

Author rips 'lace curtain' of p

Shifting rules are confusing; sexes should communicate

By Marilyn Elias
USA TODAY

Author Warren Farrell considers men guilty co-conspirators in creating an atmosphere of man-bashing and misdirected feminism that he thinks is poisoning relations between the sexes:

"Men have learned to define power as being obligated to earn money that someone else spends, while they die sooner," Farrell says, "and no woman would be stupid enough to call that power."

His new book, *Women Can't Hear What Men Don't Say* (Tarcher-Putnam, \$24.95), says enough to offend both sexes. But he doesn't care.

The author of best sellers *Why Men Are the Way They Are* and *The Myth of Male Power* sees himself as a fair person who tells uncomfortable truths and is willing to take the inevitable flak.

The pendulum has swung in an ugly direction since "empowerment feminism" of the '70s pushed women to develop their full potential, Farrell says. First came "victim feminism": As second-class citizens, women need to overcome barriers to succeed. Now it's "competitive feminism": Women have it worse than men, and that's men's fault. "It exaggerates women's burdens and underestimates men's," Farrell says.

Corporate, media and academic decisionmakers view reality through a distorting "lace curtain" of political correctness, so that men don't dare speak out in their own behalf, he says.

Examples abound in the world according to Farrell:

► Contrary to the superwoman cliché, the average U.S. man works five hours more a week (home and job) than the average woman.

► Surveys on who's doing the housework routinely omit labor often done by husbands — home repairs, shoveling snow, car upkeep.

► An Office of Research on Women's Health looks after

men still die seven years earlier, and there's no special funding for men's diseases.

► Mass culture media such as greeting cards and cartoons depict men as disposable morons; no mainstream voice would try or get away with slinging such insults at women.

Some cartoons reprinted by Farrell in his book tell the tale. In one, two women are chatting at an aerobics class. One boasts to the other, "I lost 200 pounds of ugly fat . . . I got a divorce!" Another shows a bent-over bloke staring at a sign that says "Sensitivity Training" underlined by a boldface arrow and the words "This Way, Stupid."

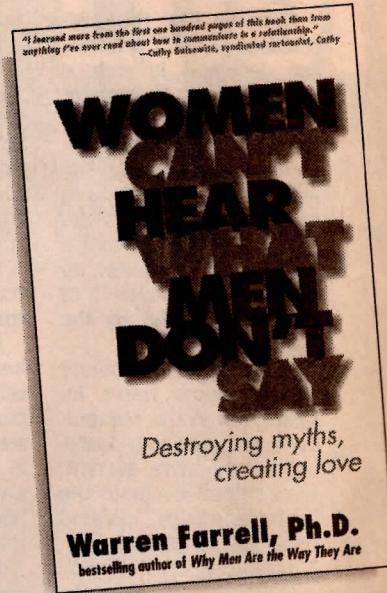
The sensitivity angle particularly irks Farrell. "Women are always saying they want men to be in touch with their feelings." But most women still prefer to share their lives with high earners, and it often takes a tough hide to succeed at well-paying jobs, Farrell says, so a lot of women are making men crazy with their contradictory demands.

In the real world, "feely" men are typically dismissed by women as losers, a key reason men won't go there, he says. When women get exactly what they wish for, they've been known to wince.

That's right, says psychologist Alvin Baraff of the Men Center in Washington. Men commonly enter therapy with Baraff because their wives ask them to, "since he's not expressing his feelings, especially negative ones like hurt or sadness."

But a frequent pattern is that as men start to express feelings, and sexual impotence diminishes as a common side effect, women become dissatisfied at hearing those feelings.

"Intellectually, she knows it's good for him to express feelings, but she hasn't been taught to deal with it any more than he's been taught to do it," Baraff says. Marriages often get rockier before they improve, but they usually improve if partners



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— Author Warren Farrell

them to get venture backing because men don't have as much faith that they'll succeed."

But Farrell thinks that, even during college, women are primed to blame men for their own failings. More than 30,000 women's-studies courses on U.S. campuses "demonize" men, he says. "The anger emanating from women's studies has infiltrated all the top universities."

He singles out the University of Michigan's Institute for Re-

search on Women and Gender, which he says is typical of "men-need-not-apply" programs, granting money for studies "on the various ways in which women are subjected to gender discrimination."

But men do apply — "and they get substantial funds for research on men and masculinity in every funding cycle," says center director Abigail Stewart. She says Farrell should thank women's-studies programs "because they're the one area in

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Warren Farrell

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"He said/she said" argu-
ments could fly back and forth
eternally. But in the end, Pol-
lack suggests that men and
women both remember they
are from the same family.

"We're not from Mars and
Venus, no way," he says. "We're
on the same planet together,
and we're not going to get out of
this by blaming each other."



By Michael Seewald

Farrell: Author says both sexes should listen to each other more carefully. His book includes techniques on how to empathize.

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► An Office of Research on Women's Health looks after women's special needs, but

Research office fills gender gap, backers say

Why is there an Office of Research on Women's Health financed by taxpayers but no similar program to benefit men?

Author Warren Farrell argues that it's unjustified discrimination in his new book, *Women Can't Hear What Men Don't Say*.

Men die about seven years earlier than women, Farrell points out. The government spends almost four times as much on breast cancer as it does on prostate cancer, and many other distinctively male ailments are neglected, he says.

There's a good reason for the 9-year-old women's research office, counters director Vivian Pinn. "We are doing science-driven research where there are gaps in knowledge that affect women's health."

A 1994 Institute of Medicine report found that two-thirds of research on diseases that affect men and women had been done only on men. That disparity has been reduced somewhat in the past five years, Pinn says, but much remains unknown.

"The whole rest of NIH (the National Institutes of Health) is the men's office," says Marianne Legato of the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York. "The more information we get, the more we realize there are systematic heart, bone and brain differences between men and women that are very important. ... Women are not small men."

Cardiovascular drugs tested on men have had to be pulled off the market because they turned out to be life-threatening to some women, Pinn says. Women also respond to pain medications differently.

Much of the basic biological research done by the women's research office will benefit both sexes, she says.

it's good for him to express feelings, but she hasn't been taught to deal with it any more than he's been taught to do it," Baraff says. Marriages often get rockier before they improve, but they usually improve if partners hang in, he adds.

Men are more stressed than women by marital quarrels because wives often excel verbally and are more at ease with confrontations, Farrell says.

But cutting-edge research challenges that. During marital arguments, women's blood pressure and stress hormones rise more than men's, studies show. And when quarrels are spiked with nasty words, wives show more negative changes in their immune function, and they get more colds and flus than their husbands, says Ohio State University psychologist Janice Kiecolt-Glaser.

Farrell thinks both sexes need to listen to each other more carefully, so his book includes suggested techniques for empathy and for melting defensiveness when differences arise.

At work as well as home, men are confused about shifting rules, Farrell says. He quotes one befuddled manager: "Last week I made a decision without consulting my female co-worker. She called me a chauvinist. But this week she made a similar decision without consulting me. I asked why she didn't consult me. She said she was independent, why couldn't I handle an independent woman?"

Female business owners earn 35% of what males do, and the more risk-taking the field, the larger the gap, Farrell says. Parents who want their daughters to compete well at work should encourage more risk-taking (as they do for boys) and less whining, he suggests. Urging her to call boys for dates gives experience with taking risks and the rejection that boys learn to endure.

But Farrell may be behind the curve on kids' behavior. Plenty of teen girls are asking boys out, says Harvard psychologist William Pollack. "There are 14-year-old boys who ask their mothers to answer the phone and say they're not home because too many girls are calling," says Pollack, author of *Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons From the Myths of Boyhood*.

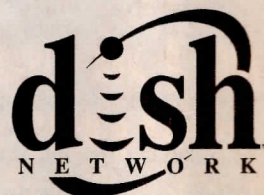
"And I don't buy the idea that women don't make big money because they're not taking risks in business," Pollack says. "It's harder for

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