

shaunti feldhahn

for women only

what you need to know about the inner lives of men

"What an important book!"

Beth Moore, author and speaker



“You’re about to gain some fresh insight into some of the mysteries of masculinity. *For Women Only* is a book that I believe will provide understanding and bring harmony to a lot of marriages.”

—BOB LEPINE
Cohost of *FamilyLife Today*

“Ready for an eye-opener? Shaunti Feldhahn has uncovered a mountain of meaningful information for any woman wanting to understand men at a profound level.”

—DRS. LES AND LESLIE PARROTT
Seattle Pacific University
Authors of *Love Talk*

“What an important book!”

—BETH MOORE
Author and speaker

“If you want to know what makes your man tick, *For Women Only* is the book for you. Feldhahn provides solid research findings to support seven revelations about the inner lives of men that have the potential to revolutionize your marriage!”

—BOB RECCORD
President of North American Mission Board

“*For Women Only* is the simplest, yet most profound marriage book I’ve ever read. Inside this little book is the power to change you and your relationship.”

—LISA WHELCHER
Author of the bestselling *Creative Correction* and
The Facts of Life and Other Lessons My Father Taught Me

for women only

what you need to know
about the inner lives of men

by Shaunti Feldhahn



Multnomah Books

FOR WOMEN ONLY
published by Multnomah Books
A division of Random House, Inc.

Published in association with the literary agency of
Calvin Edwards, 1220 Austin Glen Drive, Atlanta, GA 30338
© 2004 by Veritas Enterprises, Inc.

International Standard Book Number: 978-1-59052-317-9

Cover design by David Carlson Design

Cover art by Veer Incorporated

Author photo by Melissa Fortenbery at One Click Away, Buford, Georgia.

Interior design and typeset by Katherine Lloyd, The DESK, Bend, Oregon

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from:

Holy Bible, New Living Translation

© 1996. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

All rights reserved.

Multnomah and its mountain colophon are registered trademarks
of Random House Inc.

Printed in the United States of America

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in
a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means—
electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise—
without prior written permission.

For information:

MULTNOMAH BOOKS
12265 ORACLE BOULEVARD, SUITE 200
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80921

08 09 10 11—22

*For Jeff,
my beloved, my friend.*

SONG OF SOLOMON 5:16

Contents

1	Lightbulb On!	9
	<i>How I Woke Up to What I Didn't Know About Men</i>	
2	Your Love Is <i>Not</i> Enough	21
	<i>Why Your Respect Means More to Him than Even Your Affection</i>	
3	The Performance of a Lifetime	53
	<i>Why Your Mr. Smooth Looks So Impressive but Feels Like an Impostor</i>	
4	The Loneliest Burden	75
	<i>How His Need to Provide Weighs Your Man Down, and Why He Likes It That Way</i>	
5	Sex Changes Everything	91
	<i>Why Sex Unlocks a Man's Emotions (Guess Who Holds the Key?)</i>	
6	Keeper of the Visual Rolodex	109
	<i>Why It's So Natural for Him to Look and So Hard to Forget What He's Seen</i>	
7	Chocolate, Flowers, Bait Fishing	137
	<i>Why the Reluctant Clod You Know Really Does Want Romance</i>	
8	The Truth About the Way You Look	155
	<i>Why What's on the Outside Matters to Him on the Inside</i>	
9	Words for Your Heart	177
	<i>What Your Man Most Wishes You Knew About Him</i>	
	Additional Resource	185
	A Note to the Reader	186

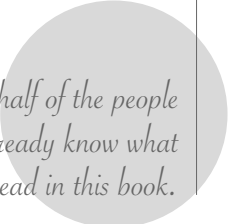


Chapter 1



LIGHTBULB ON!

How I Woke Up to What I Didn't Know About Men



*The other half of the people
on the planet already know what
you're going to read in this book.*

As newlyweds, my husband and I lived in Manhattan, and like all New Yorkers we walked everywhere. But I quickly noticed something strange. Quite often we'd be strolling hand in hand and Jeff would abruptly jerk his head up and away. We'd be watching in-line skaters in Central Park or waiting to cross the street in a crowd, and he would suddenly stare at the sky. I started to wonder, *Is something going on at the tops of these buildings?*

Turns out, something *was* going on, but it wasn't up in the buildings.

Have you ever been totally confused by something the man in your life has said or done? Have you ever wondered, looking at his rapidly departing back, *Why did that make him so angry?* Have you ever been perplexed by your husband's defensiveness when you ask him to stop working so much? Yeah? Me too.

But now, after conducting spoken and written interviews with more than one thousand men, I can tell you that the answers to those and dozens of other common perplexities are all related to what is going on in your man's inner life. Most are things he wishes you knew but doesn't know how to tell you. In some cases, they're things he has no idea you don't know. This book will share those interviews and those answers. But be careful, ladies. You might be slapping your forehead a lot!

I can tell you that the answers to dozens of other common perplexities are related to what is going on in your man's inner life.

HOW IT ALL STARTED...

Let me tell you how I got here. It all started with the research for my second novel, *The Lights of Tenth Street*. One of the main characters was a man, a devoted, godly husband

and father. Because I wanted this character's thought life to closely resemble what real men deal with, I interviewed my husband, Jeff, and many other male friends to try to get inside their heads. It took me a while to figure out how to handle what I found.

You see, in the novel my character had a secret struggle: He loved his wife and kids and was a devoted follower of Christ, but he liked looking at women and had a constant battle with his thought life. A constant day-by-day, even minute-by-minute battle with the temptations that beckoned from every corner of our culture, from the secret traps of the Internet to the overt appeal of the miniskirt walking down the street.

In short—and this is what was such a surprise to me—instead of being unusual, my character was like almost every man on the planet. Including the devoted Christian husbands I was interviewing.

That revelation led to others, on a half-dozen other subjects, and following those trails led to the hundreds of personal and written interviews with men—including a professional survey—that form the core of this book. I interviewed close friends over dinner and strangers in the grocery store, married fathers at church and the single student sitting next to me on the airplane. I talked to CEOs, attorneys, pastors, technology geeks, business managers, the security guard at Costco, and the guys behind the counter

at Starbucks. I even interviewed a professional opera singer and a former NFL offensive tackle with a Super Bowl ring. No one was safe.

Lightbulb on!

It turned out that these men shared some surprisingly common inner wiring. At their secret inner core, many had similar fears and concerns, feelings and needs.



These revelations were mostly things that my own husband always wished I knew, but couldn't figure out how to explain.

I discovered that there were many things I thought I understood about men—but really didn't. In several areas, my understanding was purely surface-level. Once I got below the surface and into specifics, everything changed. I felt like a cartoon character who suddenly had a lightbulb over my head.

Even better, it turned out that those revelations were mostly about things that my own husband always wished I knew but couldn't figure out how to explain. And that was a common refrain from most of the men I talked to. Although I still make many mistakes in my relationship

with my husband—and will continue to!—finally grasping these things has hopefully helped me to better appreciate and support him in the way that *he* needs.

I want that lightbulb to go on for you as well.



We all know, for example, that “men are visual,” but, well...what exactly does that *mean*?

Why was this surprising?

In a way, I was surprised to be so...surprised. We women think we know many things about a man’s inner life. We all know, for example, that “men are visual,” but, well...what exactly does that *mean*?

It turns out that what that means *in practice* is the key thing—the specific insight that will help you be a better wife, girlfriend, or mother. Using the “visual” example, the difference is vast between having the vague notion that men are visual and knowing that the sexy commercial he just watched has become a mental time bomb that will rise up and assault him the next day. The difference is vast between helplessly wondering what is going on in his head and having the insight of hundreds of men to help you understand not only what is going on, but also how to support him.

Actually, there was a kind of double surprise in this research. When I interviewed men and drew some conclusions, they would often say, “But women already know that...surely they know *that*.” All too frequently, I found myself replying, “Well, *I* didn’t know that.” I began to realize that there’s so much about men that we don’t understand—and that men don’t even know we don’t know. And that sort of misunderstanding is the stuff that gives birth to a lot of conflict.

SEVEN REVELATIONS

So here are the revelations this book is going to cover—seven translations from “surface level” to “in practice” that you, like me, may not have realized before.

As with all of us, the inner life of a man is a package, with these elements melded and wrapped up inside. Whether you are relating to a husband, boyfriend, or son, it is impossible to understand one part of his inner life in isolation. Every area affects every other area, and I’m only covering those few areas that I thought were the most important or helpful.

The survey

Thankfully, these revelations are also backed up by evidence—a groundbreaking professional survey of hundreds of men.

Our Surface Understanding	What That Means in Practice
"Men need respect"	➔ Men would rather feel unloved than inadequate and disrespected.
"Men are insecure"	➔ Despite their "in control" exterior, men often feel like impostors and are insecure that their inadequacies will be discovered.
"Men are providers"	➔ Even if you personally made enough income to support the family's lifestyle, it would make no difference to the mental burden he feels to provide.
"Men want more sex"	➔ Your sexual desire for your husband profoundly affects his sense of well-being and confidence in all areas of his life.
"Men are visual"	➔ Even happily married men struggle with being pulled toward live and recollected images of other women.
"Men are unromantic clods"	➔ Actually, most men enjoy romance (sometimes in different ways) and want to be romantic—but hesitate because they doubt they can succeed.
"Men care about appearance"	➔ You don't need to be a size 3, but your man does need to see you making the effort to take care of yourself—and he will take on significant cost or inconvenience in order to support you.


Since I found no survey data like this on the market, two sets of experts, Chuck Cowan at Analytic Focus, the former chief of survey design at the U.S. Census Bureau,

and Cindy Ford and the survey team at Decision Analyst, came together to help me conduct this survey. The survey was blind, done at random, and meticulously planned and executed. Four hundred anonymous men across the country, ranging in age from twenty-one to seventy-five, answered two dozen questions about their lives and about how they think, what they feel, and what they need. The survey stressed that we weren't dealing with outward behavior as much as with the inner thoughts and emotions that led to their behavior.

Later, because the survey itself inevitably led to additional revelations, I conducted a more informal follow-up survey of another four hundred anonymous men—this time, specifically churchgoers—to ask a few additional questions (and some of the same ones). And later yet, I validated several of those additional insights with a second Decision Analyst survey. Amazingly, across all these surveys there were very few differences.

After all the surveying, the results of my personal interviews were confirmed. Not only had I heard the same things over and over—quotes that I will include in the following pages—but those anecdotal results were now backed up by statistically valid evidence. I *hadn't* just happened to interview the hundred weirdest men on the planet! (Since I am an analyst and not a psychologist, and since my grad-

school statistics professor might politely question the statistical skills of someone who needed a whole semester to learn regression analysis, I was quite relieved that professional statisticians confirmed my findings!)



Results were backed up by statistically valid evidence. I hadn't just happened to interview the hundred weirdest men on the planet!

In the end, the men I spoke with and surveyed appear to have been extremely transparent and honest about some very personal subjects. So, men—whoever you are—I thank you.

BEFORE WE START: GROUND RULES

You're probably rarin' to turn the page, but before you get to look inside the inner lives of men, here are some ground rules:

- First, if you are looking for male-bashing or proof that your husband is indeed a cad, you won't find it here. I honor the men who shared their hearts with me, and I hope that by sharing their insight, more women might come to understand and appreciate the wonderful differences between us.

If you are looking for male-bashing or proof that your husband is indeed a cad, you won't find it here.

- Second, this is not an equal treatment of male-female differences, nor do I deal at all with how your man can or should relate to *you*. Yes, we women obviously also have needs, and many of the truths discussed in these pages apply to us too. But since the theme is the inner lives of *men* and my space is limited, I'm focusing entirely on how we relate to men, not the other way around. (That is also why the survey did not poll gay men.)
- Third, recognize that there are always exceptions to every rule. When I say that "most men" appear to think a certain way, realize that "most" means exactly that—most, not all. I'm making generalizations out of necessity, and inevitably there will be exceptions. One reason I did the professional survey was to determine what was an exception and what was normal.
- Fourth, I'm addressing what is normal *inside* men, not necessarily what is right in their outward behavior. And since these pages are not the place

they need to be loved. In other words, this revelation is supposed to change and improve *us*.

So read on, ladies, and join me as we look into the inner lives of men.

Excerpted from *For Women Only* by Copyright © Shaunti Feldhahn 2004 by Shaunti Feldhahn. Excerpted by permission of Multnomah Books, a division of Random House, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this excerpt may be reproduced or reprinted without permission in writing from the publisher.