

WHY MEN AND WOMAN ARE FROM DIFFERENT PLANETS

The *instinctual drives* did not become as powerful as they are in dominating our thoughts and behavior by accident. In our human species' earliest days, life was tough, only the fittest survived. If our species did not have the variety of sexual behaviors that made sure the next generation was not just created but also survived to the age when they too would produce the next generation, we would not be here today. Of near equal importance are the drives to mark and defend a territory and to place as high-up in a dominance hierarchy as possible. The species that had these behaviors encoded in their genes and expressed through the neural circuits and chemistry of their brains would win the battle for survival. Those that did not would have their bones dug up by paleontologists and displayed in museums as extinct species. These behaviors are the prime directives, necessary for survival.

A fascinating part of this whole story is that through our genes and brain's biology, Mother Nature gave to men and to women different roles in the play-out and emotional experiences of these *instinctual drives*. It would be hard for even the most strident feminist to deny that in terms of a need to be leader of the pack (dominance), to fight to acquire and defend a territory, and in particular to engage in the variety of sexual behaviors from bonding to a mate and offspring through to nest building, most men and women seem to naturally prefer different roles.

These facts of the gender differences in our instinctual drives have had a profound impact upon not only our overt behaviors but our psyches as well. An often heard saying is that "men are afraid of intimacy." Perhaps men are not afraid of intimacy but are

simply not programmed to bond in the same fashion as are women. In fact, the woman has the breast milk, if she were casual about always being around her child it would have starved. Along with genes that made women produce the child's nourishment came genes that made her bond intensely to the child. The same case could be made for the woman needing to be around a man who would hunt to provide her with food as well as protect her from the variety of threats present in the early days of our human existence. She must follow him in order for not only her own survival, but her child's as well. Compare the number of women you know who uprooted themselves and their children in order to follow her man with the number of men you know who uprooted themselves in order to follow his woman. Cultural traditions common throughout time and place are more often than not based in a *sublimation* of our *instincts*.

In the early times of our daily struggle for survival, a man's role was to fight to protect his territory and his family from intruders, to hunt to provide food, as well as to show his strength and prowess to others as a way to place himself in as high a position as possible in order to derive the benefits of his position. In the old days the competition was for mating rights, preferred access to the food always in short supply, and other benefits that made life easier. On the surface, today it certainly seems different, but perhaps the modern male's behavior is simply a *sublimation* of the immutable *instinctual* drives.

Men in the twenty-first century certainly do spend their days competing for positions in a hierarchy. It may be corporate, military, sports, or even for first-chair in an orchestra, and the benefits are not as direct as just described. Instead, a position of power provides the money with which one buys the better quality of life through food, territory,

and the variety of other possessions he then uses to create his display in order to attract the most desirable mate as possible.

Along with the genetic and brain programs for these *instinctual* behaviors came their associated emotional feelings that motivate us to try as hard as possible to fulfill their goals. What event is more guaranteed to provoke feelings of *anxiety* in a woman than to be separated from her child. This feeling also motivates her to find the child. What event is more guaranteed to provoke feelings of *anxiety* in a man than to face a threat to his position in the dominance hierarchy, his sense of self-importance. This feeling also motivates him to try hard to defend his position. The same linkage exists between the *instinctual drives* and the feelings of *depression*. *Depression* is experienced by a woman whose child had died or a man that has been fired.

This essay is a powerful tool in providing you with some insight into the inevitable conflict between men and women that seems as permanent a part of life as the daily rising of the sun. The next time you hear the saying about men and intimacy or find yourself puzzling over the seemingly irrational behavior of a member of the opposite sex, remember their fundamental nature is very different from yours. Mother Nature designed men and women to play very different roles in guaranteeing the survival of the human species. Sure, we are millennia away from the days when we lived a “dog-eat-dog” life of survival. However, the same genes and brain circuits that tens of thousands of years ago drove our behaviors and motivated us to experience the emotional feelings that led to our human species survival are still with us today.

We sublimate sublimate sublimate these primal drives into socially acceptable behaviors, but in many ways the primal feelings associated with these drives still bubble

to the surface into our conscious feelings. A man's feelings are different from a woman's, conflicts are inevitable. However, despair over this state of affairs is not the only response. Instead, this understanding should allow you to cope with this conflict in ways that instead of hurling a plate at the no-good s.o.b may even bring a smile to your face over the joy of watching the inevitability of Mother Nature at work.