

How to Think Like a Man and Listen Like a Woman!

Things to know about the gender difference in communication
by Carol McCall

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I recently saw the movie, "*Think Like A Man And Act Like A Lady!*" Very humorous, funny and for me a reminder of how differently men and women listen.

"Men Are From Mars and Women Are From Venus"
Author - Dr. John Gray

"Business Networking and Sex"
Authors - Ivan Misner, PhD, Hazel Walker, Frank De Raffe

Dr. John Gray summed it up quite succinctly when he wrote his famous book, "*Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*". There is another must read book - "*Business Networking and Sex (not what you think)*". Both these books are about the gender difference in communication.

Many women have the thought they "know-how-men-are"; they don't listen! Many men "know" they don't know how women think and tend to dismiss women as too "sensitive" or "taking things too personally".

Some of the talking points of "*Business Networking and Sex*" are:

MEN

1. Are transactional not relational;
2. Network more often, yet seem to be less satisfied with their results;
3. Believe self-improvement comes from doing it on their own, not learning from others;
4. Build credibility by stating their credentials, contacts and successes;

WOMEN

1. Are all about the relationship not the transaction;

2. Network less often, and network longer and are more satisfied with their results;
3. Believe self-improvement comes from a variety of sources and doing it themselves is not one of them;
4. Build credibility by getting to know another's character, family and personal issues.

From the five decades of work that I have dedicated to the field of listening these are the points that I have summarized that create a simple formula for understanding and accepting the rich distinction between the genders and how they listen:

MEN

Perform
Provide
Protect
Problem Solve
Play
Please
Pleasure
Pro-Create

WOMEN

Feelings
Expression
Mentoring(Mothering)
Intuition
Nurturing
Inspiring
Nourishing
Empowering

According to Deborah Tannen, a leading scholar of communication, she states in her research that the basic distinction in communication, is that

women listen to establish and support relationship and intimacy; while men listen to establish status.

Bottom line, it really doesn't matter whether a person is an employee with a secure job or a business owner or business builder looking to build an empire.

Knowing how to "listen" to both genders presents the opportunity to build a diverse network that will provide all types of "nets" that will catch you and "listen" to you when you most require to be heard!

A colleague of mine forwarded this to me. The Washington Post asked its readers to assign a gender to nouns of their choice and explain their reasons. These were the best submissions:

SWISS ARMY KNIFE: *Male*, -even though it appears useful for a wide variety of work, it spends most its time just opening bottles.

KIDNEYS: *Female*, - they always go to the bathroom in pairs.

HOT AIR BALLOON: *Male*, - to get it to go anywhere you have to light a fire under it... and, of course, there's the hot air part.

SPONGES: *Female*, - they are soft and squeezable and retain water.

SHOE: *Male*, - it is usually unpolished, with its tongue hanging out.

COPIER: *Female*, - once turned off, it takes a while to warm up. It is an effective, reproductive device when the right buttons are pushed. It can wreak havoc when the wrong buttons are pushed.

ZIPLOC BAGS: *Male*, - they hold everything, and you are able to see right through them.

WEB PAGE: *Female*, - it is always getting hit on.

SUBWAY: *Male*, - it uses the same old lines to pick people up.

HAMMER: *Male*, - it hasn't evolved much over the last 5,000 years, yet it's handy to have around.

REMOTE CONTROL: *Female*, - it gives a man pleasure; he'd be lost without it; he doesn't always know the right buttons to push, yet he keeps trying.

Tips

To strengthen your ability to listen to both genders, take this listening inventory once per month. This inventory will provide you with the areas to be developed in your listening to keep your business, professional and personal relationships nourishing, alive and exciting.

A. Business Partner(s)

Were you listening when your partner(s) said?:

1. number one favorite activity is...
2. number one favorite sport is...
3. number one most embarrassing moment is...
4. number one person who has been inspiring is...
5. number one life challenge is...
6. number one life goal to achieve is...
7. number one book (for now) is...

B. Family/Spouse

Were you listening when your spouse/family member(s) said?:

1. number one dessert is...
2. number one type of music is...
3. number one most annoying personal habit is...
4. number one best quality is...
5. number one actor (for now) is...
6. number one scariest moment is...
7. number one proudest accomplishment is...

The poor listener interrupts. The good listener interprets. The superior listener demonstrates. The masterful listener inspires.

~Lorac 1938

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

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