

Let's talk my way and your way

There is an old stereotype that labels women as likely to talk too much and think too little, and men the reverse – think too much and talk too little. Some may think it accurate but few would be brave enough these days to voice this gender generalisation.

So what is right? How you see it depends on which side of the gender fence you occupy. Of course, things are not exclusively gender-based, and you will always find some men and women who go against and don't fit the men-women generalisation. But generalisations are often apt and always worth exploring.

The simplest way to examine the difference between what might be called typical male thinking and typical female thinking is to look at what is important to them about ways of considering issues and solving problems.

Most men like to analyse the difficulty and cut it down to size, along the lines of explaining it in dot-point form and then arriving at a logical conclusion or plan of action. The A to B process.

However, the female partner often wants to know how and why he got to that conclusion. While this is irrelevant and peripheral stuff to him, to her the mental or emotional journey is what's important.

And that's the difference. He wants to just do the activity to solve the problem, but she wants to talk about it, explore the feelings associated with it and then come up with a solution.

In many cases for a man the process of identifying the problem and coming up with the solution might take five minutes – for a woman it's likely to mean half an hour of talking about it and exploring all the options.

The answer to this seemingly insoluble difference is for a man to realise that a woman needs to talk about it, and his role is to listen, rather than get frustrated that she is not getting to the point.

And in turn, the woman needs to realise that a bloke's tolerance level for talking about an issue might be different from hers, so she shouldn't expect too much – it's important to have realistic expectations of how much touchy-feely talk the average bloke can take.

Sex is an interesting battle-ground. For many men, it's the actual sexual activity that provides the intimacy between a couple, but for a woman it's important to build up towards it with emotional foreplay such as a romantic dinner and gestures from her guy that he is looking forward to "dessert".

If a bloke can play it this way, the likelihood is that the sex will be a lot more satisfying for both partners. Conversely, a woman needs to realise that sometimes she might have sex without much build up and that it was actually really spontaneous and enjoyable.

It's all about give and take and accepting each other's different approaches and working out a way of meeting in the middle.

Look for the positives in each other's different approaches rather than the negatives. In relationship issues, as soon as you get into the red and blue corners, there is going to be a winner and a loser, which is highly counter-productive to a healthy partnership.

Keep reminding yourself that your partner's different way of doing something might have much to offer. The underlying fundamental for a successful relationship is to maintain respect for the other person's autonomy.

Survival tips

- **Try to see the positives in men's and women's different approaches**
- **Be prepared to try it your partner's way sometimes**
- **Successful relationships aren't without winners and losers – always try to remain respectful of your partner.**