

They Can't Be Your Everything

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There is a trend in modern relationships where women become increasingly displeased that their partners aren't meeting all their needs. They want a protector, provider, lover (with many asterisks beside this), best friend, emotional confidante, cheerleader, political equal, and someone to share their interests.

They can't be your everything, though. You are a dynamic, complex human, with constantly evolving needs. Holding one human responsible for all your needs isn't realistic.

The truth? You are responsible for some of those needs. And the absolute truth? You are responsible for your own happiness. Our society has evolved rapidly over the last few centuries. We went from intensively tribal and tight-knit community driven society to essentially one-man islands. This disconnect from community has led us to seek complete fulfillment from one partner. So, instead of having one romantic partner that fulfills a handful of needs and wants, and then a community of peers and elders that fill our other needs, we look for a partner that is our everything.

I don't want to sell short the importance of a partner that is attuned to you. A partner with a growth mindset, who puts you as a priority in their life, is worth their weight in gold. This is part of what I work on with clients – how to hear each other and work towards optimizing their relationship. Conversely, there are partners that might meet so few of your needs, you find you are constantly unhappy. This can be untenable. It really is about balance. And it's also about committing to the journey alongside each other.

Let's work through a scenario. Imagine you have started to become irritated with your partner. They simply don't like to talk about emotions. When you are upset after a long day at work, you want to vent, and you want emotional support. Additionally, you want them to express their emotional needs of the day. You vent out all your day and are met with a few word response. This can feel dismissive and frustrating.

If you are in a relationship with a man, it's important to have perspective. Women are the portals of life. Because of our relationship as these portals and because of the hormones that run through our bodies (and of course, in my opinion to a less extent, society conditioning), women have different emotional expression needs. We are relationship driven. This is not to say that men don't feel deeply. They do.



If you have a partner that struggles to meet your needs in this area, especially after they have tried to work on it, it can be helpful to allow those feelings of frustration exchange for a sense of responsibility to finding a solution for filling this need. It sounds harsh in a society that is all about finding the perfect mate. But consider these solutions: Do you have friends that can serve this purpose? Have you tried somatic releases or exercises to balance your nervous system? What about journaling to express the day?

This same partner may excel at meeting other needs. They might be incredibly attuned at giving physical touches and affections or even words of affirmation. They might be helpful in the chores and other tiring areas of life.

Recognizing what gifts your partner brings to your relationship is important. It's an attitude of gratitude, which sounds corny, but is absolutely true. If you find yourself fixating on the things you are lacking, that lack will grow. If you instead, fixate on the things you have that you are grateful for, those feelings of gratitude will grow.

It's a very subtle, but incredibly powerful mental shift. So, just remember, your partner can't be your everything, but that doesn't mean going without. It simply means shifting perspectives and responsibilities.

