

Women's Power Vs Men's Power

“Men have all the power. Women have been second-class citizens for too long.” **“Not true! Women are the controlling force. Men are powerless when it comes to women.”**

Women, for the most part, see themselves as powerless to man in both physical and financial ways.

Men, for the most part, are powerless to women emotionally and are manipulated by women through sex.

Women find this hard to believe. *“Men have all the power; how could they possibly feel powerless to us?”*

Since both men and women see themselves as powerless, both end up playing games in their relationships:

- **Men play at love to get sex.**
- **Women play at sex to get love.**

So, which is it? Is it women that have all the power or the men? For all intents and purposes, if you believe you are powerless, you are powerless! If you were not powerless, you would not have to play games. The fact that you are playing games in your relationships with each other, proves that you must be powerless. If you were powerful, you would not have to play these games! “Not tonight honey. I’ve got a headache.” Where there are games, there is not open and honest communication.

In practical terms, Reality is what you believe it to be. Whether something is true or not, if you believe it’s true, you will act in accordance with your beliefs. The problem is that after a while, you start to believe that the reality you are experiencing is real. It is not! All power is an illusion which you create.

Learned Helplessness. When I was in college, one of the experiments done on rats was to put a rat in a cage with food and water at one end, the center of the cage was wired to provide an electric shock, and the far end was where the rat was placed. When the rat tried to move across the cage to get its food, it would have to pass over the electric grid and would receive an electric shock. It did not take long before the rat **learned helplessness** and would not try to get across the grid, even when the grid was turned off. “No evidence of the helplessness reversal was observed.”

“Learned helplessness is behavior that occurs when the subject endures repeatedly painful or otherwise aversive stimuli from which it is unable to escape or avoid. After such experiences, the organism often fails to learn or accept "escape" or "avoidance" in new situations where such behavior is likely to be effective. In other words, the organism learned that it is helpless in situations where there is a presence of aversive stimuli, has accepted that it has lost control and thus gives up trying, even as changing circumstances offer a method of relief from said stimuli. Such an organism is said to have acquired learned helplessness.” Wikipedia

May I suggest that both men and women have some degree of learned helplessness. What are some of the beliefs that lead to learned helplessness and who is responsible for spreading these beliefs?

Who is teaching our daughters that rape is something to be ashamed of? Who says that sex (rape) is dirty? Since when does being raped and reporting it make you a victim and not a victor?

Men who rape, expose themselves, use physical and/or verbal violence against women have one thing in common. They feel powerless to women. I started working with men who expose themselves to women in the early 70s. What I found, over the years, was that these men were in relationships with women who were very verbally dominant. It might be a wife, girlfriend or mother (or all three). They all had the same fantasy of exposing themselves to a woman and having her scream and run off. “See, I do have power!” While at the same time, they held a secret fantasy that if they exposed themselves to a woman, she might be turned on by him. In that way, he had a win-win fantasy going on. Whichever way she reacted, he would win psychologically.

How is it possible for men and women to hang on to beliefs that are destructive and that create feelings of powerlessness? What beliefs, values, expectations and conclusions about the world makes it possible?

One of the most common of these beliefs is that words have meanings. Words do not have meanings. Only people have meanings that they put on the vocalizations that they hear. Words have definitions, in fact, they may have a half dozen or more definitions for the same vocalization. What is your response to “I have got a scratch.” How do you respond to it? “Do you want me to get a Band-Aid?” Or, “Go ahead and scratch, no one’s watching.”

Here are some examples of words having different meanings for different people. Employee: “The boss finally trusts me to work without supervision!... He told me to get out of his sight.” And, “I think she wants me all to herself! She said she wouldn’t wish me on anybody!” And, “It is the Free-Floating Guilt Society calling? Oh no! What have I done this time?”

People tend to hear what they want or expect to hear.

“Africa has some shit hole countries.” When you heard this, what did you hear? Was the president putting down black people? Or, was he saying that some countries in Africa have very corrupt governments? What you heard was not based on what was said, but on your expectation about the person saying it!

Have you ever gotten your feelings hurt? The next time you get your feelings hurt or feel put down, you can use this same concept to change what you hear! “You are lazy and irresponsible.” Obviously, my mate does not think I am living up to her expectations. We need to talk about our expectations for each other in this relationship. This approach could lead to problem-solving and strengthening of the relationship.

**You are responsible for what you say,
but even more, you are responsible for what you hear.**

Our initial response to feeling attacked is to become defensive. My mind is made up, don't confuse me with facts. We are constantly trying to force others to think and act according to our own beliefs. These attempts to correct others behavior neither change their minds nor satisfy us.

“People should act the way I think they should act, not the way they act.” This is a second belief that creates the illusion of powerlessness. One of the major reasons for the breakup of a relationship is that your partner is not doing what you think he/she should do. These missed expectations create anger which tends to build and build until separation/divorce is all that is left.

This last week I was talking to a lady, who was bemoaning the fact that her husband was such a disappointment. “After 15 years, I still cannot go to a wedding without crying because all I can think about is my dreams that he has smashed.”

How good of a listener are you? From the above little snippet, what can you learn about her beliefs and expectations?

1. My mate should make me happy.
2. I am not willing to change my expectations; my mate needs to change.
3. My “reality” of how things should be is more important than the relationship.
4. In a relationship, problem solving should just (magically) happen.
5. If my mate would do what he *should* do, then I could be happy.
6. I am powerless to change my situation.
7. Women/men are powerless to change their situations.
8. If my mate really loved me, he/she would change.
9. Because my mate will not change, it “*proves*” that he/she does not love me.
10. My mate should know what makes me feel loved. If I have to tell him/her what makes me feel loved, then what he/she does, means nothing.
11. Therefore, I have a right to have an affair as a way of getting my emotional needs met.

The above statements are all very dysfunctional beliefs and expectations. Do you have any of them? The more you have, the more likely your relationship is to fail.

Men and women, no matter how dysfunctional your thinking and your reality may be, it is what you have gotten used to. Once you get used to a reality, even if it is full of pain, anger and hurt, it becomes very hard to change it, because it is the other persons' fault. After a while, it starts to feel like your relationship, your job, your whole world is a prison and you are just a victim of everyone else.

Would you like to have some "get out of prison free" cards? One of the main problems in relationships is trying to fix the relationship. The place to start is **not** with the relationship!

The place to start is with yourself. No wonder you are frustrated with your mate because he/she will not change. *You are absolutely, totally powerless to change anybody else.* The more you try to change the other person, the more your mate ends up feeling manipulated and controlled. And, the more they will resist, push back and become defensive.

What do you do when you are feeling manipulated and controlled? Resist. Then is it no surprise when the other person resists all your attempts to change them?

The good part is that *you are absolutely, totally powerful to change yourself.* Before trying to change somebody else, consider first, are you willing to change yourself? Second, you will need to be clear on what **you** need to change. Look back at the list of the 11 beliefs and expectations that are in a failing relationship. **Changing partners without changing your expectations will, more than likely, end in another dysfunctional relationship.**

Carefully consider these 11 dysfunctional beliefs/expectations. Which of these beliefs/expectations are you NOT willing to change? Now, you have your list that you need to work on to create successful relationships in your life.

What you believe determines what you hear. What you hear will determine whether you are an actor or a reactor and whether you see yourself as a powerful person or as a powerless person.

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