

## ***WHAT DO WOMEN WANT?***

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That is the title of a recent article in the San Diego Weekly Reader. The story chronicles some of the frustrations men face in dealing with women, both during and after relationships. However, what was stated in that article seems true for both sexes, namely:

1. It is a fantasy to think that we can ever fully understand each other – even if we have been married for 30 years.
2. Very often times in relationships we compare the current people with past people. For example, he's either better or worse than he was or she was either better or worse than she was. As a result we have difficulty discovering that person for who they are.
3. There are stereotypes on both sides. For example, that men are always the villain in a breakup or that the woman is always the weaker sex. Fact is, relying on these assumptions can be dangerous business.
4. As we get older, our wants and needs from a relationship changes. The desire for sex, financial security, companionship, nurturing, changes with the changes that go on in our body and environment. To assume that one size fits all or that that size will remain constant is also a dangerous assumption.
5. There are "possibility junkies" out there. These people don't ever want to end a relationship because there remains some possibility and therefore never get the closure necessary to move on to the next relationship.
6. Lastly, when we can't sort things out, resentment sets in. We give up on trying to figure it out and paint everything in black and white.

Isn't it true that we face these same challenges in our workplaces? The only answer is to begin by understanding that we are "both good people," that we may never fully understand each other, and we shouldn't beat each other up in the process. If we both speak the truth from "our side of the line" we will avoid setting off negative energies in both ourselves and the other person. If the relationship doesn't work out we move on without hurting each other.

No leader or manager in this country has a monopoly on understanding people. Not even Freud did after a long and industrious career of trying to do so. So, in the future, instead of painting people into some form or fantasy of who they should be, we can begin by accepting them for who they really are. We can step in their shoes and look through their eyes. And we can build powerful relationships both at work and at home.

As a final note, the article pointed out how research has shown that there should be a 5 to 1 positive to negative comments to support a successful relationship. According to the University of Washington psychologist, John Gottman, who studied 130 newlyweds over a six year period in trying to determine and pick successful marriages he found that "there has to be a kind of gentleness in the way a conflict is managed, men have to be more accepting of a woman's position and women have to be more gentle in starting up discussions."