

A marriage can't be sustained with romance alone. But added to security, meaningful communication and a fourth essential ingredient - meaningful touch - it can be a tremendous source of energy and growth.

4. A relationship needs consistent, meaningful, non-sexual and sexual touch.

While the sexual needs of a man and woman are certainly very important, the differences between men and women in this area are striking. In some ways, a man is like a microwave when it comes to the sexual area. He's ready for the sexual union in a matter of moments. But for the average woman, her response to him is more like a crock-pot. It takes her much longer - in some cases hours or even days of being treated like a valuable person - to emotionally desire to share physical intimacy with her husband.

Many men don't realize it, but over 80% of a woman's need for meaningful touch is non-sexual. Sex doesn't begin in the bedroom. It actually begins in the everyday acts of truthfulness, consistency, kindness, touching and talking that build a growing desire in a woman.

UCLA did a study on women's health and came up with this finding. The average woman needs from 8 to 10 meaningful touches from a loved one each day to remain physically and emotionally healthy. Not only that, but they also found that some "driven" type A men could add up to two years to their life if they would slow down at the beginning and the end of the day and give their wives a long, gentle hug when they came in the door.

Touching someone lowers blood pressure and literally energizes a person who is down or hurting. Wise husbands and wives will take time to practice small acts of touching.