

The Love Story Begins:

Emotional Love Needs of Husbands & Wives



Being married takes work. It is about giving and investing, it is about sharing and developing, it is about growing and understanding, it is about loving and being deeply connected. Marriage takes work because it is not simply a state of being – but a process of *becoming*. Marriage is about being employed by Allah in the lifelong career of love and mercy.

In the past 10 years, I have come across many cases of marriages and engagements that did not end due to the legal positions within Islam, but they ended because husbands and wives or potential spouses did not understand what they wanted from each other, and more importantly, they did not recognise how to communicate what they wanted without being seen as selfish or being used, or feeling resentful or not good enough. In Saudi Arabia alone, the Ministry of Justice recorded 81 divorces and four *khulas* a day in 2011, and that 66% of these marriages ended in the first year. Sadly, these numbers have been rising since.

There is a reason why marriage completes one half of a person's *deen* (hadith). Marriage is not just about having children, it is also about building a nation of strong, upright humans who can fulfil their roles as stewards of the earth through their own growth and development within their marriages, whilst having the very first real opportunity of what it means to be responsible (i.e. stewards/khalifah). Marriage is so important that one of the greatest pleasures found on earth is solely reserved to be freely expressed between a man and woman through the institute of marriage: sexual intimacy.

Having been married many years (not long for many, quite long for others!), and through my experience as a Relationships Life Coach, I found that the ***greatest aspect of a marriage is the deep emotional connection that two people have for one another, and the importance of its development in a progressive manner throughout the marriage***. Many things, whether it is our financial circumstances, our homes, our youthfulness or our family dynamics, will change as time goes on. But what remains and what keeps the marriage strong is the ***deep emotional connection*** and the ***Islamic character that sustains that connection***. If the deep emotional connection is disrupted and not understood, or the Islamic character that sustains it is not there or fails to be developed, the marriage will float on dangerous waters and will be close to sinking. Emotional connection and emotional intelligence are signs of a wise human being who knows how to live amongst others, and to deem it insignificant is not only short-sightedness, but a great loss and tragedy to the ummah and our marriages. If we can master deep emotional connections within our marriages, then we are definitely on the path towards having the best dealings with humanity, and the best character to present to Allah on the Final Day.

Emotional Needs – Validation & Approval

Men and women have different emotional needs and they do not always know how to support one another straight away. Men give in a marriage what men want out of a marriage and women similarly give in a marriage what women want out of it, whilst both mistakenly assume the other has the same needs and desires. This results in both of them feeling dissatisfied and resentful, not realising that they are mixing up the messages each are trying to sincerely communicate, albeit falling short. There are many emotional love needs of men and women, some that both genders share and others specific to each gender respectively. These emotional love needs help each spouse discover why their spouse may not feel loved or emotionally satisfied, as well as identify why they too are not feeling loved or emotionally satisfied. Here are two to think about for you and your spouse:

1. Emotional Love Need of a Woman: Validation

Validation is the source of peace for all arguments! Validation is when the husband does not object to or argue with a woman's feelings and wants, but instead accepts and confirms their **validity and her right to feel the way she does even if he does not agree or understand. He can confirm her point of view even if he has a different point of view.**

Example: Once during a journey, Safiyyah (RA) was crying because she had a slow camel to ride on. The Prophet (SAW) didn't tell her she was being unreasonable or question the validity of her crying by saying "Why are you crying for?" or "What's the big deal, it's nothing to cry over!" Instead, he gently wiped her tears, comforted her, and even tried to find her another camel. A man may not understand why Safiyyah (RA) cried, but the key thing here is that **he does not have to** – in other words, what would you lose out on compared to what she would gain if you only showed patience through validation? A husband can validate his wife's reasons to feel the way she does just by letting her be, without compromising his own point of view.

2. Emotional Love Need of a Man: Approval

Approval is when the wife acknowledges the goodness in her husband and expresses overall satisfaction with him in order for the husband to receive the **approval he needs to feel respected. An approving attitude looks for the good reasons behind what the husband does (even if she may not agree with the act itself). Giving a man approval without having to earn it is the key to a winning marriage. Every man wants to be his wife's hero. The sign that he has achieved that is his wife's approval.**

Example: If the wife expresses her disapproval indirectly or with rhetorical questions such as: "How could you do that?" when the husband decided to buy something different from the supermarket to what she had asked him to bring. The husband will feel that she no longer approves of him and he will no longer feel like the good guy. Despite his good intentions she feels upset because he overrode her choice and therefore expresses negative emotions to make her dissatisfaction and loss of her approval clear. There are certain emotions that have to be given with a good heart for a marriage to work. One of those is **approval of the overall goodness** of the husband whenever he says or does something beneficial – even if the wife may not fully agree or benefit from it. If a man has to continuously prove himself and do things exactly as his wife wants in order to get her approval, then a wife will never truly feel satisfied with her husband because high expectations to earn approval will always lead to further conditions and dissatisfaction. Consequently, the wife will put herself under unnecessary resentment when she could free herself from her own negative emotions by simply showing overall approval. Not only will this encourage her husband to do more things to win her approval, it would make her feel happy and loved.

May Allah give us all deeply connected marriages and may our marriages be a means of gaining closer to Allah and earning Allah's love, Ameen.

"When the wedding is over, the love story begins. Happily ever after is when the two of you enter paradise together."