



For the Girls

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Opposites Attract

Opening:

Option 1: Men vs. women:

1. A woman will dress up to: go shopping, water the plants, empty the garbage, answer the phone, get the mail...
A man will dress up for: weddings and funerals.
2. Women do laundry every couple of days.
Men will wear every single article of clothing he owns before he will do his laundry.
3. If Gloria, Suzanne, Debra, and Michelle go out for lunch, they will call each other Gloria, Suzanne, Debra and Michelle.
But if Mike, Phil, Rob, and Jack go out for a beer... they will affectingly refer to each other as fat boy, Godzilla, peanut-head and useless.
4. A man has 6 items in his bathroom: a toothbrush, shaving cream, razor, bar of soap, and a towel from the holiday inn.
The average number of items in a typical woman's bathroom is 437. A man would not be able to identify most of those items.

Option 2:

Read the following story:

Let's say a guy named David is attracted to a woman named Katie. He asks her out to a movie; she accepts; they have a pretty good time. A few nights later he asks her out to dinner, and again they enjoy themselves. They continue to see each other regularly, and after a while neither one of them is seeing anybody else. And then, one evening when they're driving home, a thought occurs to Katie, and, without really thinking, she says it aloud: "Do you realize that, as of tonight, we've been seeing each other for exactly six months?"

And then there is silence in the car. To Katie, it seems like a very loud silence. She thinks to herself: Geez, I wonder if it bothers him that I said that. Maybe he's been feeling confined by our relationship; maybe he thinks I'm trying to push him into some kind of obligation that he doesn't want, or isn't sure of.

And David is thinking: Gosh. Six months.

And Katie is thinking: But, hey, I'm not so sure I want this kind of relationship, either. Sometimes I wish I had a little more space, so I'd have time to think about whether I really want us to keep going the way we are, moving steadily toward . . . I mean, where are we going? Are we just going to keep seeing each other at this level of intimacy? Are we heading toward marriage? Toward children? Toward a lifetime together? Am I ready for that level of commitment? Do I really even know this person?

And David is thinking: . . . so that means it was . . . let's see . . . February when we started going out, which was right after I had the car at the dealer's, which means . . . lemme check the odometer . . . Whoa! I am way overdue for an oil change here.

And Katie is thinking: He's upset. I can see it on his face. Maybe I'm reading this completely wrong. Maybe he wants more from our relationship, more intimacy, more commitment; maybe he has sensed -- even before I sensed it -- that I was feeling some reservations. Yes, I bet that's it. That's why he's so reluctant to say anything about his own feelings. He's afraid of being rejected.

And David is thinking: And I'm gonna have them look at the transmission again. I don't care what those morons say, it's still not shifting right. And they better not try to blame it on the cold weather this time.

What cold weather? It's 87 degrees out, and this thing is shifting like a garbage truck, and I paid those incompetent thieves \$600.

And Katie is thinking: He's angry. And I don't blame him. I'd be angry, too. I feel so guilty, putting him through this, but I can't help the way I feel. I'm just not sure.

And David is thinking: They'll probably say it's only a 90-day warranty. That's exactly what they're gonna say, the scumballs.

And Katie is thinking: Maybe I'm just too idealistic, waiting for a knight to come riding up on his white horse, when I'm sitting right next to a perfectly good person, a person I enjoy being with, a person I truly do care about, a person who seems to truly care about me. A person who is in pain because of my self-centered, schoolgirl romantic fantasy.

And David is thinking: Warranty? They want a warranty? I'll give them a warranty. I'll take their warranty and stick it right up their

"David," Katie says aloud.

"What?" says David, startled.

"Please don't torture yourself like this," she says, her eyes beginning to brim with tears. "Maybe I should never have . . . Oh, I feel so....." (She breaks down, sobbing.)

"What?" says David.

"I'm such a fool," Katie sobs. "I mean, I know there's no knight. I really know that. It's silly. There's no knight, and there's no horse."

"There's no horse?" says David.

"You think I'm a fool, don't you?" Katie says.

"No!" says David, glad to finally know the correct answer.

"It's just that . . . It's that I . . . I need some time," Katie says. (There is a 15-second pause while David, thinking as fast as he can, tries to come up with a safe response. Finally he comes up with one that he thinks might work.)

"Yes," he says.

(Katie, deeply moved, touches his hand.) "Oh, David, do you really feel that way?" she says.

"What way?" says David.

"That way about time," says Katie.

"Oh," says David. "Yes."

(Katie turns to face him and gazes deeply into his eyes, causing him to become very nervous about what she might say next, especially if it involves a horse. At last she speaks.) "Thank you, David," she says.

"Thank you," says David.

Then he takes her home, and she lies on her bed, a conflicted, tortured soul, and weeps until dawn, whereas when David gets back to his place, he opens a bag of Doritos, turns on the TV, and immediately becomes deeply involved in a rerun of a tennis match between two Czechoslovakians he never heard of. A tiny voice in the far recesses of his mind tells him that something major was going on back there in the car, but he is pretty sure there is no way he would ever understand what, and so he figures it's better if he doesn't think about it. The next day Katie will call her closest friend, or perhaps two of them, and they will talk about this situation for six straight hours. In painstaking detail, they will analyze everything she said and everything he said, going over it time and time again, exploring every word, expression, and gesture for nuances of meaning, considering every possible ramification. They will continue to discuss this subject, off and on, for weeks, maybe months, never reaching any definite conclusions, but never getting bored with it, either.

Meanwhile, David, while playing racquetball one day with a mutual friend of his and Katie's, will pause just before serving, frown, and say: "Jeff, did Katie ever own a horse?"

Study

There are obvious differences in men and women.

One of the most important things, in any relationship, is to understand the other person and honor how they recognize love.

Dealing with Women

Ask the group: in general, what are some ways that women feel loved?

After a few thoughts are shared, discuss the following...

Openness- we want men to share their feelings, their difficulties...

- We want full responses (not random grunting while watching TV)

Understanding- 'don't try to fix us, just listen'. Husbands, generally, are better built to analyze, give answers, and ultimately 'fix' the situation at hand.

- We want them to not dismiss our feelings, not interrupt us, and to not try to 'fix our problems' unless we ask for a solution.

Esteem-

Ask: what does this mean... to be 'esteemed'?

- To feel honored and cherished.
- We want a husband to speak highly of us in front of others. We want encouragement, praise, and kindness. We want someone who notices something different about our hair or clothes.

Dealing with Men

Ask the group: what do you think are some characteristics of men (dealing with how they feel loved)?

A woman who completes him-

Ask the group: Why do you think that's important?

Read Genesis 2:18

- The word 'helper' can also be translated to 'completer'.
- The differences in men and women are intended to complete each other...
- For example: a wife may be better at scheduling, while the husband relies on spontaneity.
- Another example: a wife may be more social and talkative, while the man is more serious and reserved.
- To complete someone also includes accountability.
- How do you think the two go together?

Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

- Whether it's a spiritual struggle, a moral temptation or a difficult time, having the other person present and willing to understand and support is crucial.

A woman who admires him-

Ask the group: why do you think this is important for a man?

(if you have a personal experience with this—maybe a couple you've seen do a good job at this—now would be a great time to share it)

Although he brings into the relationship his own talents and weaknesses, success as the head of his family depends largely on what he needs from his wife: confidence.

While women want esteem and honor, for a man, little is more devastating than to be viewed as incompetent by the woman in his life.

No matter how successful or confident a man may seem, he still desperately needs the appreciation and support of his wife.

Show him you need him-

Ask the group: how can a woman show she needs her husband?

Read Galatians 6:2

- Scripture reminds us of the importance of having someone come alongside to help.
- We all want to be and feel needed.
- It's important that a man feels that he fulfills a purpose in your life. That he somehow makes the woman in his life feel safer, better, and more beautiful than she was before.

He needs to know that his masculine presence makes a difference.

Read Genesis 2:18-25

- Men and women are different- that is confirmed every day of our life...
- God forms and equips us both for various tasks, but all these tasks lead to the same goal- honoring God.
- As discussed earlier, it's important in any relationship to see the others' gifts and needs and learn to respect those.

Closing

Pray as a group—asking God for guidance in all relationships—that we might learn to recognize and honor the needs of the other.

Further discussion possibilities:

- Finding the hero in your husband:
 - Ask the group: what does it mean to find the hero in your husband?
 - The hero in your husband is only his ability to imitate God's attributes.
 - The find the hero in your husband, you must know the God your husband was created to imitate.
 - Ask the group: what do you think happens in a relationship when a woman doesn't find the hero in her husband?
 - There is a tendency for a woman to either find it elsewhere or to become her own. Either causes distance and can greatly weaken a marriage.
- Spend some time reading or summarizing the story of Esther.
 - Ask: how did she find the hero in her husband? What specific things did she do to show she respected him?
 - She completed him by giving him a different perspective.
 - She also admired him by showing respect in the way she approached him in front of others.
- Read Proverbs 14:1
 - Just as Esther, a woman is to use the gifts God has granted her to empower and uplift her husband.