

## Are women really from Venus?

*A man's views on how women could lead joyful and meaningful lives*

**Important note:** *Everything I say below is only my opinion, which is based on what I have experienced, observed, read, and heard. There are no absolute truths or ultimate answers.*

### Introduction

If you agree with me that the things that matter most in life are happiness, peace, and meaning, continue reading this article. 😊

I believe that the factors listed below are important keys for a woman to live a rich and fulfilling life. I have not listed them in the order of importance.

Which of these keys you should focus on depends partly on your stage in life and partly it is your personal choice.

However, you should avoid two traps: one is becoming obsessed with just one of these things at the expense of the rest – which sometimes happens, for example, when you are in love or when you are a mother. And the other trap is wanting everything at the same time – which, even if possible, would make your life incredibly complex.

### Health

*Become aware of your body - its potential, its pleasures, its needs, its limits, its health!*

The first true sign of wisdom is knowing that our body is really the only real asset that we can be assured of. Everything else is a matter of luck and in fact depends on good health. Good health is the most important factor in creating opportunities for a happy life. Good health is all it takes to look beautiful! Women have a tendency to ignore their health or give it a low priority while playing other important roles in their life. Some mothers, for example, get so obsessed with their children that they forget all about exercising, eating properly, etc.

Health has several dimensions: physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and so on. Take the time to understand each of these, but at least begin with **physical health** right away since all other dimensions depend on it!

### How?

There is no dearth of material to figure out how to take good care of your body. Simply stated, you must always find time to exercise, sleep and eat well, get regular check-ups, and challenge

your fitness through physical activity such as sports. Developing good habits is an effective way to manage your health.

## Connections

*Healthy and beautiful connections with other human beings can bring immense joy to your life.*

*Connections* are healthy associations with other people. They include friendships and relationships. Connections are so vital to a rich and happy life that I like to include “building connections” in my purpose of life.

As a woman you must try to have strong direct connections with various people: your siblings, your mother, your father, friends (both men and women), relatives, colleagues, etc. By “direct” I mean they should not require someone else’s presence or approval. For example, your mother-in-law is unlikely to be friendly with you if her son (i.e. your husband) is unhappy with you. So, she is not a “direct” connection. Your connections of course may start indirectly, i.e. through introductions or relations.

Women have a great potential to love and care. But often, they have the tendency to confine their affection to specific people or family members, thus closing doors to anybody else. This is like building a wall around a light-source and artificially constrain what it can light up. It not only leads to unhealthy emotional dependence but also stultifies your growth. You need to overcome these cultural or self-imposed boundaries. With the presence of loving and caring connections in your life, you would be able to realize your own potential in every sphere – creativity, purpose, self-awakening, and so on. They allow you to share and exchange ideas, seek help, discuss your problems, etc., with the assurance of trust and confidence.

Connections thrive on *mutual* respect and trust, space, and some common purpose.

As far as possible keep your connections independent of each other (in separate parallel universes). Avoid mixing them up unnecessarily. Each connection must get its own space, privacy, and freedom for it to flourish.

Hard to accept as it may be, know that connections are dynamic and impermanent: their intensity will vary over time. They will come and go.

One special type of connection worth mentioning is a *Feminine Circle*. There is a deep empowering bond in staying connected with a group of conscious, like-hearted women. This circle can become your support system, which is non-judgmental, and which can enable mutual sharing, learning, and growing. It is not difficult to find women for your feminine circle: you can find them within your family, at work, at the yoga retreat, among women who inspire you, and so on.

You must avoid becoming too dependent on any of your connections where you start *demanding* love and loyalty. Remember that love and friendship are true only if they come to you voluntarily.

Finally, you must recognize *bad connections* – connections that are serving no purpose, or worse, are causing damage to you. You must learn to drop them, to move on.

### How?

Connections are a matter of luck; they just happen. You only need to have an open and receptive heart. Keep your eyes open for opportunities. Relations themselves are not connections, but they could be an easy opportunity to build bonds. Communication is the lifeline for both creating and maintaining connections. Finally, build a loving connection with yourself. Others will see you as you see yourself.

### Motherhood

The word *mother* is better used as a verb. A woman loves *to mother*, i.e. to care for others, especially her own child, but also, other children, her parents, older people, and so on. Recently, Indra Nooyi, the CEO of Pepsi, was asked to list her various roles in the order of importance. She said she was a mother first, CEO second, and wife a distant third!

Women certainly don't need a how-to guide to play mother (to her own child). I would only like to suggest that motherhood should happen at her own natural clock, i.e. when she wants the child, and not at some artificial date or age dictated by her culture or relatives.

If a woman can't have her own child, all is not lost; she has plenty of opportunity to exercise her care-giving energy to care for other children, other women, older people, and so on.

For a woman to be an effective mother of her children, there is no doubt that it is desirable to have a partner to help out in the raising of children. Parenting is a challenging job and having a partner can be a great relief. The biological father is a logical choice for that partner. But really, this partner could be anyone – even another woman who wishes to avoid the torment of finding or retaining the "right man".

If the father wishes to participate in the parenting role, by all means, the woman should let him, even if he is doing a poor job on other fronts, e.g. in the "husband's" role.

If the woman is divorced, typically the father is missing altogether from the parenting scene. I think the woman should allow him to play the role of father (especially if he is interested); his participation would make the woman's job (as mother) much more effective, tolerable, and even enjoyable.

## Independence

The word independence has several flavors.

- First and foremost, *independence* means *self-reliance*. It means you should always strive to reduce your dependence on others for your needs. You should make all reasonable attempts to be self-reliant, to be financially independent, and at least avoid taking favors/help when they are not needed.

There is a danger of becoming fanatical and unreasonable about *self-reliance*. It is impossible to do *everything* by yourself. You must be reasonable, sensible. You must choose only those aspects that relate to you personally. For example, raising a child is not just your responsibility: trying to do it all by yourself is unreasonable and would cause you undue stress. You should take help or do things in partnership where it makes no sense to burden yourself alone.

Financial independence is also a bit tricky. If you are a full-time mother/homemaker and your partner does all the earning, you should safely assume that your contribution to the household is worth at least half of your partner's income. But, in general, whenever possible, try to build your own savings.

Simplifying your lifestyle and minimizing your needs can greatly help achieve self-reliance.

- *Independence* also means making your own *decisions*. You should not depend on others to make decisions for you. You must also take responsibility for the consequences – good or bad. Making your own decisions (and mistakes) allows you to avoid having to blame others and to accept events even-mindedly. It allows you to be in charge of your life.

Once again, it is important to be clear about which decisions are your “own”, and which are not. For example, how to spend your money (i.e. money earned by you) or whether to meet your male friend for a cup of coffee, are matters that you alone should be able to decide, and you must fight for their ownership. On the other hand, which school your son should attend or what gift your husband should buy for his mother, are matters that need not concern you exclusively. Women sometimes try to take charge of such matters and unnecessarily add to their headaches.

- Finally, independence is about *freedom*. Freedom is fundamentally the freedom of spirit. It's about not becoming a slave to anyone or to anything – in particular things such as, ideologies, emotions, desires, and ambitions. Freedom is about always having a choice to change course, to change ideas, to change decisions, and so on.

Being independent like this can seem scary because you have to fend for yourself. But you need to compare the joy of being free to the benefits (like food, shelter, and security) of a slavish living where your spirit is constantly under someone's control.

## **Creativity**

Creativity refers to an area of activity to which the woman can apply her talent and which she finds interesting and rewarding. Creativity is the quality that she brings to the activity; it is an attitude, an inner approach. Creativity helps the woman strengthen her confidence and destroy self-doubt; it leads to self-love.

Creativity is about discovering her gift/talent and pursuing it. It should not be confused with her life roles such as being a mother, daughter or lover, although most women become extremely creative through these roles, for example: cooking, homemaking, celebration of festivals, etc.

Woman's real creativity – one that she can rely on throughout her life – must be role-independent. It – let's call it her "true calling" – should go hand-in-hand with all the things she does as a mother, wife, friend, daughter, etc. Of course, there may be time constraints – but they are usually temporary, and the woman must not ignore her "true calling" entirely.

Through exploration and exercises in self-discovery, she can discover her creative calling. The question she should ask herself is: "What would I like to do if I had no responsibility for anyone?" In fact, women often hit these "empty pockets" when no one – kids, husbands/partners, parents – seems to need them. Instead of going into depression, they should use those moments as opportunity to discover this true calling. The "true calling" does not need to be a career (money-making), or social work, or artistic work. It can be any of these, or something else. Dr. Jane Goodall's "true calling" involved spending her entire life studying chimpanzees! It got her no money, it did not help anyone, nor can it be called artistic. The most important thing about "true calling" is it gives you joy and a sense of purpose.

## **Krishna or Mr. Yang**

Finally, let us discuss a factor that largely depends on luck! Unlike the keys we discussed above, this key is not entirely in the woman's control.

It is the wonderful influence men can have on women's quality of life. Of course, a lot of men in reality have a very destructive and hurtful influence, but since this article is about happiness and fulfillment I will only focus on the positive aspects.

I have chosen for this purpose the beautiful metaphors of Krishna (for the women who love Krishna and understand his unique qualities) and Mr. Yang (borrowed and adapted from the

Chinese Yin-Yang philosophy). Simply stated, the idea of Yin-Yang is that Yin represents the feminine and Yang represents the masculine and only when Yin and Yang come together, they both experience true completeness.

So, what is this Krishna/Mr. Yang really like?

He is a man that makes the woman truly feel like a woman, who makes her aware of her feminine nature, who respects her completely, who does not disparage her feminine traits. He is someone with whom she can share her most intimate thoughts. Through her connection with him, she is inspired to pursue her creativity with full energy. She feels supported to pursue her other roles.

He makes the woman aware of her sexual energy and helps her release and harness it. Every woman has the potential for deep orgasms. The awakening of her sexuality has the power to aid in the process of creating self-awareness, of discovering the various dimensions of femininity – and thus nullifying the need to depend on external borrowed knowledge. The sexual orgasm can both be a joyful and a healing experience. The woman can attain this experience in a trusted environment, where she feels safe, and the company of a man who is open-minded, spiritually inclined, and respectful can certainly enhance this experience.

### How to meet Krishna?

Finding a Krishna/Mr. Yang is a tough task. Krishna is really an ideal, and a woman can only find his approximations.

The only way for the woman to connect with even such approximations is to be open-minded and adventurous. She needs to be alert and receptive to the possibility of such a man walking into her life. If she is truly inspired, she can even transform, through loving mentorship, a “promising” man into a close approximation of Mr. Yang. Generally, most women have a good nose for a man; they just need to follow their natural instincts honestly. Unfortunately, these instincts are hidden deep beneath the burden of cultural norms or moral codes. The woman needs to have the courage to overcome these norms.

Can the husband be the Krishna? Most women would certainly hope so and in some cases, it may turn out to be true. In reality though, the poor chap is already burdened with family, children, etc. and has no energy left to be a Krishna. Plus, the very (contractual) nature of marriage (more about it below) makes it difficult for the beautiful connection of “Krishna and his beloved” to blossom and survive. Once again, societal norms come in the way of a woman having “other” male friends, but when a Krishna-like man walks into her life, it is up to the woman to decide how important his presence is for her.

Finally, the woman must also be watchful about not getting stuck with some idiot (which, there are plenty, unfortunately) and not letting bad experiences make her cynical and dampen her hopes.

### **Additional note about marriage:**

Now that I have finished listing the important keys, I would just like add a note about marriage.

Marriage is typically one of the most vexing topics for women. Whether to marry, who to marry, when to marry, why to marry: the questions seem endless and without relief.

I have my own views on the system of marriage (which, to put mildly, are not very favorable), which I will not dwell upon here. It's really every woman's choice. But I think marriage (or any similar arrangement) must not prevent the woman from pursuing any of the factors listed above. For instance, her personal freedom to live life the way she wants and make connections with other people must remain unaffected. Marriage also must not be viewed as a necessity. Indeed, I believe a woman can be fulfilled (in all the ways listed above) without getting married. As a result, marriage should be entered into without stress and without the sense of finality or the mindset of "closing a chapter and starting a new one", etc. It should simply be yet another adventure that may or may not work.

The primary purpose of marriage, in my opinion, must be to have family, i.e. to raise children. A marriage should certainly begin with a love connection or at least with a connection that meets the criteria (described elsewhere in this article) of a healthy connection. But, when the couple decides to get married, they must have the purpose of family in mind. That way, the two of them will take the right actions for the children when things go wrong, conflicts arise, love diminishes, etc. The whole point (or definition) of "divorce" would then change. I think it is important that the responsibility of raising children is shared (because it is so complicated), and that the children get an environment in which they can avail of the natural affection and services of both parents, at least until they reach a certain age (say 18).

Some people may object to this idea and say, "You mean I should make a false show to my children that I am happily married when I am not?" I think this question has an inherent contradiction because I define a *happy marriage* as *the association of two people with the sole purpose of raising their children*. It should not be too difficult to be happy raising your own children!



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