

Eight Words to Guarantee Conflict Between Men and Women

If you're looking for *natural* sources of conflict between men and women, look no further than the words and expressions we use in every-day conversation. Many studies of the human brain support the idea that men and women think differently because our brains are different sizes and are mapped differently for language.

For the most part, men use about two-thirds fewer words than a woman uses during the day. Women use language to establish rapport. Men use words to exchange information.

Write two definitions for each word below: one definition from a woman's perspective and one from a man's.

Example: REMOTE CONTROL

Woman . . . A device for changing from one TV channel to another.

Man . . . A device for scanning through 375 channels every 5 minutes.

1. Thingy
2. Vulnerable
3. Communication
4. Commitment
5. Entertainment
6. Flatulence
7. Making Love
8. Remote Control

More Verbal Opportunities to Guarantee Conflict Between Men and Women

Natural differences in communication styles between men and women lead to inherent conflict:

- Conversations gone awry drive us nuts.
- Values of talking can sabotage relationships.
- Mixed messages (body language vs. words) ratchet up tension.
- Missed subtle messages leave us scratching our heads.

About Those Sex Scenes:

Goal: Getting the H/H together -- in a satisfying, loving relationship.

Duuuh!

It's all about vulnerability.

Double duuuh!

Conflict is guaranteed if your H/H have differences about the following ideas:

- Making love vs. having sex
- One-night stand vs. life-time commitment
- Performance preoccupation vs. emotional response

Note: Writing against the stereotype makes for interesting conflict.

Example: The heroine worries about her performance in bed while the hero longs for an emotional response.

Still More Verbal Opportunities to Guarantee Conflict Between Men and Women

Whether in the heat of the moment or during a lull in the storm, the following comments--and variations thereof--can trigger a meltdown in fiction and in real life:

"You just don't understand . . ."

"That's not what I meant . . ."

"You're just like your mother/father/brother/sister . . ."

"Why don't you ever tell me you love me?"

"Would you get married again if I died?"

"How long would you wait if I died before getting involved with someone else?"

"I wear the pants in this family."

"What'd you do all day?"

"Why don't you tell me when you have an orgasm?"

"Why do you love me?"

"Why'd you marry me?"

"Swear you'll never leave me."

"Promise you won't get mad."

"Calm down."

"Are you paying attention?"

"Did you hear a word I said?"

"We've been over this a hundred times."

"Don't tell me what to do."

"I told you yesterday."

Even More Verbal Opportunities to Guarantee Conflict Between Men and Women

If you're at a loss for verbal triggers that create conflict between men and women, try some ideas from the list below:

- "You drive like a maniac."
- "You drive like your mother."
- "Do you have any idea what I want for my birthday?"
- "How many times a day do you want sex?"
- "Why don't you ever want sex?"
- "Is it PMS?"
- "Are you having your period?"
- "Christopher Columbus didn't need directions and neither do I."
- "Tell me what you're thinking."
- "How can you think 'nothing?'"
- "I can discuss more than work, sports, or sex."
- "How do you like my new haircut?"
- "We need to talk."
- "Are you saying I need to lose weight?"
- "I just want you to listen . . ."
- "You probably talk in your sleep."
- "How can you remember every word of an argument from six months ago?"
- "I suppose you think that was an apology."
- "Want me to beg for forgiveness?"
- "Doesn't love mean I never have to say I'm sorry?"

Other Workshops:

"Discover Your Writer's Voice."

"He Said... She Elaborated"

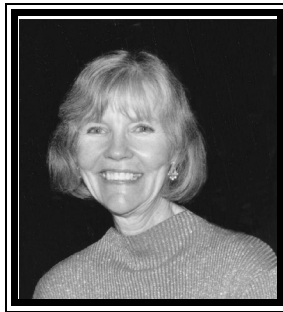
or

"Differences Between Men and Women's Conversational Styles."

More Writing Tip Sheets:

"Tight Places for Your Characters"

"What's in a Name?"



Barbara lives near the exit off the fast lane in Silicon Valley with her husband and two literary mews, T.C. and Jessica, who never cease to inspire her.

References:

Writing Dialogue. Cincinnati: Story Press. Chiarella, Tom. 1998.

Emotional Intelligence. New York: Bantam Books. Goleman, Daniel. 1995.

The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work. New York: Three Rivers Press. Gottman, John M. 1999.

That's Not What I Meant! New York: Ballentine Books. Tannen, Deborah. 1986.

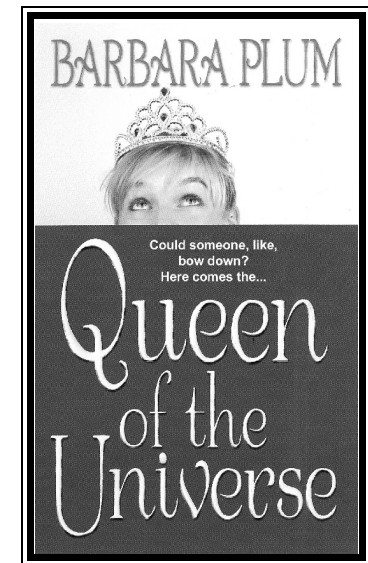
You Just Don't Understand. New York: Ballentine Books. Tannen, Deborah. 1990.

Feedback: barbara@barbaraplum.com

Guaranteed Tips to Create Conflict Between Men and Women©

Adapted by Barbara Plum
Author of: *Queen of the Universe***

"It is sooo not easy being
Queen of the Universe."



Read Excerpts Now at

www.BarbaraPlum.com

Pre-order today at your bookstore
Available: September 2005

**Debut Novel: *Prince of Frogs*
Published: September 2004

www.romanceunleashed.com

Copyright ©2005 by Barbara Plum