

“Men Are From Earth and
Women Are From Earth:
Deal With It!
(Song of Solomon 2:15)

Beware of the Foxes of Danger

Warning Sign #1: The fox of role reversal or abuse

- Warning Sign #2: The fox of intimacy stagnation
- Warning Sign #3: The fox of silence / stonewalling
- Warning Sign #4: The fox of time ill spent
- Warning Sign #5: The fox of outside interference
- Warning Sign #6: The fox of fatigue
- Warning Sign #7: The fox of misunderstanding

Be Aware of the Foxes of Difference

1. Men and women communicate differently
2. Men and women view romance differently
3. Men and women have needs differently
4. Men and women see self worth differently
5. Men and women think about time differently
6. Men and women parent differently

MEN ARE FROM EARTH
AND WOMEN ARE FROM EARTH:
DEAL WITH IT!

SONG OF SOLOMON 2:15

INTRODUCTION

1. JOHN GRAY BECAME A HOUSEHOLD NAME AND AN OVERNIGHT MILLIONAIRE WITH HIS BEST SELLER MEN ARE FROM MARS, WOMEN ARE FROM VENUS. HE HAS ALSO AUTHORED MARS AND VENUS IN THE BEDROOM: A GUIDE TO LASTING ROMANCE AND PASSION; MARS AND VENUS TOGETHER FOREVER: RELATIONSHIP SKILLS FOR LASTING LOVE; MARS AND VENUS IN LOVE; MEN, WOMEN AND RELATIONSHIPS; AND WHAT YOUR MOTHER COULDN'T TELL YOU AND YOUR FATHER DIDN'T KNOW.
2. IN HIS BOOKS HE STRUCK A CORD THAT RESONATES IN EACH OF US. MEN AND WOMEN REALLY ARE DIFFERENT. WE THINK DIFFERENTLY; WE SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY; WE FEEL THINGS DIFFERENTLY. WE ARE DIFFERENT AND DIFFERENT BY DESIGN: IT IS THE WAY GOD MADE US AND THE WAY GOD INTENDED. HE DID MAKE US MALE AND FEMALE (GEN. 1:27).
3. HOWEVER, JOHN GRAY IN MAKING HIS ARGUMENT DID MAKE A CRUCIAL AND CRITICAL ERROR. MEN ARE NOT FROM MARS AND WOMEN ARE NOT FROM VENUS. MEN ARE FROM EARTH AND WOMEN ARE FROM EARTH AND WE HAVE GOT TO DEAL WITH IT.
4. MOST MARRIAGES WHICH GET IN TROUBLE DO SO NOT OVER THE BIG THINGS, BUT THE LITTLE THINGS. WE DO SWEAT OVER THE SMALL STUFF.
5. DORTHY ROSBY IN AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "IT'S LIVING TOGETHER THAT MAKES MARRIAGE DIFFICULT" (FIRST FOR WOMEN, 2-23-98; P. 114) TELLS THE STORY OF THE WOMAN WHO SHOT HER HUSBAND BECAUSE HE ATE HER CHOCOLATE. SHE WRITES, "I PROBABLY READ ABOUT THAT INCIDENT WITH A HERSHEY BAR IN MY HAND. AT THE TIME, I MAY HAVE EVEN THOUGHT HE HAD IT COMING. BUT NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, EVEN I, A CONFIRMED CHOCOHOLIC, THINK SHOOTING WAS EXTREME."
SHE THEN ADDS, "IT TRULY IS THE LITTLE THINGS THAT DESTROY RELATIONSHIPS. MARGARINE, CHOCOLATE, NYLONS ON THE TOWEL RACK, HAIR IN THE SINK. I ONCE HEARD ABOUT A COUPLE WHO FOUGHT FOR MORE THAN FOUR HOURS—OVER A RUBBER BAND. HE HAD IT, AND SHE WANTED IT. . . . IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT HAPPEN WHEN YOU'RE LIVING TOGETHER. . .
PART OF THE PROBLEM IS THAT GOD MADE OPPOSITES ATTRACT: SAVERS MARRY SPENDERS; NEATNIKS PAIR UP WITH SLOBS; AND EARLY

BIRDS TEAM UP WITH NIGHT OWLS. OPPOSING IDIOSYNCRASIES COME TOGETHER LIKE WEATHER FRONTS WHEN COUPLES LIVE TOGETHER.”

6. DORTHY ROSBY IS RIGHT, IT IS THE LITTLE THINGS, WHAT SOLOMON DESCRIBED WITH GREAT INSIGHT AS THE “LITTLE FOXES,” THAT CAN SNEAK INTO OUR RELATIONSHIP AND DO SERIOUS DAMAGE. QUIETLY, UNNOTICED AND YET EFFECTIVELY, THEY DESTROY THE TENDER FABRIC, THE TENDER VINES AND GRAPES OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WHOSE HEALTH IS ESSENTIAL FOR A HAPPY AND SATISFYING MARRIAGE.
7. THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF LITTLE FOXES THAT ARE ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS THAT I WANT TO WARN YOU ABOUT: ONE I CALL “THE FOXES OF DANGER” AND THE OTHER I CALL “THE FOXES OF DIFFERENCES.”

I. BEWARE OF THE DANGERS TO YOUR MARRIAGE

1. CATCH IN V. 15 IS AN IMPERATIVE, A WORD OF COMMAND.
2. THE LITTLE FOXES ARE UNWELCOMED INTRUDERS INTO A MARRIAGE WHO CAN DESTROY THE PURITY OF ONES LOVE AND THE PRICELESSNESS OF A RELATIONSHIP.
3. A HEALTHY AND HAPPY MARRIAGE MUST BE PROTECTED. WE MUST BE ON GUARD AND CATCH ANYTHING THAT COULD HARM THE TENDER AND YES, VULNERABLE UNION, WE HAVE ESTABLISHED.

❖ WHAT DO THESE LITTLE FOXES LOOK LIKE? LET ME QUICKLY NOTE 7, WHAT I CALL “WARNING SIGNS OF A FAILING MARRIAGE”

1. WARNING # 1: A MARRIAGE WILL GET INTO TROUBLE WHEN GOD’S ROLE FOR THE HUSBAND AND WIFE ARE REVERSED OR ABUSED (FOX OF ROLE REVERSAL).

- (1) GOD MADE MEN TO BE MEN, HUSBANDS, FATHERS.
- (2) GOD MADE WOMEN TO BE WOMEN, WIVES, MOTHERS.
- (3) NO ONE IS AS GOOD AT BEING A MAN AS A MAN.
- (4) NO ONE IS AS GOOD AT BEING A WOMAN AS A WOMAN.

IN OUR DAY, MEN ESEPCIALY STRUGGLE WITH THEIR MALE IDENTITY. THE SOUTH CHINA POST (APRIL 25, 2000) GOT IT RIGHT WHEN IT SIAD, “WHAT A REAL MAN NEEDS IS ANOTHER MAN TO TALK TO AND REINFORCE HIS MALENESS AND HELP HIM BE A BETTER HUSBAND . . . WITHOUT SUCH A FRIEND, MEN RISK REVERTING TO A MOTHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP WITH A SPOUSE.” DR. PETER KARL STATES, “MEN BECOME HELPLESS AND INSECURE AND INCREASINGLY REVERT TO THE CLASSIC OVERGROWN KID WHO EXPECTS TO BE MOTHERED . . . MEN HAVE FEW POSITIVE ROLE MODELS. OFTEN, THEY DON’T EVEN HAVE A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR FATHERS, MUCH LESS ANY OTHER MAN.”

2. WARNING # 2: A MARRIAGE WILL GET INTO TROUBLE WHEN INITIAL, SENSUAL LOVE FAILS TO DEVELOP INTO TRUE INTIMACY (FOX OF INTIMACY STAGNATION)
 - (1) EXPLAIN WHY I MARRIED CHARLOTTE AND MY LOVE THEN.
 - (2) CONTRAST THAT WITH THE LOVE I KNOW NOW!

3. WARNING #3: A MARRIAGE WILL GET INTO TROUBLE WHEN IT IS NOT BEING NOURISHED BY REGULAR AND GENUINE COMMUNICATION. (FOX OF SILENCE/STAGNATION)
 - (1) WE MUST LEARN TO TALK (ESPECIALLY SOME MEN)
 - (2) WE MUST LEARN TO LISTEN (ESPECIALLY SOME WOMEN)
 - (3) “A COURTSHIP BEGINS WHEN A MAN WHISPERS SWEET NOTHINGS; AND ENDS WHEN HE SAYS NOTHING SWEET.”
4. WARNING # 4: A MARRIAGE WILL GET INTO TROUBLE WHEN FORCES OR PERSONS OUTSIDE THE MARRIAGE ENCROACH ON THE ALL-IMPORTANT TIME THE TWO OF YOU NEED ALONE TO BUILD AND MAINTAIN A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP. (FOX OF TIME ILL SPENT)
 - (1) IN-LAWS/OUTLAWS!
 - (2) JOB
 - (3) ACTIVITIES (EX. FOOLERY OF SOME MEN AND DEER HUNTING!)
 - (4) THE INTERNET!

ILLUSTRATION: USA TODAY 7-6-99

“SPOUSES BROWSE INFIDELITY ONLINE”

THE INTERNET IS BECOMING A BREEDING GROUND FOR ADULTERY, SAY EXPERTS WHO TRACK THE PATTERN OF EXTRAMARITAL AFFAIRS. AND EVEN STAY-AT-HOME MOMS, WHO DON’T GET TO MEET POSSIBLE PARTNERS AT WORK, CAN BE SEDUCED.

“I PREDICT (ONE) ROLE OF THE INTERNET IN THE FUTURE WILL BE AS A SOURCE OF AFFAIRS,” SAYS PEGGY VAUGHAN, AUTHOR OF THE MONOGAMY MYTH, WHO IS RESEARCHING A SECOND BOOK ON ADULTERY.

SHE IS AN AMERICA ONLINE EXPERT ON PROBLEMS CAUSED BY INFIDELITY AND HANDLES QUESTIONS ABOUT AFFAIRS THROUGH HER AND HUSBAND JAMES’ WEB SITE (WWW.VAUGHAN-VAUGHAN.COM). SHE COULD, SHE SAYS, BASE HALF HER NEW BOOK ON LETTERS ABOUT AFFAIRS THAT START ONLINE.

“STAY-AT-HOME MOMS IN CHAT ROOMS ARE SHARING ALL THIS PERSONAL STUFF THEY ARE HIDING FROM THEIR PARTNERS,” VAUGHAN SAYS. THE INTENSITY OF WOMEN’S ONLINE RELATIONSHIPS CAN “QUICKLY ESCALATE INTO THEIR THINKING THEY HAVE FOUND A SOULMATE. IT IS SO PREDICTABLE, IT IS LIKE A SCRIPT.”

VAUGHAN SAYS SHE KNOWS OF WOMEN “WHO HAVE LEFT THEIR MARRIAGES BEFORE THEY HAVE EVEN MET” THEIR NEW PARTNERS IN PERSON.

SHIRLEY GLASS HAS RESEARCHED “EXTRAMARITAL ATTACHMENTS” SINCE 1975. SHE WARNS OF ONLINE RELATIONSHIPS THAT GO OVER THE LINE. THEY CAN BECOME SO INTENSE THAT THEY THREATEN MARRIAGES, EVEN IF THERE IS NO SEX INVOLVED, SHE SAYS. SUCH ONLINE LIAISONS INVOLVE THE THREE ELEMENTS OF AN EMOTIONAL AFFAIR: SECRECY, INTIMACY AND SEXUAL CHEMISTRY.

GLASS CAUTIONS: “DISCUSS YOUR ONLINE FRIENDSHIPS WITH YOUR SPOUSE AND SHOW HIM OR HER YOUR E-MAIL IF YOUR PARTNER IS INTERESTED. INVITE YOUR SPOUSE TO JOIN IN YOUR CORRESPONDENCE SO YOUR INTERNET FRIEND WON’T GET ANY WRONG IDEAS. AND DON’T EXCHANGE SEXUAL FANTASIES ONLINE.”

5. WARNING # 5: A MARRIAGE WILL GET INTO TROUBLE WHEN REAL AND PERSONAL NEEDS ARE BEING MET MORE AND MORE OUTSIDE THE MARRIAGE (FOX OF OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE)
 - (1) THIS IS WHAT OPENS THE DOOR FOR AN AFFAIR.
 - (2) IT COMES ABOUT SLOWLY, OVER TIME ALMOST WITHOUT NOTICE. IT IS ONE OF THE MOST LETHAL FOXES WHO PREY ON YOUR VINEYARD.
 - (3) IF NEEDS ARE NOT BEING MET BY YOUR SPOUSE, THEN GO TO JESUS AND CLAIM PHIL. 4:13!

6. WARNING # 6: A MARRIAGE WILL GET INTO TROUBLE IF THE WEDDING VOWS ARE CONSIDERED CONDITIONAL, MARRIAGE IS NO LONGER CONSIDERED A SACRED COVENANT BEFORE GOD, AND DIVORCE BEGINS TO BE CONSIDERED AS A POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO AN UNHAPPY SITUATION. (FOX OF FATIGUE)
 - (1) PAUL, MY SON, COMING HOME IN WAKE FOREST, N.C. AND ASKING ME IF WE WOULD EVER GET A DIVORCE AND THE PAIN HE SAW IN A CLASSMATE.
 - (2) DIVORCE NEVER, MURDER PERHAPS!

7. WARNING # 7: A MARRIAGE WILL GET INTO TROUBLE IF THE MAN AND WOMAN FAIL TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE AND ENJOY JUST HOW REALLY DIFFERENT THEY ARE FROM ONE ANOTHER. (FOX OF MISUNDERSTANDING)

II. BE AWARE OF THE DIFFERENCES OF YOUR MATE

I’VE OFTEN SAID MEN ARE DOGS AND WOMEN ARE CATS, AND WITH GOOD REASON (ILLUSTRATE). NOW I HAVE SUPPORTING EVIDENCE.

WHAT IS A CAT?

- 1) CATS DO WHAT THEY WANT.
- 2) THEY RARELY LISTEN TO YOU.
- 3) THEY’RE TOTALLY UNPREDICTABLE.
- 4) THEY WHINE WHEN THEY ARE NOT HAPPY.
- 5) WHEN YOU WANT TO PLAY, THEY WANT TO BE ALONE.
- 6) WHEN YOU WANT TO BE ALONE, THEY WANT TO PLAY.
- 7) THEY EXPECT YOU TO CATER TO THEIR EVERY WHIM.
- 8) THEY’RE MOODY.
- 9) THEY CAN DRIVE YOU NUTS AND COST YOU AN ARM AND A LEG.
- 10) THEY LEAVE HAIR EVERYWHERE.

CONCLUSION: THEY’RE TINY LITTLE WOMEN IN FUR COATS.

WHAT IS A DOG?

- 1) DOGS LIE AROUND ALL DAY, SPRAWLED OUT ON THE MOST COMFORTABLE PIECE OF FURNITURE IN THE HOUSE.
 - 2) THEY CAN HEAR A PACKAGE OF FOOD OPENING HALF A BLOCK AWAY, BUT THEY CAN'T HEAR YOU EVEN WHEN YOU'RE IN THE SAME ROOM.
 - 3) THEY LEAVE THEIR TOYS EVERYWHERE.
 - 4) THEY GROWL WHEN THEY ARE NOT HAPPY.
 - 5) WHEN YOU WANT TO PLAY, THEY WANT TO PLAY.
 - 6) WHEN YOU WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE, THEY WANT TO PLAY.
 - 7) THEY ARE GREAT AT BEGGING.
 - 8) THEY WILL LOVE YOU FOREVER IF YOU FEED THEM AND RUB THEIR TUMMIES.
 - 9) THEY DO DISGUSTING THINGS WITH THEIR MOUTHS AND THEN TRY TO GIVE YOU A KISS.
 - 10) THEY CAN LOOK DUMB AND LOVABLE ALL AT THE SAME TIME.
- CONCLUSION: THEY'RE TINY LITTLE MEN IN FUR COATS.

1. COMMUNICATION

- (1) LISTENING IS HARD WORK FOR MEN; IT BRINGS HAPPINESS TO WOMEN.
- (2) TALKING CAN INTIMIDATE MEN, IT NURTURES INTIMACY FOR WOMEN.
- (3) MEN TEND TO REPORT FACTS; WOMEN WANT TO SHARE FEELINGS.
- (4) MEN FEEL COMPELLED TO OFFER SOLUTIONS; WOMEN WANT AFFIRMATION AND ASSURANCE.
- (5) MEN DO NOT RESPOND WELL TO HINTS; WOMEN ARE SUBTLE AND CODED IN THEIR CONVERSATION.

*SOME OF THIS MAY BE ACCOUNTED FOR BY BRAIN SIZE:

THE HUMAN BRAIN SHRINKS AS WE AGE. A WOMAN'S BRAIN SHRINKS 2.5% EVERY 10 YEARS, WHILE THE TYPICAL MALE BRAIN SHRINKS 5% IN THE SAME PERIOD (MARRIAGE PARTNERSHIP, SP. 99, p. 141).

2. ROMANCE

- (1) ROMANCE FOR MEN MEANS SEX; FOR WOMEN IT CAN MEAN A LOT OF THINGS.
- (2) ROMANCE FOR MEN IS HIGHLY VISUAL; FOR WOMEN IT IS EXTREMELY RELATIONAL/ PERSONAL.
- (3) ROMANCE FOR MEN THEN IS WHAT THEY SEE; FOR WOMEN IT IS WHAT THEY FEEL.

❖ WHAT DO MEN SAY ROMANCE IS TO THEM? THIS LIST OF 15 SUGGESTIONS IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE, BUT IT IS HELPFUL:

- 1) BE ATTRACTIVE AT BEDTIME—NOTHING IN THE HAIR OR STRANGE ON THE FACE. WEAR SOMETHING BESIDES GRANNY GOWNS AND PAJAMAS.
- 2) DO NOT BE ASHAMED TO SHOW YOU ENJOY BEING WITH ME.

- 3) DRESS MORE APPEALINGLY WHEN I AM AT HOME (NO HOUSECOATS, SLIPPERS, ETC.)
- 4) DO THINGS TO CATCH MY ATTENTION: REMEMBER THAT A MAN IS EASILY EXCITED BY SIGHT.
- 5) COMMUNICATE MORE OPENLY ABOUT SEX.
- 6) DO NOT MAKE ME FEEL GUILTY AT NIGHT FOR MY INCONSISTENCIES DURING THE DAY (NOT BEING AFFECTIONATE ENOUGH, ETC.).
- 7) BE MORE AWARE OF MY NEEDS AND DESIRES AS A MAN.
- 8) SHOW MORE DESIRE AND UNDERSTAND THAT CARESSING AND FOREPLAY ARE AS IMPORTANT TO ME AS THEY ARE TO YOU.
- 9) DO NOT ALLOW YOURSELF TO REMAIN UPSET OVER EVERYDAY EVENTS THAT GO WRONG.
- 10) DO NOT TRY TO FAKE ENJOYMENT. BE AUTHENTIC IN YOUR RESPONSE TO ME.
- 11) DO NOT TRY TO PUNISH ME BY DENYING ME SEX OR BY GIVING IT GRUDGINGLY.
- 12) TREAT ME LIKE YOUR LOVER.
- 13) LISTEN TO MY SUGGESTIONS ON WHAT YOU CAN DO TO IMPROVE OUR SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP.
- 14) FORGIVE ME WHEN I FALL SHORT OF WHAT I SHOULD BE.
- 15) TELL ME WHAT I CAN DO TO BE THE SEXUAL PARTNER YOU DESIRE.

❖ WHAT SUGGESTIONS HAVE WIVES MADE TO HUSBANDS AS TO HOW THEY CAN MAKE ROMANCE AND SEXUAL RELATIONS MORE MEANINGFUL? AGAIN, THIS LIST IS TO HELP US GET THE IDEA:

- 1) SHOW MORE AFFECTION; GIVE ATTENTION THROUGHOUT THE DAY; COME IN AFTER WORK AND KISS ME ON MY NECK AND ASK ME ABOUT MY DAY.
- 2) BE MORE SYMPATHETIC WHEN I AM REALLY SICK.
- 3) ACCEPT ME AS I AM; ACCEPT ME EVEN WHEN YOU SEE THE WORST SIDE OF ME.
- 4) TELL ME THAT YOU LOVE ME AT TIMES OTHER THAN WHEN WE ARE IN BED; PHONE SOMETIMES JUST TO SAY, "I LOVE YOU!" DO NOT BE ASHAMED TO TELL ME, "I LOVE YOU" IN FRONT OF OTHERS.
- 5) WHILE I AM BATHING OR SHOWERING, FIND SOFT MUSIC ON THE RADIO OR DIM THE LIGHTS AND LIGHT A CANDLE.
- 6) HONOR CHRIST AS THE HEAD OF OUR HOME.
- 7) TALK TO ME AFTER OUR LOVEMAKING; MAKE CARESSES AFTER OUR LOVEMAKING AND HOLD ME.
- 8) BE SWEET AND LOVING (AT LEAST ONE HOUR) BEFORE INITIATING SEX.
- 9) SHOW AN INTEREST IN WHAT I HAVE TO SAY IN THE MORNING.
- 10) HELP ME WASH DINNER DISHES AND CLEAN THE KITCHEN.

- 11) PAY ROMANTIC ATTENTION TO ME (HOLD HANDS, KISS) EVEN DURING RELATIVELY UNROMANTIC ACTIVITIES (TELEVISION WATCHING, CAR RIDING, WALKING IN THE MALL, ETC.).
- 12) HELP ME FEEL THAT I AM SEXUALLY AND ROMANTICALLY ATTRACTIVE BY COMPLIMENTING ME MORE OFTEN.
- 13) PRAY WITH ME ABOUT THE PROBLEMS AND VICTORIES YOU ARE HAVING; LET ME EXPRESS MY OWN NEEDS TO YOU.
- 14) DO NOT APPROACH LOVEMAKING AS A RITUALISTIC ACTIVITY; MAKE EACH TIME A NEW EXPERIENCE.
- 15) THINK OF SOMETHING NICE TO SAY ABOUT ME AND DO IT IN FRONT OF OTHERS OFTEN. (ILLUSTRATION: JOHN AND CATHY STANLEY IN OUR HOME, ADAPTED FROM GARY CHAPMAN, TOWARD A GROWING MARRIAGE)

3. NEEDS

- (1) WOMEN NEED TO FEEL VALUED; MEN NEED TO FEEL SUCCESSFUL.
- (2) WOMEN NEED TO BE HEARD; MEN NEED TO BE PRAISED.

4. SELF WORTH

- (1) WOMEN VALUE RELATIONAL MOMENTS; MEN VALUE OCCUPATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS.
- (2) WOMEN FEAR NEGLECT; MEN FEAR FAILURE.

* BARBARA O'CHESTER TALKS ABOUT "MAKING A MEMORY." THIS SPEAKS DEEPLY TO THE HEART OF A WOMAN.

5. TIME

- (1) MEN DO NOT THINK MUCH ABOUT TIME; WOMEN VALUE BOTH QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF TIME.
- (2) MEN GO WITH THE FLOW; WOMEN APPRECIATE SPECIFIC AND CREATIVE IDEAS.

❖ TELL ME WHERE YOU SPEND YOUR TIME AND I WILL TELL YOU WHAT YOU LOVE.

❖ QUALITY VS. QUANTITY WAS THE GRAND MYTH OF THE BABY BOOMER GENERATION. TO BE MORE HONEST: IT WAS A GREAT LIE.

ILLUSTRATION

THE GREATEST MAN

(BY REBA MCINTYRE)

THE GREATEST MAN I NEVER KNEW LIVED JUST DOWN THE HALL
AND EVERY DAY WE SAID, "HELLO," THOUGH WE NEVER TOUCHED AT ALL.
HE WAS IN HIS PAPER AND I WAS IN MY ROOM.
HOW WAS I TO KNOW HE THOUGHT I HUNG THE MOON.

THE GREATEST MAN I NEVER KNEW, I GUESS I'LL NEVER KNOW.
 HE WORKED LATE ALMOST EVERY NIGHT
 HE NEVER HAD TOO MUCH TO SAY, TOO MUCH WAS ON HIS MIND.
 NOW IT SEEMS SO SAD THAT EVERYTHING HE GAVE US TOOK ALL HE HAD.
 DAYS FADED TO YEARS AND THE MEMORIES TO BLACK AND WHITE.
 HE GREW COLD LIKE AN OLD WINTER WIND THAT BLEW ACROSS MY LIFE.

THE GREATEST WORDS I NEVER HEARD, I GUESS I'LL NEVER HEAR.
 THE MAN I THOUGHT WOULD NEVER DIE HAS BEEN DEAD ALMOST A YEAR.
 HE WAS GOOD AT BUSINESS, BUT THERE WAS BUSINESS LEFT TO DO.
 HE NEVER SAID HE LOVED ME; I GUESS HE THOUGHT I KNEW.

6. PARENTING

- (1) MOTHERS NURTURE; FATHERS PROVIDE STRENGTH AND A CHILD'S SENSE OF SELF WORTH.
- (2) MOTHERS PROVIDE THE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN; FATHERS PROVIDE A SENSE OF SECURITY.

ILLUSTRATION:

FAMILY—THE TIES THAT BIND . . . AND GAG! (ERMA BOMBECK)

ONE MORNING MY FATHER DIDN'T GET UP AND GO TO WORK. HE WENT TO THE HOSPITAL AND DIED THE NEXT DAY.

I HADN'T THOUGHT THAT MUCH ABOUT HIM BEFORE. HE WAS JUST SOMEONE WHO LEFT AND CAME HOME AND SEEMED GLAD TO SEE EVERYONE AT NIGHT. HE OPENED THE JAR OF PICKLES WHEN NO ONE ELSE COULD. HE WAS THE ONLY ONE IN THE HOUSE WHO WASN'T AFRAID TO GO INTO THE BASEMENT BY HIMSELF.

HE CUT HIMSELF SHAVING, BUT NO ONE KISSED IT OR GOT EXCITED ABOUT IT. IT WAS UNDERSTOOD WHEN IT RAINED, HE GOT THE CAR AND BROUGHT IT AROUND TO THE DOOR. WHEN ANYONE WAS SICK, HE WENT TO GET THE PRESCRIPTION FILLED. HE TOOK LOTS OF PICTURES . . . BUT HE WAS NEVER IN THEM.

WHENEVER I PLAYED HOUSE, THE MOTHER DOLL HAD A LOT TO DO. I NEVER KNEW WHAT TO DO WITH THE DADDY DOLL, SO I HAD HIM SAY, "I'M GOING OFF TO WORK NOW" AND THREW HIM UNDER THE BED.

THE FUNERAL WAS IN OUR LIVING ROOM AND A LOT OF PEOPLE CAME AND BROUGHT ALL KINDS OF GOOD FOOD AND CAKES. WE HAD NEVER HAD SO MUCH COMPANY BEFORE.

I WENT TO MY ROOM AND FELT UNDER THE BED FOR THE DADDY DOLL. WHEN I FOUND HIM, I DUSTED HIM OFF AND PUT HIM ON MY BED.

HE NEVER DID ANYTHING. I DIDN'T KNOW HIS LEAVING WOULD HURT SO MUCH.

ILLUSTRATION:

ONE WOMAN TO ANOTHER

TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR MY FRIEND. WHILE WE ARE SITTING AT LUNCH, SHE CASUALLY MENTIONS THAT SHE AND HER HUSBAND ARE THINKING OF “STARTING A FAMILY.” WHAT SHE MEANS IS THAT HER BIOLOGICAL CLOCK HAS BEGUN ITS COUNTDOWN, AND SHE IS BEING FORCED TO CONSIDER THE PROSPECT OF MOTHERHOOD.

“WE’RE TAKING A SURVEY,” SHE SAYS HALF JOKING. “DO YOU THINK I SHOULD HAVE A BABY?”

“IT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE,” I SAY CAREFULLY, KEEPING MY TONE NEUTRAL.

“I KNOW,” SHE SAYS. “NO MORE SPONTANEOUS VACATIONS. . .”

BUT THAT IS NOT WHAT I MEAN AT ALL, AND I TRY TO DECIDE WHAT TO TELL HER. I WANT HER TO KNOW WHAT SHE WILL NEVER LEARN IN CHILDBIRTH CLASSES: THAT THE PHYSICAL WOUNDS OF CHILDBEARING HEAL, BUT THAT BECOMING A MOTHER WILL LEAVE AN EMOTIONAL WOUND SO RAW THAT SHE WILL BE FOREVER VULNERABLE. I CONSIDER WARNING HER THAT SHE WILL NEVER READ A NEWSPAPER AGAIN WITHOUT ASKING “WHAT IF THAT HAD BEEN MY CHILD?” THAT EVERY PLANE CRASH, EVER FIRE WILL HAUNT HER. THAT WHEN SHE SEES PICTURES OF STARVING CHILDREN, SHE WILL WONDER IF ANYTHING COULD BE WORSE THAN WATCHING YOUR CHILD DIE.

I LOOK AT HER MANICURED NAILS AND STYLISH SUIT AND THINK THAT NO MATTER HOW SOPHISTICATED SHE IS, BECOMING A MOTHER WILL REDUCE HER TO THE PRIMITIVE LEVEL OF BEAR PROTECTING HER CUB. THAT AN URGENT CALL OF “MOM!” WILL CAUSE HER TO DROP HER BEST CRYSTAL WITHOUT A MOMENT’S HESITATION.

I FEEL I SHOULD WARN HER THAT NO MATTER HOW MANY YEARS SHE HAS INVESTED IN HER CAREER, SHE WILL BE PROFESSIONALLY DERAILED BY MOTHERHOOD. OH, SHE MIGHT ARRANGE FOR CHILDCARE, BUT ONE DAY SHE WILL BE GOING INTO AN IMPORTANT BUSINESS MEETING, AND SHE WILL THINK ABOUT HER BABY’S SWEET SMELL. SHE WILL HAVE TO USE EVERY OUNCE OF DISCIPLINE TO KEEP FROM RUNNING HOME, JUST TO MAKE SURE HER CHILD IS ALL RIGHT. I WANT MY FRIEND TO KNOW THAT EVERYDAY DECISIONS WILL NO LONGER BE ROUTINE. THAT A 5-YEAR-OLD BOY’S DESIRE TO GO TO THE MEN’S RESTROOM RATHER THAN THE WOMEN’S AT A RESTAURANT WILL BECOME A MAJOR DILEMMA. THAT ISSUES OF INDEPENDENCE AND GENDER IDENTITY WILL BE WEIGHED AGAINST THE PROSPECT THAT A CHILD MOLESTER MAY BE LURKING IN THE RESTROOM. HOWEVER DECISIVE SHE MAY BE AT THE OFFICE, SHE WILL SECOND-GUESS HERSELF CONSTANTLY AS A MOTHER.

LOOKING AT MY ATTRACTIVE FRIEND, I WANT TO ASSURE HER THAT EVENTUALLY SHE WILL SHED THE POUNDS OF PREGNANCY, BUT SHE WILL NEVER FEEL THE SAME ABOUT HERSELF. THAT HER LIFE NOW, SO IMPORTANT, WILL BE OF LESS VALUE TO HER ONCE SHE HAS A CHILD. THAT SHE WOULD GIVE IT UP IN A MOMENT TO SAVE HER OFFSPRING, BUT

WILL ALSO HOPE FOR MORE YEARS—NOT TO ACCOMPLISH HER OWN DREAMS, BUT TO WATCH HER CHILD ACCOMPLISH HIS.

MY FRIEND’S RELATIONSHIP WITH HER HUSBAND WILL CHANGE, BUT NOT IN THE WAYS SHE THINKS. I WISH SHE COULD UNDERSTAND HOW MUCH MORE YOU CAN LOVE A MAN WHO IS ALWAYS CAREFUL TO POWDER THE BABY OR WHO NEVER HESITATES TO PLAY WITH HIS SON OR DAUGHTER. I THINK SHE SHOULD KNOW THAT SHE WILL FALL IN LOVE WITH HER HUSBAND ALL OVER AGAIN, BUT FOR REASONS SHE WOULD NOW FIND VERY UNROMANTIC. I WANT TO DESCRIBE TO MY FRIEND THE EXHILARATION OF SEEING YOUR CHILD LEARN TO HIT A BASEBALL. I WANT TO CAPTURE FOR HER THE BELLY LAUGH OF A BABY WHO IS TOUCHING THE SOFT FUR OF A DOG FOR THE FIRST TIME. I WANT HER TO TASTE THE JOY THAT IS SO REAL IT HURTS.

MY FRIEND’S QUIZZICAL LOOK MAKES ME REALIZE THAT TEARS HAVE FORMED IN MY EYES. “YOU’LL NEVER REGRET IT,” I FINALLY SAY. THEN, SQUEEZING MY FRIENDS HAND, I OFFER A PRAYER FOR HER AND ME AND ALL THE MERE MORTAL WOMEN WHO STUMBLE THEIR WAY INTO THIS HOLIEST OF CALLINGS.

ILLUSTRATION:

LADY IN FLORIDA WHO ATTACKED THE ALLIGATOR THAT TOOK HER CHILD, THEN SHE PASSED OUT.

“A CHILD LOVES ITS MOTHER,
BUT LIVES FOR ITS FATHER.”

“THE GLORY OF CHILDREN ARE THEIR FATHERS.” PROVERBS 17:6B

CONCLUSION

1. IT HAS BEEN WELL SAID, “WE ARE SHAPED AND FASHIONED BY WHAT WE LOVE” AND “TELL ME WHOM YOU LOVE AND I WILL TELL YOU WHAT YOU ARE.”
2. “WE GREW UP A LITTLE LATE”

WE GOT MARRIED EARLY
AND JUST A LITTLE BIT LATE

BABY CAME TOO EARLY
BUT, SOME THINGS JUST CAN’T WAIT

WE WERE JUST BEGINNING
BUT IT WAS VERY CLEAR

WE GREW UP A LITTLE BIT THAT YEAR.

I CAUGHT ON AS A METER MAN

YOU WERE CAUGHT AT HOME

WHEN I STARTED NIGHT SCHOOL
YOU ENDED UP ALONE

BUT YOU HAD ANOTHER BABY
WHILE I HAD MY CAREER

AND WE GREW UP A LITTLE BIT
WE GREW UP A LITTLE BIT

WE GRE UP A LITTLE BIT THAT YEAR

THEY PUT ME IN AN OFFICE JOB
THE YOUNG MAN ON THE MOVE

WE BOUGHT A HOUSE IN SHAKER HEIGHTS
YOU SUPERVISED THE MOVE

WE WERE CASHING CHECKS
YOU WERE CHANGING CHILDREN
WHILE I PLAYED ENGINEER

AND WE WERE GROWING EVER FASTER EVERY YEAR

BUT I GOT BORED OF KILOWATTS
AND YOU WERE TIRED OF KIDS

I STARTED STAYING OUT AT NIGHT, AND SOON
THAT'S WHAT YOU DID

AT PARTIES WE'D GO SEPARATELY
YOU'D WIGGLE AND I'D LEER

AND WE WERE GROWING FASTER
WE WERE GROWING EVER FASTER
WE WERE GROWING EVER FASTER EVERY YEAR

WELL YOU LEARNED TO LIVE IN SILENCE
I LEARNED TO LIVE IN LIES

AND WE BOTH IGNORED THE EMPTY SPACES
GROWING IN OUR EYES

YOUR BREATH BECAME A GIN AND TONIC
WHILE MINE BECAME A BEER

AND WE GREW UP A LITTLE MORE LAST YEAR.

TODAY AT WORK THEY PASSED ME BY
AND PROMOTED JOHN INSTEAD

I CAME HOME TO FIND YOU'D WRECKED THE CAR
I GUESS I LOST MY HEAD

WELL, I CAN'T BELIEVE I HIT YOU
BUT THE RAGE CAME ON SO STRONG

AH, WHERE DID WE GO WRONG?

AS YOU SIT THERE CRYING
I WONDER WHO YOU ARE?

THE PARTNER-STRANGER-FRIEND AND FOE WHO'S
COME WITH ME THIS FAR

WE STAND HERE IN THE ASHES AND I GUESS
IT IS QUITE CLEAR

WE DID NOT REALLY GROW TOO MUCH EACH YEAR.

SO, YOU SAY WE'RE GOING NOWHERE
WELL, I KNOW THAT'S WHERE WE'VE BEEN

BUT I STILL CAN'T HELP WONDERING
CAN WE BEGIN AGAIN?

I FEEL SO FULL OF QUESTIONS
CURIOSITY AND FEAR

BUT COULD WE GROW A LITTLE BIT
COULD WE GROW A LITTLE BIT
CAN WE GROW A LITTLE BIT THIS YEAR?

FROM THE ALBUM DANCE BAND ON THE TITANIC, HENRY CHAPIN, SINGER

3. YES, MEN AND WOMEN ARE FROM EARTH AND WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT. IF, HOWEVER, WE CAN WITH GOD'S GRACE, GROW A LITTLE BIT EACH DAY, WE CAN MOVE BEYOND "DEALING WITH IT" TO "DELIGHTING IN IT." THAT WAS, AFTER ALL, ALWAYS HIS PLAN.

A MAN CALLED HIS WIFE FROM A PAY PHONE, FINISHED THE CONVERSATION AND HUNG UP. AS HE WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE, THE PHONE RANG AND THE OPERATOR SAID, "JUST AS YOU HUNG UP, YOUR WIFE SAID SHE LOVED YOU. I THOUGHT YOU WOULD WANT TO KNOW."

WHEN THEY HUNG JESUS ON THE CROSS, HE WAS SAYING TO ALL OF US HE LOVED US, THAT WE MIGHT LOVE OTHERS. OTHERS INCLUDE OUR MATE! BE A MARVELOUS MATE. LOVE YOUR SPOUSE LIKE YOUR SAVIOR LOVES YOU!