



♂ *The Gender Dance*
 Loving and Understanding the Opposite Sex

Joy Carroll, Ed.D., Licensed Psychologist

Men	Women
Brain Differences	
Typically have larger brains although both sexes score equally well on tests of intelligence	Have greater numbers of neurons in areas of the brain associated with perception and speech
Have more white matter giving men greater ability in the areas of spatial reasoning ability and analytical thought	Have more developed corpus callosum giving greater ability to read feelings and social cues, infer intentions; excel in verbal and language tasks
Experience inhibition of “information spread” in the cortex allowing single-mindedness; tend to consider problems one piece at a time	Tend to globally respond to problems, see interconnections and can more readily see alternate side of an argument; can easily multitask
Tend to be skilled at systemizing and ordering, constructing rules-based analyses of events and the world	Tend to have difficulty separating emotions and personal experience from problems and solutions
Recall events by reconstructing tasks, elements or activities; events associated with competition or physical activity more easily recalled	Have enhanced ability to recall information and memories that have strong emotional components
Greater ability to detach from painful situations; can easily compartmentalize events and feelings	Produce higher levels of stress hormones and fail to shut off production readily; biologically prone to ruminate over troubling situations
Less sensitive to touch, pressure on the skin; less aware of changes in volume and voice inflection	Demonstrate greater sensitivity to sound; adept in noticing small changes in volume; better visual memory, tactile sensitivity
Communication	
Tend to have greater difficulty correctly identifying emotion in facial expression, particularly in women	More likely to correctly identify facial emotion and expression in both sexes
Avoid verbalizing passing thoughts because this is considered unimportant information	Process information and feelings by talking; details are important
Are more abstract; they are more likely to talk about ideas, concepts, and theories	Are more likely to talk about fears, feelings and experiences
Use “report talk” to gather facts, debate opinions, and solve problems through reasoned conversation	Use “process talk” in order to understand themselves and others, identify and validate feelings
Have a more limited feeling vocabulary and experience greater difficulty identifying feelings other than anger; need concrete talk from partner	Have an extensive feeling vocabulary and ability to identify feelings including nuances of emotion
View conversation as a means to an end; must have a practical purpose i.e. solve a problem, gather specific useful information	View conversation as means of processing, an end in itself and a way of achieving emotional connectedness

Men	Women
Demonstrate a greater need for control in discussion; will more often ask for evidence to support a claim	Tend to be better listeners; more likely to support claim based on emotion or past experience
Are more likely to focus on future plans and solving problems for a better tomorrow	Are more likely to focus on current feelings and experiences, the here-and-now
Conflict	
Tend to be more competitive; want to prove a point, keep score and win a debate	May be more likely to acquiesce in order to “keep the peace”; may use passive-aggressive means to win conflict
Respond to conflict with logical, ordered, solution focused discussion	Respond to conflict with feeling and experience focused discussion
Desire solutions and action when presenting partner with a problem	Desire empathy and validation when presenting partner with a problem
Are more likely to use work or sports as a means of escape from relationship pressures	Are more likely to be physically affected by stress in the relationship
Romance	
Feel loved when they are sexually desired and needed	Feel loved when they are cherished, protected and cared for
Define romance in sexual terms	Define romance in emotional terms
Tend to prefer romantic actions over romantic talk	Enjoy romantic and feeling talk; use this to feel closer to their partners
Usually do things for their partners as romantic gestures	Do things for their partners in concert with emotional gestures and expressions