



Connecting
Couples

Donna Reeves Bowman, LCSW-C & David L. Bowman, MDiv

Thought of the Month News and Notes

In This Issue

[Thought of the Month](#)
[Upcoming Workshops](#)

Quick Links

[Register for
Workshops](#)

[Next Step Workshops](#)

[IRI Couples Blog](#)

[LaSplash online
magazine](#)

[Be Sure to "Like" Us
on Facebook!](#)

Join Our List

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

Issue: #67
October 2014

Dear Friends,

Yes, you are correct, it IS November and the Thought is for October! Did you think we forgot this issue? No, though one team member, an important one...missed the deadline! She (and no, it's not Donna!) apologizes and promises that this "trick" will not be repeated. After all, tricks in October are almost as fun as treats!

We were loving a relaxing Sunday by the fire and having a discussion about this Thought. If you recall, last month we explored what makes your partner feel cherished or special. This month we look at things from a guy's point of view. What does he REALLY want? You may be surprised!

As always, if you need us, just call.

Donna and David

[Be Sure to "Like" Us on Facebook!](#)

OCTOBER 2014: "How to Respect Your Guy"

A thousand men were asked the simple question, "If you had to choose one, would you rather be loved or respected?" Guess what? 90% of the men said they would rather be respected.

I felt like I was on solid ground last month in my suggestions for how men could help their partners feel more cherished. (I got

some feedback on the word "cherished." Try "loved" or "treasured" if you want.) I am less confident in making suggestions to women this month, somehow. Please see this as an honest effort to capture some things men really, really want and feel but probably will not be able to tell you outright. My thoughts come out of my observations over a bunch of years of sitting with thousands of couples.

Just as it is true that women are not likely to say outright how much they wish to be cherished or treasured, men may not say directly that they wish to be respected or seen as a hero. That does not make it any less true!

Ready? Some of my readers will be uncomfortable or downright angry upon hearing these suggestions. I know this. It may be because of a painful experience with your husband or a prior relationship or your childhood story. I also know that across the board women are measurably less satisfied with their relationship than men. Women tend to feel "I already work much harder at keeping this relationship going than he does."

Nevertheless, allow me to share what I genuinely see as true and helpful to know.

1. Most important of all: refrain from any criticism. It may come as a shock but we men are far more vulnerable to feeling criticized than our Partners. Notice that I said "feeling" criticized. Donna can say something as harmless as "I think one of the tires is low" and immediately I can shift into "Oh no. I'm a terrible husband" mode. This phenomenon is widespread with men (I've checked it out.) It stems from a combination of our particular childhood story combined with what Steven Stosny calls our primal urge to "provide" and "protect". Women, understandably, don't easily get this.

Just know this...that anytime you are questioning your guy about everyday things there is a distinct possibility that he will feel criticized. Any mention of a deficit can do this. From "It's cold in this house" to "We never take nice vacations."

Learn and practice abundant language for everything. "I would love it if you would...." "It makes me happy when you ..." (e.g. come home on time; drive the speed limit, etc.)

2. Be patient with his relational style. Men want to be connected just as much as women. It's true. We often do it differently than through intimate conversation or sharing of feelings. Many times we don't know what we feel. Terry Real writes that men, by and large, have lost touch with their feelings as they grow up. We may very well want to connect by doing an activity or by being sexual. Fixing a broken appliance may be a loving and connected act for a man. So, again with abundant language, look for ways to say "I understand that you are wanting to connect with me in your own way."

3. Seek to understand his need for peace and routine. I know this can be infuriating but it is true that for men, if things are not too terribly out of whack, they will tend to choose not to stir things up. Most men that I know feel at a disadvantage in "relational" discussions or dust ups. As men, our unspoken desire is for things to be peaceful. That means that we have succeeded in providing a safe and pleasant environment for our Partner and our family.

This is very important to most men. Picture a male lion perched on an outpost watching over his mate and cubs. He is happy and relaxed when the family is eating and playing. He is doing his job. If there is any disruption, the male lion must go on high alert and take defensive or aggressive measures. (See Stosny: "Lions Without a Cause"). The next time your man runs away

or loses his temper, see if it is not related to his frustration over failing to provide a peaceful connection for you and the family.

4. Try to understand his vulnerability to shame. Please note: your Partner is not going to reveal to you that he feels ashamed. If he is like me, he is too ashamed to reveal that he is ashamed. I will hide or run away or resort to anger first. (Shame is a very instructive but complicated phenomenon. See Love and Stosny: How to Improve Your Marriage Without Talking About It. This book informs my understanding of hetero relationships more than any other since GTLYW.)

The point is that at a very early age little boys are hypersensitive to too much relational stimulation and are inadvertently given signals that they are not doing it right...the "relational" thing, that is. This starts a lifelong pattern of being vulnerable to shame, especially in intimate relationships. Add to this the many cultural messages that a boy doesn't "do" feelings, certainly not vulnerable or soft ones like sad, afraid, anxious....and a boy certainly doesn't express feelings by crying! So an abundance of compassion is needed to re-frame what you women experience as avoidance, indifference, willfulness or worse.

5. Trust me on this one....The top priority in his life is for YOU to be happy with him. Trust that. That's what I said. What a man wants most...more than a fortune, or a scratch golf game, or six pack abs or a promotion...is to know that his Partner is pleased with him. Go ahead! Ask him, "As far as you and I are concerned, what do you most want out of life?"

I have posed this notion to hundreds of men and there has been 100% agreement to date. Usually with an enthusiastic

"ABSOLUTELY!"

Again, to be respected and to feel successful in protecting and providing makes for a very fulfilled man. (Please be clear that providing and protecting are not about material things or wild animals anymore. Women today can survive and stay safe on their own. It's about connection and peace and routine and respect.)

I would love to hear your wisdom about, and/or challenges to, any of what I have written.

David (and Donna)

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES
COMING UP!**

Be sure to watch this space or check our web site for future opportunities.

Getting the Love You Want Workshops

December 5-7, 2014 Frederick, MD

January 9-11, 2015 Frederick, MD

February 20-22, 2015 Frederick, MD

Next Step Workshop

March 7-8, 2015 Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

I'm not concerned with your liking or disliking me... All I ask is that you respect me as a human being. Jackie Robinson

One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say. Bryant H. McGill

There is no respect for others without humility in one's self. Henri Frederic Amiel

Everyone should be respected as an individual, but no one idolized. Albert Einstein

To be one, to be united is a great thing. But to respect the right to be different is maybe even greater. Bono

And the greatest lesson that mom ever taught me though was this one. She told me there would be times in your life when you have to choose between being loved and being respected. Now she said to always pick being respected.
Chris Christie

The bond that links your true family is not one of blood, but of respect and joy in each other's life.
Richard Bach

It is so important to get respect for what you do and at the same time give it. Estelle Parsons

When you practice gratefulness, there is a sense of respect toward others. Dalai Lama

We are on this journey with you. Keep in touch!

Sincerely,

**David and Donna Bowman
Bowman & Associates, PA**

[Forward email](#)



This email was sent to info@connectingcouples.net by info@connectingcouples.net | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Rapid removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).



Try it FREE today.

Bowman & Associates, PA | 7823 Chestnut Grove Road | Frederick | MD | 21701
