



SUZANNE VENKER

# The Bossy Wife Diet

## 7-Day Challenge

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by Suzanne Venker

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## About the Author

SUZANNE VENKER is an author, speaker and cultural critic known as “The Feminist Fixer.” For over 15 years, Suzanne has taught women how to succeed with men in life and in love. She’s a leading voice for millions of women and men who know that a partnership with the opposite sex is superior to constant competition.

Suzanne’s extensive research, combined with her sound and compelling arguments, dispel feminist myths that have infiltrated society and undermined women’s most important relationships. She has helped women:

- embrace the way men and women are naturally wired
- prioritize marriage and relationships over career
- express their unique value outside the marketplace
- enjoy the power of their femininity in sex and relationships
- build a lasting, satisfying relationship with a man
- build a flexible career that accommodates the needs of children and family life



Suzanne is currently [a Fox News contributor](#) and [a columnist at the Washington Examiner](#). One of her articles, “[The War on Men](#),” is one of Fox News’ most read op-ed in history. Suzanne’s work has appeared in publications such as *Time*, *USA Today*, *Parents* and the *New York Post* and has been featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Newsweek*, *The Atlantic*, *Forbes*, *The Huffington Post* and London’s *Daily Mail*. Her TV credits include *Fox & Friends*, *STOSSEL*, *The View*, *CNN*, *ABC* and more. She has appeared on hundreds of radio programs throughout the country, and her work has been featured on “The Dr. Laura Program,” “The Late Show with Stephen Colbert” and “The Rush Limbaugh Show.”

A former middle school English teacher, Suzanne was born in St. Louis, MO, and graduated from Boston University in 1990. After ten years on the East Coast, where after college she made the unfortunate decision to marry the wrong man and subsequently learned what *not* to do in love, Suzanne returned to the Midwest, where she now lives with her husband of 20 years and their two teenagers, one of whom leaves for college in the fall of 2018.

<http://www.thefeministfixer.com>

## Endorsements

“Ms. Venker’s contribution to humanity, to families, to marriages, to women is huge.”

**Dr. Laura Schlessinger**

Author of six *New York Times* bestsellers, including *The Proper Care & Feeding of Husbands*, and host of one of the most popular talk show hosts in radio history

“Suzanne Venker presents a refreshing guide to a happy marriage. While she takes aim at alpha females, the untold secret is that this book is for all women. She’s lived it. She’s studied it. And the insights and advice she gives will save many marriages.”

**Dr. Scott Haltzman**

Distinguished Fellow, American Psychiatric Association, author of *The Secrets of Happily Married Women*

“Without being preachy or prim, Suzanne Venker extols femininity, domesticity, and—get ready—a considerate and solicitous wife to a good man.”

**Christina Hoff Sommers**

Resident scholar at AEI and author of a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year, *The War on Boys*, and the groundbreaking book *Who Stole Feminism?*

“Suzanne Venker tells women how to be a full partner at home rather than the boss—and how to possibly save their marriages. Lively and sensible. A fun read!”

**John M. Townsend, Ph.D.**

Professor of Anthropology, author of *What Women Want—What Men Want*

“Suzanne Venker shows how a simple shift in attitude is all women need to find peace with the men in their lives. If you’re a woman who feels successful in life but unsuccessful in love, look no further.”

**Susan Page**

relationship expert and author of *How One of You Can Bring the Two of You Together*

“Suzanne Venker shows that being an alpha woman doesn’t need to interfere with love and harmony.”

**Shawn T. Smith, Psy.D.**

Psychologist and Author of *The Practical Guide to Men* and *The Woman’s Guide to How Men Think*

## Quiz: Are You a Bossy Wife?

Answer the questions below to find out if you're an bossy wife. [Note: This quiz will only work if you're 100% honest in your answers.]

1. Do you feel nervous or out of control when you're not the one in charge?
2. Are you a perfectionist or an overachiever?
3. Do you sometimes feel superior to your husband, as though he needs you to show him how to do things? (How to dress, what to say, how to grocery shop, how to parent, and so forth.)
4. Do you take your everyday frustrations out on your husband as though he's the cause of those frustrations?
5. Do you generally expect your husband to go along with your plans, as opposed to the other way around?
6. Do you listen to your husband when he has something to say without immediately formulating a response in your head?
7. Do you roll your eyes when your husband says something with which you disagree or disapprove?
8. Do you frequently contradict your husband? (If your answer is no, would your husband agree?)
9. Are you a drill sergeant?
10. Do you tease your husband in front of others in a manner that could be construed as disrespectful?
11. Do you need to be right?
12. Do you frequently interrupt your husband or talk over him, even in public? (If your answer is no, would your husband agree?)
13. Does your marriage feel like one giant power struggle? (If your answer is no, would your husband agree?)

**RESULTS:** If you answered "yes" to three or more questions, you are indeed a bossy, or an "alpha," wife. But not every woman is the same degree of alpha. A good gauge of how alpha you are is simple: The more questions you answered in the affirmative, and the more frequently they each occur, the more alpha, or bossy, you are.

## Wave the White Flag

My mother, who was married to my father for 44 years and who died in 2015, was a remarkable woman with a big heart. She was also a wonderful grandmother to my children. But like the rest of us, she had flaws. And one in particular, the main one really, was not insignificant.

My mother was totally incapable of ceding control. She was always, not just with my sister and me but as a wife too, The Boss.

If you took the bossy wife quiz and determined you're an "alpha" (i.e. controlling and bossy) like my mother was, I have some news that at first will be hard to swallow.

You're going to have to become a beta at home. Do whatever you want in your day job (whether you're employed or at home raising kids), but you're going to have to switch gears at 5 o'clock.

If you don't, your marriage will continue to be one giant fight.

Most women become bossy due to a lack of trust. It isn't always directed toward men; it may be an inability to trust in general. But at the end of the day, it doesn't matter why a woman is controlling. The root of the problem is the same: fear that she can't trust a soul.

To make matters worse, feminists routinely tell women they're oppressed, and that the only way for a woman to be empowered is to become fiercely independent of men. A woman should put herself first at all times, we're told, and never, *ever* cede control.

The result is a generation of women who believe they don't need a man at all, which is an attitude that will destroy your marriage before you return from the honeymoon.

Do you ever wonder whether you can be a strong woman, yet still be vulnerable and even take care of a husband?

Do you ever wonder whether you can be a wife and still maintain your own identity?

Do you ever wonder whether you can be powerful outside the home, yet defer to a husband inside the home?

The answers are yes, yes, and yes.

But first you'll have to Let Go. Of your desire to lead. Of your desire to be in control. And of your desire to have the last word.

Then you'll need a new set of tools. Work is about making money or having power and influence—marriage is about love. If you want to be successful in both arenas, you need to be able to switch gears.

You need to take off your “I’m in charge” hat and surrender to love at home. And this holds true whether you’re the boss at work or the boss of your kids.

I know the idea of ceding control is daunting, especially today. The implication is that a wife who yields to her husband in any way loses herself in the process. (She doesn’t.) Doing so means her husband will lord over her. (He won’t.)

To avoid this supposed fate, women are taught to chuck their femininity and to become more like men: dominant, aggressive and in charge.

That may get you ahead at work. But at home, it will land you in a ditch.

***The Bossy Wife Diet* is about learning to let go of the wheel.** It’s about learning to love your husband in a whole new way in order to bring about a more peaceful union. If you want to be happily married, you must relinquish the desire to be right. “Being right is a dead end,” writes relationship expert Susan Page. “Life just stops there. Nothing else happens....”

I know your husband has areas in which he, too, can improve. But you can’t browbeat your husband into becoming who you want him to become. Your husband is responsible for his own behavior, but his behavior is inextricably linked to yours.

That is the secret of the male-female dance.

A woman’s love, along with her femininity, can reduce the most powerful man in the world to mere jellyfish. Your husband, whether he’s a CEO or a handyman, wants to make you happy more than anything else in the world. It’s what he lives for.

If this isn’t the husband you know, it’s possible you’re not responding to him in a kind and loving manner. It’s possible you’re not taking care of his needs the way you expect him to take care of yours. It’s possible you’re not letting him know you respect him and that you’re grateful to have him in your life.

“But what if I genuinely don’t feel that way about my husband?” you ask. If you feel absolutely nothing for your husband—zero admiration, respect, or desire—I admit that’s a problem. But it’s probably not the case. More than likely, you do feel this way about him but forgot you do because of conflicts that have surfaced along the way. After all, you felt this way about him when you married him. Didn’t you?

If so, you have the power to change your marriage overnight. Boom—just like that. Women have a natural feminine energy that, when used well, works wonders on men and marriage. Too many women give up on love before putting this power to use. And it's just sitting there for the taking! Not using it is like flushing a million dollars down the toilet.

The following 7-day challenge is your opportunity to try something new. Even if it feels uncomfortable (and it will), think of it as a test. It's just for one week!

For the next 7 days, pay zero attention to what your husband is or isn't doing and focus exclusively on yourself and your own behavior.

Take it one day at a time, and just watch what happens.

## Day 1: Learn the dance.

**Thought for the Day:** When it comes to love, women are in charge of the puppet strings. If they pull on the wrong one, they get a negative response. If they pull on the right one, Bingo!

WOMEN HAVE ALL THE POWER IN LOVE—they can steer the ship in any direction. The trick is to steer the ship well.

A good man wants his wife to be happy more than anything else in the world, and he will go to great lengths to make it happen. He'll even support his wife's ideas, plans or opinions if he doesn't agree with them. That's because a husband's number one goal is to please his wife. If he determines his wife cannot be pleased, that's when the marriage is in trouble.

Men are just so much simpler than women. Not simple as in dumb, as is often portrayed in the media. Simple in that they have far fewer needs than women do.

What men want most of all is respect, companionship and sex. If you supply these basics, your husband will do anything for you—slay the dragons, kill the beast, work three jobs, etc. Men will happily do this if, and only if, they are loved well in return. It is when men are not loved well that problems arise.

### **That is the nature of the male-female dance.**

Now I know what you're thinking: that I'm putting everything on you. Not exactly. Your husband is responsible for his own actions. If he chooses to behave poorly—get repeatedly drunk, have emotional outbursts, not follow through on promises, etc.—it's his job to own up to that behavior and put a stop to it.

What I *am* saying is that men tend to follow women's lead. Your husband's actions are more often than not *reactions*. He's reacting to something you said or did, or to something you didn't say or didn't do. He's reacting to your moods, your gestures, your inflections and your tone. That's how men are. Your husband wants you to be happy, and when he sees that you're not, he thinks he's failed. That's when he acts out.

To put it another way: a wife is in charge of the puppet strings. If she pulls on the wrong one, she gets a negative response. If she pulls on the right one, she gets a positive response.

Once you know this, or more importantly, once you accept it, you realize that if your relationship isn't going well, it is you who needs to change. You need to go first. If you do, the rest will fall into place.

Another way to think about the male-female dance is to consider the game of chess. In chess, the king is the most important piece but also one of the weakest. He can only move one square

in any direction—up, down, to the sides and diagonally. The queen, however, is the most powerful piece. She can move in any one direction—forward, backward, sideways or diagonally. And how *she* moves affects how he moves.

As a woman, you can respond to this dynamic in one of two ways: you can resent it, or you can embrace it.

Which will you choose?

*“To us, your power comes from one simple thing: you’re a woman, and we men will do anything humanly possible to impress you so that, ultimately, we can be with you. You’re the driving force behind why we wake up every day.”*

— Steve Harvey

**ACTION:** Think about your most recent bossy interaction with your husband. How did your response reflect fear, mistrust, or an insistence on being right? What different response on your part could have reflected love and caring instead, and how might this have changed his reaction to you?

## Day 2: Own your feminine.

**Thought for the Day:** Sweet does not mean submissive.

SO HOW, EXACTLY, DOES AN ALPHA WOMAN become more feminine, or more beta?

By making up your mind to do so, and then doing it. That's something alphas do extremely well. ☺

Your inner beta exists—I promise. It's just dormant because you haven't allowed it to express itself. I don't believe you were aggressive and bossy when you and your husband first met, or even when the two of you were dating or just married. Your strong personality might have come through, but I bet you smiled a lot and doted on your husband. I bet he fell in love with a perfectly nice woman. Men don't marry bitches.

On the contrary, men gravitate toward women who are nice and who are easy to please. A man will date a domineering woman—he'll certainly have sex with her!—but he won't envision a future with her. He won't see her as the mother of his children.

Now when I say men like women who are nice and easy to please, I don't mean men are looking for a doormat. This is a common misperception of beta females. Being feminine does not mean you lack an identity of your own or that you're an appendage of your husband. That's the narrative the culture sells, but it just isn't true.

Unfortunately, women have been taught to be wary of men and to exercise their “bitch” muscle in order to prove their value to men and to society. As a result, women associate strength with being bossy or even bitchy.

Media personality Terri Trespicio is a great example of this modern conundrum. In 2012 Trespicio graced the cover of *Boston* magazine to extol the merits of singlehood. But later that same year in a YouTube video, Trespicio concedes she's missing out by not settling down and, in a bold and courageous admission, says *she's* the one with the problem.

“I'm the first to admit I'm not easy. And part of the problem is that I have gone in trying to win... I've always thought that by being super independent and by proving to potential mates that I didn't need anyone I would be very attractive—because you always hear that men don't like needy, clingy women. And so it's always been my goal to not be needy.”

Trespicio is right that men don't like clingy women (although I would argue this goes both ways), but being clingy and being vulnerable are not the same thing. Vulnerability is a turn-on; clinginess is not. Being smart is a turn-on; being a know-it-all is not. And being self-reliant is important, but not if your man feels superfluous as a result.

**Being truly feminine means being soft, nice and complementary to your man.**

Being soft, or nice, is not the same thing as being a mouse. Men love women who are fun and feisty and who know their own mind! But they don't want a fire-eating dragon. And they don't want a woman's strength to overpower theirs, not because they *can't* handle it but because they don't *want* to handle it. Men don't like to fight with women.

Besides, you don't need to prove anything to your husband—he already knows how valuable you are. That's why he married you.

*“The deal is this: Most men just want to marry someone who's nice to them. Nice includes sex, laughing and occasionally—but not to the point of oppression or anything—cooking a meal, folding the laundry, or doing something else he's too lazy to do for himself. That's what nice is.” — Tracy McMillan*

**ACTION:** For the next few days, be soft instead of hard. Be nice instead of a nag. Let your husband do things for you that you're capable of doing but would rather not do. Smile a lot. Compliment him, and thank him for whatever he does on the home front, even if it's something you expect him to do. Basically, pretend it's opposite day and do the reverse of whatever it is you're tempted to do. And see what happens.

### Day 3: Serve for the sake of serving.

**Thought for the Day:** To serve is to love. Nothing more, nothing less.

LOVE IS SOMETHING YOU DO, not something you get or something that just “is.” It’s an action. With that in mind, I’m going to suggest you do something that isn’t very chic.

I’m going to suggest you serve your man.

Retro, I know. But the truth is, marriage is nothing more than a giant exercise in learning to get over yourself and serve someone else for a change. This is true for both sexes, of course; but men aren’t typically the ones who struggle with it because they love serving the woman they love. Women, meanwhile, have been specifically groomed to never serve a man. See the problem?

Author and scholar Jennifer Roback Morse, Ph.D., learned about love the hard way. In a speech she gave some years ago, Morse explained to her audience that she once fell victim to the feminist tenet that says a married woman is a mere appendage of her husband and she should therefore never “cater to” or serve her husband in any way. And she *certainly* shouldn’t listen to him or take his advice!

“I took the unexceptional statement that wives are not doormats to mean I have the right, possibly the duty, to stand up for myself inside the marriage. I had come to believe that my dignity as a modern woman depended upon prevailing in disagreements that would arise between my husband and myself.”

Perhaps you harbor this same notion, whether you absorbed it from the culture or you absorbed it from your upbringing. It doesn’t matter where you got it. The point is, **do you feel compelled to stand your ground at all times in the marriage? Is your knee-jerk reaction to the suggestion that you should serve your husband to get defensive?**

If so, turn the scenario around. Do *you* expect your husband to serve *you*? Do you expect him to do something you suggest with which he doesn’t agree? I bet it happens all the time. That’s because a man’s desire to serve his wife is instinctive. His need to make you happy is so automatic he’ll let you “win” just to keep the peace.

And he’ll do it over and over again—until he breaks. That’s when you have a problem.

Loving someone means serving that person out of good will. You choose to love, regardless of what your husband chooses. This does not apply if your husband is abusive or an alcoholic, by the way. But assuming you’re married to one of the good guys, if you *aren’t* serving him you’re not loving him.

And if that's the case, it may be that you're harboring a lot of resentment for one reason or another. If so, you need to determine the source of that resentment. Did your husband do something to hurt you or the marriage? Or were your expectations of him or of the marriage simply too high?

If it's the former, and you want to remain married, you'll have to find the grace to forgive or you'll never be able to truly love him. If it's the latter, it's time to let go of your expectations and accept what *is* rather than hold out for what-ifs. Once you do this—and it won't happen overnight; it's a process—loving, or serving, your husband, becomes a piece of cake.

*“Love and marriage require a lot of giving. If you don't want to be giving and generous, don't get married.”*

— Susan Page

**ACTION:** For the next five days, focus on serving your husband. Make him a meal or a drink. Bring him the newspaper or a cup of coffee. Ask him if he needs anything. Listen without interjecting. Show respect, even if you think what he said is nuts. When you were dating your husband, you probably did all of these things happily. My guess is you stopped because resentment settled in. Don't let it.

## Day 4: Don't use money as a weapon.

**Thought for the Day:** A man's need to provide for his family is integral to his very being.

WHO MAKES THE DECISIONS IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD when it comes to the big-ticket items? When you and your husband disagree on a house project—whether or not to do it, or when to do it, or which one to do—or when the two of you disagree about where to go on vacation, who casts the deciding vote?

How you answer that question determines who holds the power in the relationship.

Who's in charge of the checking account matters, too. Because that person has control over discretionary spending, and discretionary spending is what causes conflict. No one fights over the bills that have to get paid.

The person who's in charge of the checking account is the same person who sees how the money is being spent, which means the person who's not in charge of the checking account is at the mercy of bill payer. The bill payer may not be *trying* to control the other person's spending; but he or she has the advantage of seeing what's moving in and out of the account, so it's inevitable.

If the breadwinner in your marriage is the same as the person who pays the bills, that person has all the power in the relationship. If, on the other hand, the breadwinner allows the other person to control the daily spending, the power is more equally distributed.

This may come as a surprise, but in the past financial power *was* evenly distributed in many, if not most, households. As breadwinners, men may have had more control over big-ticket items; but wives typically maintained control of the family's day-to-day spending. "Even if a woman does not earn a paycheck, she is likely the gatekeeper to her household's expenditures," writes Bridget Brennan, author of *Why She Buys*.

This is true today, and it was true in our mothers' day. Yes, there were husbands who did not allow their wives to control the spending. But that doesn't mean it was the norm. And some of those husbands may have been justified if their wives were chronic overspenders.

Today, things have changed. Most women bring home a paycheck of some sort, which alters the dynamics considerably. The culture hails women's newfound earning power as a great thing, a boon for women and for society. And it may be. But depending on how a woman handles her newfound power, it can be very bad news for her marriage.

If you're an alpha female, you probably prefer to pay the bills because of your need to be in control. The idea of *not* being in control is about as appealing as sticking needles in your eye. But if you *are* in control of the finances, pay close attention to how it's affecting your marriage.

If you're a stay-at-home mom, or if you work part time and your husband is the primary breadwinner, as long as you have a system in which your husband doesn't have to ask you for money, you're good to go. If, on the other hand, your husband has to check in with you for every purchase he makes, your marriage is a ticking time bomb.

Same goes if you're the primary breadwinner *and* the bill payer. In both scenarios, the wife has, in effect, cut off her husband's balls. And that means eventually, whether you choose to divorce or not, the marriage will die.

*"Surrendering financial control is essential for intimacy."*— Laura Doyle

**ACTION:** If all your bank accounts are not joint, make them joint. Then, equalize the power by making sure the person who does not bring home the bulk of the income has decision-making power over discretionary items. Because if you bring home most of the income *and* you control all the finances, your marriage is a ticking time bomb.

## Day 5: Stop saying no.

**Thought for the Day:** More than anything, your husband needs to know you respect him. And every time you argue with him, every time you say no instead of yes, you're essentially telling him you don't respect him.

CHOOSING TO SAY YES INSTEAD OF NO, or choosing not to argue with your husband, is about understanding two things: male nature and human nature. In general, people don't respond well to the word 'no.' And men in particular hate it.

“When a person says no and really means it,” writes Dale Carnegie, “he or she is doing far more than saying a word of two letters. The entire organism—glandular, nervous, muscular—gathers itself together into a condition of rejection. When, to the contrary, a person says ‘Yes,’ none of the withdrawal activities takes place. The organism is a forward-moving, accepting, open attitude.”

One way a wife says “no” to her husband is by not respecting his opinion. When there's a disagreement of any sort, alpha females rarely capitulate—often because they're used to calling the shots or they're used to doing things their way in their day job.

That was a big one for me. Since I've been home with my kids all these years, and since I'm self-employed, I haven't had a boss in ages. And those who don't have a boss aren't used to following someone else's plans.

For years I've either been in charge of my kids, or I've been in charge of my work. I make every decision there is to be made in that domain. So when my husband disagrees with me, it's uncomfortable. It wasn't that I insisted on having my way in a childish or disrespectful manner. I never made decisions without him or said, “This is how it's going to be, and you're just going to have to deal with it!” But what I did do was just as exasperating.

I wouldn't let up.

I'd carry on with something over and over again until I wore my husband down and got my way, which isn't hard to do since husbands long to please their wives. Your husband wants to see you happy, so he will ultimately surrender—even if he hates your idea.

This has happened in my marriage on numerous occasions throughout the years, particularly with circumstances related to the home. I like to think my husband and I make decisions together—if and when to move, whether or not to do an addition, etc. But the truth is, when I get my mind set to something, I'm off and running. My husband's choices are to either talk me down off the ledge or to get out of my way.

Here's what I know today. Just because it's in your husband's nature to please you doesn't mean you should take advantage of it. When you do, you're using him. Instead of respecting his feelings, you're using your feminine power to undermine your husband's judgment. That may get you what you want at the moment, but it destroys intimacy.

**Listen to your husband. Respect his ideas. Agree with him even if you don't.** If you do this often enough your husband will, ironically, be more likely to agree to your suggestions or ideas because you've chosen to be respectful.

Try it.

*“Respect does something to the soul of a man.”* — Emerson Eggerichs

**ACTION:** Stop arguing with your husband. Just. Stop. Don't say “no,” or “I want to do it this way,” or “I have a better idea,” or some combination therein. Just trust his judgment and say, “Okay. Sounds great.” The worst thing that can happen is you discover his ideas aren't so bad after all. Isn't that what you thought when you were dating him?

## Day 6: Speak less—you'll say more.

**Thought for the Day:** It isn't necessary to air every thought and feeling you have.

WE OFTEN HEAR THAT COMMUNICATION in a marriage is everything, and it is true. But good communication doesn't always require dialogue.

One of the most proactive measures I've taken to bring about a more peaceful marriage is to not talk so much. The reason this is important is because men are a largely silent bunch. They speak far less than women do—not because they have nothing of value to offer but because men don't talk just to talk. They think first about what they have to say and then 'bottom line' it.

That's not how women operate.

To us, talking is second nature; and it starts when we're young. Our girlfriends come over, and we talk for hours on end, or they don't come over so we talk for hours on end on the phone.

Even as adults, a 'girl's night out' is usually filled with incessant gabbing. And if we haven't seen a friend in months and then spend two hours together, we feel like we haven't said squat. "We have to get together again," we implore. "That wasn't enough *time!*"

If you're female, this will sound very familiar. A man won't identify with this at all—although he may recognize it from his experience with sisters, wives and girlfriends. Women talk.

Men are wired differently. In fact, they often communicate nonverbally. Your husband is deeply affected by your intonations and your facial expressions, as well as by the way you walk. He'll pick up on your mood before you've even opened your mouth!

**That's the power you have as a female. Even when you don't talk, you're saying something.**

We live in a culture that celebrates the loudest among us. But the advantages of being quiet are manifold. Not talking gives you the opportunity to collect your thoughts before saying something you wish you hadn't. Not talking makes you a better listener. Not talking allows the silence in between to be reflected upon rather than squandered. Not talking makes your husband perk up because now you're using *his* language.

So on that note, I have an experiment for you. For one week, decide to keep your feelings to yourself. Every time you want to say something that doesn't absolutely have to be said, ask yourself these questions first: Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?

Then, when you do decide to speak, do so carefully and purposefully as opposed to just talking every emotion you have. After you've been quieter than usual for a week, watch your husband start to be more receptive.

Watch *him* instigate conversations with *you*.

Really.

*"We have two ears and one mouth, and we should use them proportionally."*— Susan Cain

**ACTION:** For one week, decide to keep your feelings to yourself. Every time you want to say something, zip your lip and think first: Do I need to say this? Weigh the pros and cons before you speak. When you do speak, do so carefully and purposefully as opposed to just talking every emotion you have in order to release your frustrations. (Call or text your friend for that.) After you've been quieter than usual for a while, your husband will start to be more receptive. He'll even instigate more conversations with you. Really.

## Day 7: Get busy in the bedroom.

**Thought for the Day:** Sex is a man's number-one mode of communication.

THERE'S A GREAT SCENE IN THE FILM *Annie Hall* in which a therapist asks the main character, Alvy (played by Woody Allen), how often he and his girlfriend Annie (played by Diane Keaton) have sex. Alvy answers, "Hardly ever, maybe three times a week." Then, in a split screen, the film cuts to the same therapist asking Annie how often she and Alvy have sex. To which she replies, "All the time, like three times a week."

The message couldn't be clearer: when it comes to sex, men and women have very different needs.

Those needs used to be something people understood and accepted; but in a culture that insists the sexes are "equal" as in *the same*, that understanding has vanished. As a result, so has any sympathy for men and the way their bodies are made.

Bottom line: sex is as crucial to your husband as is your need to talk and to be close to him. As a female, you're emotionally expressive and nurturing and, as a result, seek intimacy via cuddling, talking, etc.

That's not how it works for men. **Men communicate via sex. Via action.**

Your husband isn't being insulting when you walk by, and he grabs your butt. He's not being rude when he turns some innocuous statement you made into something sexual. He's trying to get close to you. So let him. If he *didn't* do those things, you'd have a problem on your hands.

In the same way you and I need to talk, to *release* whatever's on our minds, men need a release of a different sort. But that release isn't just a physical act any more than your need to talk is just a physical act. When you talk to your husband and he gives you his undivided attention, that makes you feel loved, doesn't it?

That's how sex makes him feel. If you hold this against him, or if you deny him the ability to show you his love, you're telling him you don't care about him. (Naturally, there are some exception to this rule: sickness, the postpartum period, etc.)

**To turn your husband down in bed is akin to telling your husband you need to talk to him and his saying in response, "Sorry, not interested."**

As with everything else, men take their cues about sex from their wives. If you're "into" it, your husband will almost always reciprocate. If you're not into it, he will try to get you to be

more interested. But if you're not receptive, at some point he'll give up. What's enjoyable about begging someone to have sex with you?

Many husbands will accept their predicament for some time. But the longer it goes on, the greater the chance he will end up in another woman's arms. He won't necessarily seek it out, but if it's right in front of him and the gun is loaded...

The way to avoid this is to have sex with your husband regularly and often.

*"For your man, having sex makes him feel loved and makes him love you."* — Dr. Scott Haltzman

**ACTION:** For one month, say yes every time your husband initiates sex. If he doesn't initiate it, or if when you have sex it feels "off" somehow, it's probably because the dynamic you had at the beginning of your relationship has shifted. To get it back to the way it was, re-read every chapter of this book. Read it three or four times if necessary—there's a lot to take in. Only by returning to beta mode will you find what you're looking for in your marriage or relationship. It may take months or even years to recapture that dynamic. But what I've written in these pages will work. It. Will. Work.