

# How a Man's Mind *REALLY* Works! Part 2

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Most women would love to better understand how the men in their lives think. They intuitively know that men often think differently than they do. In the last issue, we discussed how male and female hormones influence the development of the fetal brain.

Modern science can demonstrate the differences in brain activity between men and women with functional brain scan pictures.

**What follows are some very interesting differences between the male and female brain.**

Let's start with the cerebrum, the upper part of the brain.

While in the uterus, testosterone surges to the male brain and at puberty, enhances areas in the right hemisphere responsible for the development of complex spatial skills, which is one of the male's strongest assets. In former times, this spatial strength allowed men, the hunters, to calculate the speed, movement, and distance of prey, and to work out the arc and velocity needed to shoot their target. Only about 10% of women have spatial skills as good as most men. Spatial ability also means being able to picture in one's mind the shape of things, their dimensions and movement. Men can often tell you if a piece of furniture will fit in a space without having to measure.

Individuals with good spatial abilities find pleasure in moving objects through space, such as baseballs, golf balls, fishing lures and race cars. Have you noticed that men love anything that moves? It is partly because men generally have such strong directional skills, that it is so difficult for them to stop and ask for help when they are lost. They are certain, with a little more time that they'll be able to figure out how to get there. Most women have the feeling that Moses wouldn't have spent 40 years wandering in the desert if he had just listened to his wife and stopped to ask directions! With superior spatial skills, a man is more likely than his wife to spend Saturday in the garage using a circular saw to cut wood for a doghouse.

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The cerebrum is also the area of the brain that is best at problem solving. A man's brain is organized to evaluate and understand objects, their relationship to other objects, how it all works, and solutions to the problems. His brain is programmed for a "How



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do I fix it?" response to life. Men tend to fix things by doing something. One woman wanted her husband to show a more loving attitude toward her — so he mowed the lawn. He saw this as an expression of his love. When that didn't work, he painted her kitchen. When she still wasn't happy, he offered to take her to a football game! When a woman is upset, she talks emotionally to her friends, but an upset man rebuilds a motor or fixes a leaky sink. He wants to do something.

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she talks emotionally to her friends,  
but an upset man rebuilds a motor  
or fixes a leaky sink.**

Because the male brain devotes more cortical area to spatial tasks, it tends to devote less space to reading, talking and listening than the female brain. This is why a man will tend to spend his free time tossing a football or playing a video game, while a woman might chat on the phone or curl up with a book.

Connecting the right and left hemispheres of our brains is a small bundle of nerves called the corpus collusum, which allow the right and left sides of the brain to "talk" to each other. In men, the corpus collusum is on average 25% smaller than in women. If a feeling or a thought needs to move from the right to the left hemisphere, it has a 25% less chance of moving over. This is crucial, because the male brain does its language in the left hemisphere. Because of this, men don't connect as many feelings or thoughts to words as women do. The end result is that

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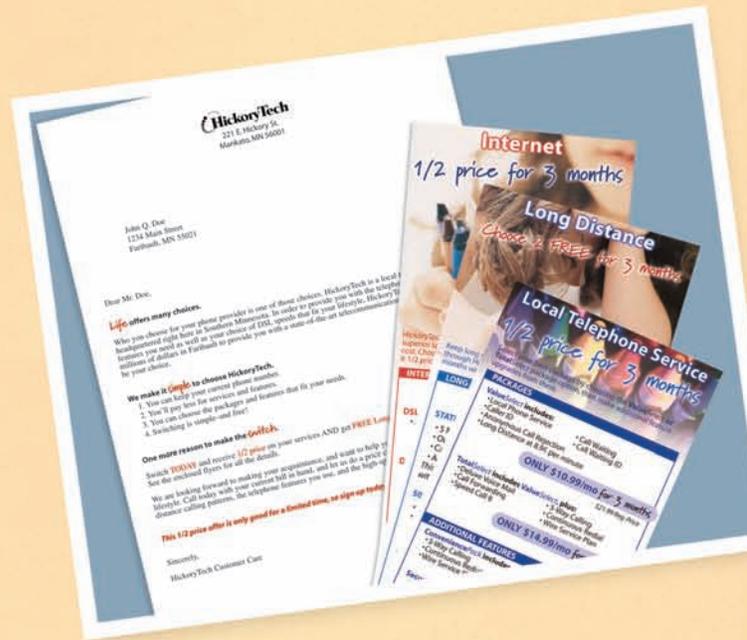
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men have a more difficult time making language out of experience than women do. Try this experiment with your teenage son and daughter. Ask them about a party they attended the night before. Your daughter will give an articulate account of everything that happened — who said what to whom, how everyone felt about it, and what they were wearing. Ask your son the same question, and he'll likely mumble, "Uhhh ... good."

On the average, men use about half the number of words per day as women do, and generally have them nearly used up by the time they get home from work. This is exasperating to the women in their lives who have been waiting all day to talk! Instead of the two areas for language that men have, women have about six or seven areas for language. Women have a much easier time verbalizing their experiences and tend to think that men should be able to do it the same way. Men don't, because they can't. On Valentine's Day, florists tell men to say it with flowers because they know that a man finds it difficult to say it with words.

When men are stressed, they don't talk. They often want to be alone and think, like the famous Rodin sculpture, "The Thinker." Many women feel that this silence means he doesn't love her, or that he's angry with her. This is because if a woman weren't talking, she'd be angry or upset. Generally, a man will be fine, and when he solves his problem he'll feel happy and begin to talk again. A man's self worth is defined by the results he can achieve, whether it's how accurately he can hit a moving zebra, or how accurately he can recall what you said last night. Men hate to be wrong because it means their problem solving has been faulty, and he feels like a failure.

All the available research agrees: men's brains are specialized and compartmentalized. A male brain is configured to concentrate on one specific dedicated task. Indeed, many men will admit that they can only do one thing well at a time. When a man stops the car to read a map, the first thing he does is turn down the radio. Most women can't understand why this happens. She can read while listening and talking, so why can't he? The man's brain is configured for one thing at a time because of fewer connecting fibers between the right and left hemispheres and a more compartmentalized brain. Take a brain scan of a man while he's reading, and you will find that he is virtually deaf.

A woman's brain is configured for multi-tasking performance. She can do several unrelated things at the same time and her brain is never disengaged. She can talk on the telephone, cook a new recipe, and watch television all at the same time. This is why almost all executive secretaries are women. If a man is shaving and you talk to him, he's likely to cut himself. Many women have had the experience of being accused by a man of making him miss a turn off the highway simply because she was talking to him at the time. However, because women use both sides of their brains, many women find it more difficult to tell their right and left hands apart. About 50% of women look for a ring or freckle to recognize which hand it is. That gets her in trouble for telling a man to take a right turn when she really meant left.

There are many more differences between the brains of men and women. In the next issue, we'll talk about how brain hormones affect our thoughts, feelings, and emotions. *W*