men in their lives harsh or violent. There are different reasons for becoming confused about gender. It's not a simple issue. It can be confusing for everyone if they are not clearly identifying with their gender.

The media, school, friends and parents may play a part in causing you to abandon your essential female/maleness. Portraying females as objects to be ogled at or males who are football playing, beer-drinking macho men, can place pressure on you to act out something other than what is true of your Essential Nature.

Recognising the Differences

There has been a great deal of research in recent years about how males and females are different. The following is adapted from *MEN ARE FROM MARS AND WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS* by John Gray. It was the first of many popular books written about gender like this. As the title suggests, it's as if we're from different planets.

Check this out for yourself:

MALES define themselves by achieving results – working out the details. Problem solving fulfils them.

Trying to fix things he offers solutions and invalidates her feelings. It is difficult for him to listen to her when she is unhappy or disappointed because he feels like a failure.

His deepest fear is that he is not good enough. The secret of empowering him is never to try to change or improve him. He is motivated and empowered when he feels valued. Not to be valued is a slow death for him.

It puts too much pressure on him if she makes him the only source of love and support.

To feel better a man goes to his cave. He cannot give her the attention she deserves when there (never go into a man's cave or you'll be burned by the dragon). Males should not be judged for withdrawing. He alternates between intimacy and independence. When he loves her he periodically pulls away so that he can get closer again. To a certain extent he loses himself through connection with her.

He thrives when he receives encouragement, trust, acceptance, appreciation, approval and reassurance.

FOR BOTH: When each takes the time to listen to their feelings, they are in effect saying: I matter, I deserve to be heard and I care enough to listen.

He typically gives in relationship what he expects, while she gives what she expects. When negative feelings are suppressed, positive feelings become suppressed as well and love dies.

FEMALES. Her sense of self is defined through her feelings and the quality of her relationships. To feel better females get together and openly talk about problems. She is fulfilled through talking about details.

She offers unsolicited advice and direction, presuming he doesn't know what to do or that he can't do it on his own. She forgets he doesn't talk as much as she does. She often feels unheard. When he is silent, it's easy for her to imagine the worst. Her biggest challenge is to interpret and support him when he isn't talking. She argues for the right to be upset and asks for understanding. He misunderstands even this complaint. She should not be judged for seeking reassurance.

She is motivated and empowered when she feels cherished. She relaxes as she remembers she is worthy of love. She doesn't have to earn it – she deserves it. She rises and falls in her ability to love herself and others.

She gives as much as she can – only noticing she has received less when she is empty and exhausted.

She thrives when she receives caring, understanding, respect, devotion, admiration and approval.