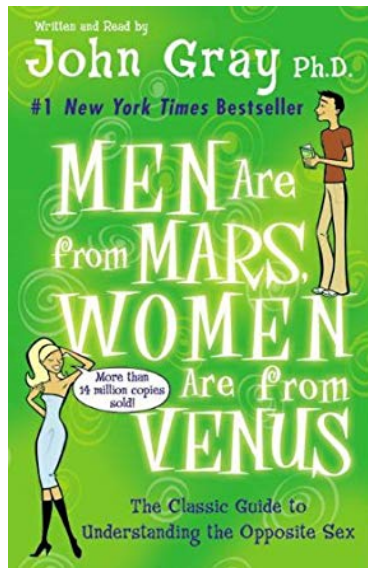


# **#1 Book Summary: Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus, by John Gray**

by Allen Cheng

<https://www.allencheng.com/men-are-from-mars-women-are-from-venus-summary-pdf-john-gray/>



Imagine that men and women come from two different planets. When you think that way, it's suddenly easier to understand why men and women tend to communicate differently, behave differently, and have different emotional needs.

In this book, author John Gray breaks down the primary differences between men and women and gives comprehensive advice for dealing with miscommunication, showing support to your partner in the way they crave, and being more fulfilled with your relationship. Find out why your husband pulls away just when you need him most, and why your wife needs to talk relentlessly about her feelings.

## **1-Page Summary of Men are from Mars**

Men and women tend to get into conflict over their natural differences. But when you learn to think of men and women as coming from different planets, and therefore **recognize the inherent differences between men and women, you will be more successful in relationships with the opposite sex.**

Imagine that men come from Mars and women come from Venus. By understanding life on both planets, you will begin to understand *why* men think one way and women think another. Then you will learn to be more tolerant and forgiving of people of the opposite sex. **You will discover creative solutions to miscommunication problems, understand the best way to show love and support, and learn how to get more fulfillment out of your relationships.**

### > Martians and Venusians Come to Earth

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> One day on Mars, the Martians were looking out through their telescopes. All of a sudden, they noticed beautiful creatures on another planet. They had discovered the Venusians of Venus. Immediately, the Martians began to feel a kind of love they had never known. They quickly invented spaceships and traveled to Venus to take care of the marvelous creatures there.

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> All along, the Venusians had known that something great was on its way. They welcomed the Martians to their planet and gave their love generously to them. Although they were from different planets, the Martians and Venusians celebrated their differences and learned to live together harmoniously.

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> Eventually, the Martians and Venusians traveled to Earth. But the planet's atmosphere had strange effects on them—they developed amnesia. All of a sudden, the Martians and Venusians forgot that they originally hailed from different planets. They could no longer understand and appreciate their innate

differences.

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> Men and women have been in conflict ever since because **understanding and appreciating**

**one another's differences is the key to healthy relationships.**

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## The Primary Differences Between Men and Women

Because men and women hail from different planets, they have a different code of values and different emotional needs. The primary values and emotional needs of men and women influence everything from the way we behave to the way we communicate.

### Qualities and Values of Men and Women

A man is primarily concerned with **autonomy, achievement, power, and efficiency**. **His sense of self is centered around his ability to solve problems and reach goals by himself**. These values are reflected in everything that a Martian does and says.

Because a man is so focused on handling his own problems, he does not particularly like to talk about his problems or accept advice, unless he consults a trusted expert. So on Mars, it is understood that when a man talks to another man about his problems, he has already attempted to solve them alone—now he is asking for advice or solutions.

On the other hand, a woman is primarily concerned with **relationships, love, connection, and aesthetics**. **Her sense of self is centered around her ability to nurture others, communicate her feelings, and build quality relationships**. These values are reflected in everything that a Venusian says and does.

Because a woman is so focused on communication, she finds fulfillment in talking about her problems with others. So on Venus, it is intuitively understood that communication is a sign of caring and respect. The way women show love to other women is to offer support without having to be asked.

## **Emotional Needs of Men and Women**

Many times, both a man and a woman in a relationship feel as though they give more love than they receive. But the truth is that they are *both* giving love, but not in their partner's desired manner.

Awareness of how your partner's love needs are different from yours will guide you in how to show your love and support in the way they most want to receive them.

There are 12 types of love. It is important to note that both men and women need all 12 types of love. But men and women each have six *primary* needs that must be fulfilled in order to truly feel loved and give love in return.

- Men primarily need **trust, acceptance, appreciation, admiration, approval, and encouragement**. On Mars, every man instinctively knew to show their love for each other in these primary ways.
- Women primarily need **caring, understanding, respect, devotion, validation, and reassurance**. On Venus, every woman instinctively knew to show their love for each other in these primary ways.

**The most effective way for a woman to fulfill a man's love needs is to empower him.** Showing your man that you love him the way he is, and wouldn't want to change him, makes him feel trusted, accepted, appreciated, admired, approved of, and encouraged.

**The most effective way for a man to fulfill a woman's love needs is to communicate with her.**

Listening to a woman, without trying to change or invalidate her feelings, is a way to shower her with caring, understanding, respect, devotion, validation, and reassurance.

## Different Behaviors of Men and Women

### How Men and Women Communicate

You probably wouldn't expect two different species from two different planets to speak the same language—so why would you expect men and women to communicate in the same way?

A man and a woman can hear the exact same words and glean two completely different meanings. These little misunderstandings often build into big arguments. The first step to avoiding unnecessary arguments is to understand the natural differences in the way you communicate:

- **Men talk to communicate information.** They tend to speak literally and succinctly.
- **Women talk to communicate feelings.** They tend to generalize, hyperbolize, and use poetic language to express themselves.

Because men and women use their words differently, they often misunderstand each other and end up in arguments.

### > Example: How to Communicate

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> Tammy is frustrated and says “You *never* listen to me!” Her husband, George, responds earnestly, “I’m listening right now.”

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> Because George forgot that Tammy is from Venus and likely to hyperbolize, he took her statement literally. He wanted to comfort Tammy with his response, but instead he frustrated Tammy further. Tammy forgot that George is from Mars. She interpreted his response as an attempt to invalidate her feelings.

**When you learn to translate your partner's words and understand the intended meaning behind them, you'll be able to avoid arguments by eliminating miscommunication.**

### **How Men and Women Respond to Stress**

One of the most drastic natural differences between men and women lies in their response to stress.

- **A man withdraws into his "cave."** He needs to be alone to focus on the problem and come up with a solution.
- **A woman reaches out.** She needs to talk about her problems in order to find comfort from her stress.

### **Men Go to Their Cave**

When a man is under stress, he rarely wants to talk about what's bothering him. So he goes into his "cave," his private mindset. Remember, men from Mars are primarily focused on autonomy and competence. Talking about his problems would make him feel like he's not able to solve them himself. In the cave, a man's primary focus is on discovering how to solve his own problems.

While in the cave, a man is usually distant, preoccupied, and forgetful. He is unable to be fully present in his relationship until he has found a solution and emerged from his cave.

As a man, it is important to know your own tendency to go into your cave. **Be aware of how quickly you might shift from being warm and loving to being withdrawn and unresponsive.** Try to be compassionate of your female partner if she feels neglected while you are in your cave.

Ideally, women should understand that going into the cave is a necessary step for a man to deal with stress. It is unfair to expect a man in the cave to be able to open up or talk about his feelings. Don't take it personally—remember that he is from Mars. **Trust his ability to cope with his own stress and come back to you in his own time.**

### **Women Talk about Their Problems**

When a woman is under stress, she needs to talk about everything that's overwhelming her so that she can sort through her feelings. So she reaches out to those closest to her. Remember, women from Venus primarily focus on connection and expression. While stressed, a woman is usually emotionally involved, talkative, and sensitive.

As a woman, it is important to remember your tendency to talk about everything that is overwhelming and bothering you. **Be aware of how your complaints might sound like blame to your male partner.** Try to be appreciative of your male partner if he listens to you and your stress.

Sometimes when you talk about your problems with your male partner, he will feel attacked and assume that you are blaming him for everything that's bothering you. Because he came from Mars, he might forget that you're only talking to feel better. If you sense this happening, say these magic words: **"It's not your fault."**

Ideally, a man should understand that talking through problems is a necessary step for women to deal with stress. It is unfair to shut your partner down when she needs to vent. Don't take her complaints as blame or criticism—remember she's from Venus and she's just talking to feel better.

### **How Men and Women Argue**

Most arguments in relationships follow a similar pattern:

1. The woman expresses that she is upset about “Topic A.”
2. The man explains why “Topic A” shouldn’t upset her.
3. The woman feels her upset feelings have been invalidated. Now she is more upset about this invalidation than she ever was about “Topic A.”
4. The man feels her displeasure and becomes upset. He mistakenly blames his partner for making him upset and expects her to apologize.
5. She either apologizes while secretly wondering why she was the one to have to apologize, or she becomes increasingly upset and escalates to a fight.

In order to avoid arguments and break this pattern:

- A man must learn not to invalidate his partner’s feelings.
- A woman must learn not to speak in a disapproving tone.
- **Both partners must learn the value of the words “I’m sorry.”** Not every apology has to be an admission of guilt. Men, especially, should learn to use “I’m sorry” as a way to say “I care about you and your feelings.”

**Men unknowingly start arguments by invalidating a woman’s feelings.** When your female partner expresses feelings of disappointment, frustration, or worry (especially about something you’ve done or said), resist the instinct to offer explanations of your intentions or justifications for your behavior. First, show that you are listening to her in order to fulfill her primary love needs of reassurance, caring, and understanding.

**Women unknowingly start arguments by being indirect when expressing their negative feelings.** Women commonly ask rhetorical questions when they are upset, such as “How could you do that?” Women also use their eyes and tone of voice to express that they’re upset. To a man, these indirect forms of communication feel like interrogation and disapproval. When your male partner makes a mistake, resist the urge to correct him. First, forgive his mistake in order to fulfill his primary love needs of trust, acceptance, and encouragement.



> ##### Example: How to Avoid Arguments

> One day, Frank forgets to pick up groceries on the way home like he said he would. Laura is frustrated.

>

> **What not to do:** Lisa sharply asks a rhetorical question, like “How could you possibly forget?” This is too indirect. Frank takes the question literally and answers “I was really busy. These things happen.” This is an explanation and too invalidating of Lisa’s feelings. Lisa feels like Frank thinks she has no reason to be upset, and she becomes angry that he would dismiss her feelings.

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> **What to do instead:** Instead of Lisa asking a rhetorical question, she could simply ask him, “Would you please go pick up groceries?” This is direct and avoids a disapproving tone. Frank, realizing that he forgot to get groceries could say, “I’m sorry that I forgot. Are you mad?” Giving Lisa a chance to talk about her feelings will make her feel validated.

## How Men and Women Keep Score

In relationships, men and women perform gestures of love for each other in the hopes of earning points from their partner, or earning favor. But because men and women are from different planets, they award points based on an entirely different set of rules.

**Once you understand how your partner awards points, you’ll be able to direct your energy towards the gestures of love that your partner will appreciate the most:**

- Men need to focus on performing small loving acts for their partner.

- Women need to focus on showing a loving attitude to their partner.

**To a woman, every gift or gesture of love, no matter the size, is worth one point.** The little things, like taking out the trash or bringing home flowers, are just as important to a woman as the big things, like a new car or a fun vacation. This is not just a woman's preference—it's a true emotional need. Every expression of love makes a woman feel cared for, validated, and respected.

Here are some examples of the kind of small gestures you can do every day to keep your female partner's love needs fulfilled:

- Give her a hug first thing upon arriving home from work.
- Compliment her.
- Notice something that needs fixing and offer to do it. Don't forget.
- Offer to complete something on her to-do list for her.

**To a man, every time a woman shows appreciation or acceptance and makes him feel loved, he awards her a point.** A man feels satisfaction when he elicits a loving response from his partner for the things that he's done. Unlike a woman, his love needs aren't fulfilled by the actions that his partner does for him. In fact, doing things for his partner is the first step to filling his own love needs. As long as she responds with warm appreciation, he will feel admired and encouraged.

Here are some of the ways that you can show appreciation and acceptance to earn points from your male partner:

- Don't say "I told you so" when he makes a mistake.
- Say "it's okay" when he forgets something he was supposed to pick up for you.
- Say "it's okay" if he forgets again—this will earn you more points than the first time you forgave him.
- Show him how happy you are to see him when he gets home.

## **How to Achieve Lasting Love**

Reading this guide and learning to appreciate your partner's natural differences is a great first step in building a lasting relationship. But don't forget, some phases of love will feel better than others. That doesn't mean that your love is any less strong or less healthy than it once was. It just means that you need to work a little bit harder to nurture warmth and kindness with your partner.

Think of your relationship as a journey that you are going on with your partner. Be forgiving of any steps backward and appreciative of every step forward.

Refer back to this guide whenever you feel that you or your partner have forgotten the best ways to give and receive love. It's natural to forget new things when you're learning. So if you only remember one thing from this book for now, it should be this: **You and your partner are *supposed* to be different. Love your partner for who they are and for all the ways they're different from you.**

## Full Summary of Men are from Mars

### Introduction

Men and women tend to get into conflict over their natural differences. But when you learn to think of men and women as coming from different planets, and therefore **recognize the inherent differences between men and women, you will be more successful in relationships with the opposite sex.**

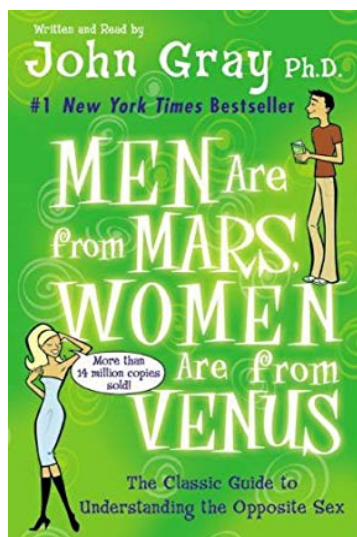
(Shortform note: Throughout this book, published in 1992, author John Gray uses the terms sex and gender somewhat interchangeably. He also makes some generalizations about men and women that might seem outdated today. Challenge yourself to look for insights about yourself and your romantic partner in the descriptions of both sexes.)

Imagine that men come from Mars and women come from Venus. By understanding life on both planets, you will begin to understand *why* men think one way and women think another. Then you will learn to be

more tolerant and forgiving of people of the opposite sex. **You will discover creative solutions to miscommunication problems, understand the best way to show love and support, and learn how to get more fulfillment out of your relationships.**

Once you are aware that men and women are naturally different, you will be able to set more realistic expectations for yourself and your partner. Often (usually unknowingly), you expect people of the opposite sex to act, think, and feel the way *you* do. You expect your partner to love you the way that you love them, and to behave the way that you behave. This is a recipe for disappointment because you have already forgotten to appreciate the ways that your partner is naturally different from you.

**---End of Preview---**



Read the rest of the "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus" summary at my new book summary product, [Shortform](#).

Here's what you'll find in the **full Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus summary**:

- Introduction
- Different Behaviors of Men and Women
- Exercise: Help Your Partner Support You in Stressful Times
- Men and Women's Intimacy Cycles
- Improve Communication in Your Relationship
- Exercise: Improve Communication in Your Relationship

- Understand How Your Partner Keeps Score
- Achieve a Reciprocal Relationship
- Exercise: Get the Support You Need
- Handle Conflicts Lovingly
- Exercise: Write a Letter of Love
- Nurture Love in All Its Phases

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