

So How Can Men and Women Handle These Differences?

Men and women are from different planets, or so we're told. Anytime the discussion turns to gender differences, no matter what the topic, it's easy to fall into old stereotypes and old assumptions about men and women. The truth is that when it comes to body language there are indeed differences between the genders. This does not mean one gender is inherently "better" or "worse" than the other is; it just means they have different tendencies and characteristics.

What Are The Differences Between Men and Women?

Body language differences between men and woman show up in two primary ways. There are differences in behaviours as well as differences in the purpose behind their behaviours. Some of these differences are thanks to nature; that is, they are "pre-programmed" into each gender. Others, however, are learned through experience and can differ greatly from one culture to another.

For instance, women are generally more likely to display nurturing behaviours, show emotions, and let their feelings come through. Men, on the other hand, are generally more likely to display behaviours of power, dominance, and assertiveness. In the modern world, however, these general tendencies are subject to far more variability than ever before. This is due to increased acceptance and comfort with each gender displaying non-typical body language in many different situations.

Despite this increase in freedom to display non-typical body language, there are still some general differences between men and women. The two most common are:

Differences in receiving messages – Women tend to be better at receiving body language messages, especially when it comes to noticing inconsistencies between body language and verbal language.

Differences in sending messages – Men tend to be less skilled at using subtle body language to influence communication without seeming to be doing so at all.

There are actual physical reasons for these differences. For example, women process messages using up to 16 different parts of their brain at once, while men process messages using about six or 7 different parts of their brain at once. Neither is better than the other is, but each processing pattern does influence the receiving and sending of messages based on gender.

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As with most things divided up along gender lines, the body language differences between men and women are best used as general guidelines. They are a starting point, if you will, for engaging in interactions and going through the process of establishing rapport, building trust,

and the like. They are only a starting point, however, because interpreting and understanding body language requires a great deal of observation and simply getting to know the characteristics of the other person.

Greater awareness and understanding of differences can also help a great deal in preventing different interpretations of body language or, when those different interpretations occur, in resolving potential conflicts and misunderstandings. The key is to be respectful of differences and not belittle or judge either gender based on body language issues. When both men and women make a point of sharing each other's perspectives and learning from those differences, both genders learn to better interpret and understand the non-verbal communication of the other.

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