

The Eleven Touches to a Happy Marriage

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Dedication

To my wife Cheri, who has inspired me and taught me
much of what is in this book

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Chapter 4

The Caring Touch

You care about and for your spouse. Even couples who are having significant problems can still give a caring touch. We need to be taken care of and we need someone to deeply care for us.

What then is the best way to give that caring touch? It is not enough to say you care. It *must* be shown. You can care to the nth degree, but it will not do much good for you or your spouse if you are unable to demonstrate that caring in ways that really work.

Men and women generally need different caring touches. To be effective, you will need to understand and give the caring touch your spouse so desires. I will give you four caring touches for both men and women. In general, I think you'll find these gender differences accurate. Check it out with your spouse to make sure you're on the right track.

MEN:

1. Care about my job.

A man's job is one of the most important areas of his life. Many times his job is the top of the list. If you don't care about his job, then he will think you don't care much about him. His job is what he spends most of his time on, what he thinks and worries about most. Men feel pressure to provide for their families. Even if the wife works outside the home, the man is typically the one who feels the pressure of providing. A man who doesn't do

well in this area often feels inadequate as a man, and he struggles with self-esteem problems.

Show you care by asking him about his day, the problems, the pressures, the failures, the fears, the hopes. Listen and show empathy, like you do with your girlfriends. Men often don't want advice about their work. If they do, they will ask. Giving unsolicited advice triggers feelings of inadequacy and won't go over very well. Show that you understand and care about the financial pressure he is dealing with.

2. Care about my physical needs.

Men are like little boys. We want to be taken care of. Feed us, have sex with us, let us play, take care of the home. There is nothing wrong with these needs and desires. If you care about them and attend to them, your man is more likely to feel satisfied but and in addition have good feelings about you.

Granted there are too many men who never grow up and expect their wives to mother them way too much. Of course, men need to balance out being taken care of, with taking care of his wife and children. The key is to find that balance. Giving too much or giving too little in this area will inevitably lead to problems.

3. Show you care by appreciating me.

It may seem a bit childish, but men need appreciation. They respond well when they feel appreciated. Many wives will say "Why do I have to thank him or show appreciation for helping me with the children, or helping me around the house. It's his house and children too!" Why? Because it is a caring touch that your man needs, and it will reap benefits for you directly. When a man feels appreciated, then he is more motivated to help and please you. If a man feels unappreciated, or even worse, feels that his efforts are inadequate, he will

likely not continue. If you want your husband to do certain things, then show appreciation for what he does. It really isn't that hard. All it takes is a touch or hug with a few positive words.

4. Show you care by respecting me.

Men need respect more than they need sex. If you don't believe me, then ask a man if he would rather live with a woman who respects him, or a woman who only wants sex with him.

Respect is crucial for a man in a relationship. Without respect, there will be significant problems. You may be wondering how you can respect him when he has acted in some very disrespectful ways. Good question. I'm not saying you should respect destructive, inappropriate, or non-loving behavior. Focus on respecting who he is. The fact that you are with him says you found some positive things that you respect about him. Obviously he cannot be all that you want. Let's face it-he is a man. However, you can still respect his desires, his motivation, his attempts to please you, to meet your needs, and his attempts at trying to love you.

If you are constantly critical, emasculating, negative, complaining, instructing, belittling him, then you are not being respectful.

It is possible to show respect to anybody regardless of what they have done. It doesn't mean you don't address unhealthy behavior. It means you show respect in the process.

WOMEN:

1. Care about my feelings.

Most men are uncomfortable when it comes to feelings. We don't like to feel too much. We aren't good at

expressing feelings or hearing someone express feelings to us. We are not quite sure what to do about it. Feelings scare us and trigger our own feelings of insecurity.

Well, too bad. Quit being an emotional wimp. Your wife needs to express her feelings. She needs to talk things out, and she needs you to express your own feelings. So get tough. Prepare yourself to listen and empathize. It is not as hard as you think. Most men go into the problem solving mode, but women don't want solutions. They want you to listen and try to understand what they're feeling and why. Put yourself in their shoes – that is empathy. It will work and it shows you really care about your spouse.

2. Give me non-sexual attention.

Women already know you want and like their bodies. What they really need to know is that you want and like who they are. If you are always focused on sex and her sexual parts, then she won't feel that you really care for her. Start giving non-sexual affection daily. Hold her hand, give her a warm hug (without grabbing her butt), cuddle, soft kisses, massages, brush her hair. All go a long way in showing you really care about her.

Be romantic without being sexual. Giving cards, flowers, romantic dinners, dancing, and love notes really give a touch of caring without focusing on sex. If you can focus on giving non-sexual attention then my guess is it will lead to more sex. But let her take you there. You need to focus on giving affection as an end in itself.

3. Treat the children in caring ways.

One of the best ways to show how much you care about your wife is to demonstrate caring behavior to the kids. Nothing is closer to a woman's heart than her children. When she sees you loving them in tender, positive ways, she will feel very cared for by you and will

be drawn to you.

Now I know you care for your kids, but the important thing here is how well you show that you care. There are specific ways to operate with kids that will be most effective. Consider the following:

A) Spend time doing fun things with your kids, things that they want to do.

B) Be involved in their activities, school, and friends. Be interested in their lives.

C) Don't be harsh with your words or behavior toward them. Respect your children even if you don't like their behavior.

D) Communicate your love and commitment to your kids even in the light of discipline.

E) Discipline your children in constructive ways. If you don't know how, then learn.

We'll touch a little more on this subject in Chapter Six. The point here is caring for your children is one of the best ways to give your wife a caring touch.

4. Show you care by protecting me.

One of a woman's primary needs is to feel safe and secure. She needs you to help provide her with that security. It will show her how much you care. There are three ways to give her that protective touch: financial, physical, and emotional.

To protect her financially is to do your best to be a good provider by working hard to make money as well as learning how to manage it.

To protect her physically is to take into account her fears about safety for her and the children. Respect her need to lock doors, to have an alarm system, and being careful with the kids. If it makes her feel safer, then do it, even if it doesn't make sense to you. It is a great way to show you care. Above all, don't you be the one

who hurts her. If you can't control your anger and you hurt your wife, then please get some help. It's not her fault if you lose your temper and do damage. That is your choice and your problem.

Protecting your wife emotionally is learning to understand and attend to her feelings as I stated earlier. She needs to feel safe with you emotionally in order to move toward you and feel that you really care.

The result of taking the time and effort to give the caring touch to your spouse will bring many rewards. Though learning to adequately give this touch will take some effort, it will be worth it.