

## Girlfriends & Wives - Why Men View Them Differently

A friend of mine announced his plans to get married recently. It came as somewhat of a surprise considering that he once vowed to never get married. We talked about the reasons and the motivations for his about-face, and in doing so, embarked upon an ongoing dialogue in which we weighed the pros and cons of having a girlfriend, versus the pros and cons of having a wife. It was the kind of revealing conversation that women aren't usually privy to...until now. Since the foundation of marriage is commitment, it's only appropriate that I start there. My friend is not commitment averse. In fact, he has tried - and failed - in previous attempts to have committed relationships. But so have most men. During our conversation he expressed his fear of failing in a marriage. This fear is not the same as failing in a casual, or short-term relationship where there's no cohabitation or commitment. It's a deeper, greater fear of failure. The kind that everyone (friends, families, co-workers, distant relatives, and anyone else you may invite to your wedding) will know about. When men fail in relationships with their girlfriends, they can, in many instances, salvage their friendships with them. When men fail in their marriages, they rarely remain friends with their ex-wives. The continued exposure is a painful reminder of what once was, and will never be. Any friendship that existed is soon replaced by contempt and resentment. Not exactly the ingredients for friendship. Men like having girlfriends. Women acquire this position in different ways. Sometimes starting out as acquaintances, co-workers, or friends. Sometimes they are officially given the title of girlfriend, other times they "assume" the position based on their interactions and emotional connections with men. No woman could ever assume the position of being a wife. Wives are always chosen by the man. It's akin to the way that a woman always chooses her lovers. This is the balance of power between the sexes. Girlfriends (the assumed ones) eventually want an official acknowledgment over a period of time. And just so you women know, if a guy does not officially offer you the position and title of his "girlfriend," it's because he does not want to commit to you...but he does want to continue receiving the unofficial benefits of being your friend. A recent study revealed that two-thirds of college students have been in a "friends with benefits" relationship, citing the lack of commitment required as the main advantage to such an arrangement. More than half of those who had sex with a friend said they had engaged in all forms of sex; 22.7 percent said they had intercourse only, while 8 percent said they did everything but have intercourse. My friend is not a college student, but he was in this situation. It led to him receiving an ultimatum. His assumed girlfriend threatened to cut off his "benefits." As a result she got a promotion from assumed girlfriend, to fiancée in just one night. With this decision, he was forced to confront his greatest fear; the greatest fear of all men. Choosing the wrong woman as a wife. Women have similar fears, but because they tend to be fantasy-driven, they turn their focus to their "big day" after such a monumental decision. It distracts them from the possibility of making a big mistake. The women who are less emotionally distracted seem to manage and rationalize their fears much better; at least better than men do. Men are more fearful of choosing the wrong woman to commit to, than they are of commitment itself. Yes, men fear being "locked" down - legally or logistically - when the woman that they really want finally comes along. The logic among men is simple: it's hard to find the love of your life when you are already married. When men aren't ready to settle down with a long-term girlfriend, it's always because they don't have confidence in their choice of girlfriend as a potential wife. After all, with the assumed girlfriend, men can always say, "I never said you were my girlfriend." With the official girlfriend, you just break-up, even though it may be painful for her or you. And ending things with your wife? That's drama - and expensive. A girlfriend becomes a low-risk proposition in contrast. But choosing not to get married for fear of it "not working out," is like choosing not to play your favorite sport for fear of getting hurt: the risk is always present. My friend took this attitude, and with it, decided to take his once assumed girlfriend, as his new wife. During our conversations about girlfriends and wives, I was reminded that for men, there is a stigma associated with marriage that many women are not aware of: men fear that sex changes both in quality and frequency during marriage. Men also fear that their wives won't pay as much attention to their appearance as they did when they were once a girlfriend. While these may seem like trivial fears to most women, they are real and very substantial ones for men. So much so, that they immobilize men in their efforts to move forward with a decision to "settle down." For men, being "stuck" with a woman who loses her "hotness" - sexually or visually - makes them feel like they have indeed, settled, which is an unsettling realization. Men are visual, sexual creatures. Girlfriends don't have to be reminded of that. Men also fear that wives may change in terms of attitude, demeanor, and values over time; causing them to fall out of love. These are all fears. Some are legitimate. Some are not. All are to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. I wish my friend well. He is my best friend after all, and you can't help but have guarded optimism when someone you love makes one of the most important decisions of their lives. Hopefully this article, inspired by his sudden marriage, will help other men realize that the difference between a girlfriend and a wife, comes down to perception.

## About the Author

Gian Fiero is a speaker and author who lectures throughout the country.

Source: <http://www.relationshiprepair.net>