

The Differences Between Men And Women

Marrying your best friend is probably the smartest thing you can do, but even so, one person can't meet all your needs.

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My friend Jamie and I talk every day, sometimes twice a day. We joke around, talk about our lives and what crazy things we've gotten ourselves into. It's great having a friend that you connect with. Now what if I told you Jamie's a man, and we are both married to other people. Go back and read what I just wrote and suddenly, this friendship takes on a different look. Maybe you're wondering: what is she really doing with this guy? Is this an emotional affair? So, the question is: Can men and women maintain friendships when one or both are married? And if they can, what are the ground rules, and do you establish them up front, or do you wait until one of you may have wandered over the line and now have to find your way back to what is "acceptable."

When I was single, having male friends was an important part of my life. Growing up, my best friends were always boys. This worked because I only had male friends that I wasn't the least bit sexually attracted to, so there was never any danger of me falling for them. The problem was, I didn't consider what would happen if one of these male friends started to fall for me.

On the occasions when this happened and my male friend would subtly let me know that he now liked me in a different way, I did the only thing I could think of to keep him as my best male friend. I pretended I had no idea what he was talking about. This would work for a while, but at some point he would casually try to tell me that he wanted us to be more than just friends. I would then also casually mention that I was swearing off boys until I got my C in algebra up to an A, which I knew was impossible. These were high school guys, so I could get away with this for a while. But after this male friend saw me lusting after some other guy, he was convinced that I just didn't realize that I really wanted him as my boyfriend. He one day blurted out: "Hey, haven't you noticed how great we are together, I really like you as more than a friend." As soon as I told him I that I only saw him as a friend and I had assumed he saw me the same way, he would be hurt and as mad at me as if I just dumped him and the whole thing would end.

I thought this was just a high school thing, but it turns out that it seems to be the way men and women relate to each other. Recently a study [published in Scientific American](#) stated that women are much more likely to be able to keep male friends platonic, while men have a harder time. The article states that these friendships are masked by a cover-up of sexual impulses by one of the parties. It's said that men were far more attracted to their female friends and assumed their female friends felt the same, when they didn't. Females were far less attracted to their male friends, and they, too assumed that the male friends felt the same as they did. So, when it comes to male/female relationships, there are a lot of mixed signals going on from both sides.

After high school, I met my husband. He was one of my close male friends, but lucky for both of us, we found a sexual attraction in each other. After we married, almost all my male friends fell by the wayside. Recently, I asked my married girlfriends if they still had male friends, and they, too, realized their male friends were long since gone. Work

friendships were OK, but taking them outside of work was a non-starter. Reconnecting with an old high school or college buddy on Facebook was fine as long as you only got together for the occasional meal. And any friendship where your kids are part of the equation was a no brainer. There's no better reminder of marriage than wiping a melted ice cream cone off your shirtless toddler.

I wondered if it was just the natural progression of settling down that ended these close friendships, or maybe there's a lack of interest because our partner meets that need we have for getting attention from the opposite sex. Or it could be that the wives of our old male friends were less than thrilled that we were in their husbands' lives. I know I wouldn't have liked my husband having a close friendship with another woman, unless she looked like a Furby if the Furby was having a bad hair day. Marrying your best friend is probably the smartest thing you can do, but even so, one person can't meet all your needs. I find it easier to get my other needs met from my girlfriends and the male attention I get outside of that is restricted to the few men that still try to pick up on me in the grocery store. I must be getting old, because that's getting fewer and farther between.