





QUICK REFERENCE:

*A Woman's Guide
to Being
a Man's
Best Friend*



100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112

113

114

115

116

117

118

119

120

121

122

123

124

125

126

127

128

129

130

131

132

133

134

135

136

137

138

139

140

141

142

143

144

145

146

147

148

149

150

151

152

153

154

155

156

157

158

159

160

161

162

163

164

165

166

167

168

169

170

171

172

173

174

175

176

177

178

179

180

181

182

183

184

185

186

187

188

189

190

191

192

193

194

195

196

197

198

199

200

201

202

203

204

205

206

207

208

209

210

211

212

213

214

215

216

217

218

219

220

221

222

223

224

225

226

227

228

229

230

231

232

233

234

235

236

237

238

239

240

241

242

243

244

245

246

247

248

249

250

251

252

253

254

255

256

257

258

259

260

261

262

263

264

265

266

267

268

269

270

271

272

273

274

275

276

277

278

279

280

281

282

283

284

285

286

287

288

289

290

291

292

293

294

295

296

297

298

299

300

301

302

303

304

305

306

307

308

309

310

311

312

313

314

315

316

317

318

319

320

321

322

323

324

325

326

327

328

329

330

331

332

333

334

335

336

337

338

339

340

341

342

343

344

345

346

347

348

349

350

351

352

353

354

355

356

357

358

359

360

361

362

363

364

365

366

367

368

369

370

371

372

373

374

375

376

377

378

379

380

381

382

383

384

385

386

387

388

389

390

391

392

393

394

395

396

397

398

399

400

401

402

403

404

405

406

407

408

409

410

411

412

413

414

415

416

417

418

419

420

421

422

423

424

425

426

427

428

429

430

431

432

433

434

435

436

437

438

439

440

441

442

443

444

445

446

447

448

449

450

451

452

453

454

455

456

457

458

459

460

461

462

463

464

465

466

467

468

469

470

471

472

473

474

475

476

477

478

479

480

481

482

483

484

485

486

487

488

489

490

491

492

493

494

495

496

497

498

499

500

501

502

503

504

505

506

507

508

509

510

511

512

513

514

515

516

517

518

519

520

521

522

523

524

525

526

527

528

529

530

531

532

533

534

535

536

537

538

539

540

541

542

543

544

545

546

547

548

549

550

551

552

553

554

555

556

557

558

559

560

561

562

563

564

565

566

567

568

569

570

571

572

573

574

575

576

577

578

579

580

581

582

583

584

585

586

587

588

589

590

591

592

593

594

595

596

597

598

599

600

601

602

603

604

605

606

607

608

609

610

611

612

613

614

615

616

617

618

619

620

621

622

623

624

625

626

627

628

629

630

631

632

633

634

635

636

637

638

639

640

641

642

643

644

645

646

647

648

649

650

651

652

653

654

655

656

657

658

659

660

661

662

663

664

665

666

667

668

669

670

671

672

673

674

675

676

677

678

679

680

681

682

683

684

685

686

687

688

689

690

691

692

693

694

695

696

697

698

699

700

701

702

703

704

705

706

707

708

709

710

711

712

713

714

715

716

717

718

719

720

721

722

723

724

725

726

727

728

729

730

731

732

733

734

735

736

737

738

739

740

741

742

743

744

745

746

747

748

749

750

751

752

753

754

755

756

757

758

759

760

761

762

763

764

765

766

767

768

769

770

771

772

773

774

775

776

777

778

779

780

781

782

783

784

785

786

787

788

789

790

791

792

793

794

795

796

797

798

799

800

801

802

803

804

805

806

807

808

809

810

811

812

813

814

815

816

817

818

819

820

821

822

823

824

825

826

827

828

829

830

831

832

833

834

835

836

837

838

839

840

841

842

843

844

845

846

847

848

849

850

851

852

853

854

855

856

857

858

859

860

861

862

863

864

865

866

867

868

869

870

871

872

873

874

875

876

877

878

879

880

881

882

883

884

885

886

887

888

889

890

891

892

893

894

895

896

897

898

899

900

901

902

903

904

905

906

907

908

909

910

911

912

913

914

915

916

917

918

919

920

921

922

923

924

925

926

927

928

929

930

931

932

933

934

935

936

937

938

939

940

941

942

943

944

945

946

947

948

949

950

951

952

953

954

955

956

957

958

959

960

961

962

963

964

965

966

967

968

969

970

971

972

973

974

975

976

977

978

979

980

981

982

983

984

985

986

987

988

989

990

991

992

993

994

995

996

997

998

999

1000

INTRODUCTION

Although I didn't provide an introduction to Appendix A, *A Man's Guide To Being A Woman's Best Friend*, I feel it's important to share a few thoughts before I become specific with regard to this quick reference guide. Remember earlier that I mentioned that "Women inherently seem to know how to be a man's best friend." With few exceptions, women don't need a guide. That doesn't mean to say that they are all perfect. There are those who have character flaws and hopefully are working to overcome them. In general, though, if a man does everything in *A Man's Guide To Being A Woman's Best Friend* every day of his life, women will respond by giving back tenfold. Women love to give to their man.

On the other hand, if her man doesn't tell the truth about everything; if he doesn't appreciate that if she's working outside the home she is really carrying four and maybe five full-time jobs, especially if she has children; and if he evidences abandonment-causing behaviors frequently — look out! Most women are much more vicious than most men. So, in spite of the fact that women inherently seem to know how to be a man's best friend, this appendix is intended to *provide insights* for women with that inherent knowledge — enabling them to "give" to their man even better than before.

As a result, because you've chosen to be with a man who "gets it," you'll have more fun and will be treated even better by him.

Okay. I know this next statement leads to a sensitive subject, but since I've openly shared my perspective with you throughout this book, I won't feel good about not including this last — but to

me, my most important — perspective. I believe that most women are stronger, more clear-thinking, and smarter than most men. To be really truthful, I believe women are *all* smarter than most men, especially if they are loved in the way they should be loved and made to feel special. I believe that a man cannot effectively “get through life” without a woman who helps him to think more clearly. I believe that men — including me (although I’ve been trained a little better than most) think too much of the time with certain parts of their body other than with their brain, if you get my drift.

So as you begin to read this final section of *Best Friends Forever*, keep this in mind. If he’s not being your best friend, don’t bother trying to be his (and, of course, if a woman is not being a man’s best friend, that’s true for men, too). Life is too short to give, give, and then give some more to any man who doesn’t choose to respond appropriately.

It’s better to be your own best friend and give to yourself while being alone, than to waste your life giving much of yourself to a guy who thinks that simply “having a woman” makes him big, strong, powerful, and smarter.

■ BE GOOD TO YOURSELF SO YOU CAN FEEL
GOOD ABOUT BEING GOOD TO HIM

For you to be your best, and for you to grow to become the person you were destined to become, you must be selfish more than just once in a while. I know that men get up in the morning too, in order to fight the dragons that we all must fight to make a living. But do they have to whine about how tired they are at the end of the day, everyday? Do they have to expect to be waited on, hand and foot, just because they, too, worked hard for eight to ten hours? Here's another reality check. In the majority of cases, women also work outside the home. And whether or not they work outside the home, they *still* feel they are primarily responsible for taking care of the children, the house, doing the wash, preparing dinners, and coordinating most aspects of the family's entire life. How many jobs is that? It's a whole lot more than "one." So get a manicure and pedicure often. Buy that special moisturizer you want. Take time to work out or go to a yoga class a few times a week. Take time to read a book every day. Life will go on. Things will get done. He's capable of helping to fill in for you when you're taking time for yourself. And if he doesn't help out when you need him to help — *without you asking* — don't wash his underwear. Maybe next time he'll drive the kids to baseball practice or help them with their homework. Maybe next time he'll wash the dirty dishes that are in the sink or he'll empty the dishwasher when it's full of clean dishes. And if he's smart, maybe next time he'll take you out to dinner when you haven't had time to prepare any because you took the time to be good to yourself.

*I present myself to you
in a form suitable to the relationship
I wish to achieve with you.*
— Luigi Pirandello, 1867–1936

■ **ALWAYS TELL THE TRUTH, EVEN ABOUT THE SMALLEST DETAIL**

Earlier I said that women inherently know when their man is not truthful. Well, generally it takes men a light year or two to know when their woman is not telling the truth. When they finally figure it out, though, they will feel betrayed. He'll begin to distrust you when it comes to everything.

He'll stop following *The Man's Guide To Being A Woman's Best Friend* and you will have reason to feel abandoned. If you can't tell him the truth about everything, don't be with him.

The future is purchased by the present.

— Dr. Samuel Johnson, 1709–1784

■ **TRUST THAT HE WILL ALWAYS TELL YOU THE TRUTH**

Certainly it takes years of consistent behavior for any of us to trust another person. But, if he's openly sharing everything he does during the day and is being honest and objective about himself and the quality of his daily accomplishments, trust that he will always tell you the truth. You'll instinctively know when something he says seems amiss and of course you'll ask a follow up question or two. But in general remember that trust begets honesty. Whereas if you seem to be questioning everything he says and you make him feel as though you don't trust him, he may end up giving you reason to distrust him.

■ **UNDERSTAND THE PRESSURE HE FEELS
TO BE THE PRIMARY WAGE EARNER**

From his perspective, he's got to be your hero. Again, he feels that he's the one who must earn enough money to buy a beautiful home. He's the one responsible for going into the wilderness to hunt for food. Our society has taught him to believe that he's supposed to be the primary wage earner. We know that is not true in today's world, but he'll always believe it's true — and that's not a bad thing for him to be feeling.

If you earn more money than he earns, to him, his penis may feel inadequate. (Don't laugh, it's true!) Realistically, even if you fight the feeling, you may feel slightly disappointed, too. Don't ever let that feeling show, even when you're angry. If you do, he'll not only feel that his penis is small, he'll feel like it's been cut off. That's not a good thing for either you *or* him.

*When we feel that we lack whatever is needed to secure
someone else's esteem, we are very close to hating him.*

— Luc de Clapiers de Vauvenargues, 1715–1747

■ LET HIM KNOW THAT HIS BEST IS GOOD ENOUGH

If you use phrases like “my car is good enough,” “I don’t need that outfit now,” or “I don’t need that purse anyway,” he’ll wish he could do more for you and he may be disappointed in himself. There are no words to help him to feel better about himself. It’s all about how you look at him. It’s about how you touch his face as you smile softly and lovingly when you’re letting him know that you love him.

Your words, although well meaning, could backfire. Say “thank you” to him once in a while when the words “thank you” aren’t normally the words you’d use in the context of what’s going on. For example, you might say “thank you” as you kiss him goodbye in the morning. You might walk over to him when he’s had to bring some work home to catch up and gently touch him while saying “thank you.”

He’ll feel what you’re telling him; that you know he’s doing his best and it’s fine, whatever it is. Be his friend, especially if he is being your best friend, too.

*Many men are like unto sausages:
Whatever you stuff them with,
that they will bear in them.*

— Alexi Konstantinovich Tolstoy 1817–1875

■ **LET HIM KNOW THAT IT'S OKAY NOT TO ALWAYS BE STRONG**

He needs to feel safe in your presence. You've got to allow him to feel comfortable whimpering just a little as he crawls into bed with you at night and cuddles up behind you in the morning. You've got to allow him to tell you that he's afraid, that he's tired, that he's disappointed he's not accomplishing more. Remember that he wants to be your knight in shining armor. He expects it of himself. Hold him as you'd hold your baby. He *is* your baby, you know. Men never lose the need to be mothered, no matter how old they are. Never forget: in some ways he'll always be a little boy needing to be held by his mom. Do that for him. He'll try even harder to be your hero.

■ **DON'T TRY TO CHANGE HIM**

It doesn't work.

*Be not angry that you cannot make others
as you wish them to be,
since you cannot make yourself
as you wish to be.*

— Thomas a Kempis 1380–1471

■ **UNDERSTAND THAT IN SOME WAYS HE'LL ALWAYS BE A LITTLE BOY**

Take advantage of it.

■ **DON'T EVER BE DEMANDING**

Except when it's important for both of you.

*Never claim as a right
what you can ask as a favor.*

— John Churton Collins, 1848–1908

■ BE HIS FANTASY

You were his fantasy when you first met him. The look in your eyes said “Play with me, I’ll be anything you want.” Throughout your relationship, he’ll always remember how you dropped your keys — accidentally of course — while walking in front of him and then you had to bend down in that special way to pick them up. He’ll remember how you stripped for him. He’ll remember the sounds you made when he kissed you passionately.

You were his fantasy in the beginning. Be his fantasy as often as you can muster up the energy to be his fantasy. It doesn’t have to be that often. It has to be just often enough to remind him that “you can make him tingle” just by the way you look at him — and certainly by the way you play with him.

One does what one is; one becomes what one does.

— Robert von Musil 1880–1942

■ UNDERSTAND HIS NEED TO SHOW OFF A LITTLE

He’ll never outgrow it. Get used to it. Hopefully, you’ll love him enough to think it’s cute. Play it up big, baby. Tell him how strong he is and how impressed you are with his athleticism. I hate to admit it, but every one of us is so stupid when it comes to that stuff. Play into that stupidity. He’ll love that you do that for him. I know it seems impossible, but it’ll make him less “stupid” about the important things in life.

■ **LET HIM MAKE THE CHOICE WHEN THE CHOICE ISN'T REALLY IMPORTANT TO YOU**

Does it really matter where you go for dinner, or what movie you see? Does it really matter if he asks you to wear a particular fragrance, though you'd choose a different one? Does it matter if the car you're buying is white or burgundy; Ford or Chevrolet; Mercedes, Jaguar, or BMW?

If he's generally doing everything described in *A Man's Guide to Being A Woman's Best Friend* (Appendix A), then allow him to make the decisions when those decisions are not the really, really important ones. Be easy for him. In turn, he'll be low maintenance for you.

■ **BABY HIM WHEN HE DOESN'T FEEL WELL**

I don't know any other way to put this than "men feel the weight of the world" on their shoulders much more than women. Perhaps it goes back to my belief that women are stronger, more clear-thinking, etc. Certainly we know that attempting to complete each and every one of *your* responsibilities while having cramps each month isn't easy. We know that being pregnant for nine months while still being responsible for every aspect of "the world of your life" isn't fair. There probably isn't a man living who could climb that mountain. And it's very true that having a runny nose shouldn't incapacitate a big, strong, intelligent man like your partner. But a little cough, chest cold, and runny nose causes most men to feel — no, make that *act* — like their life is coming to an end.

I can't provide a logical explanation for babying him when he doesn't feel well.

I just know that he needs you to do it. So, you know what? Accept this one on face value. I haven't suggested that you do this before, so if he really is trying his best and his best generally is good enough, tolerate his low tolerance for discomfort and baby him. Don't baby him too seriously, though. Bring him some juice, a decongestant, a box of tissues, and plug in a video of his favorite cowboy movie. That's enough. You've got the really important stuff to do.

■ SEND HIM LOVING CARDS OR MESSAGES AT WORK

If you do this, he'll smile a little as he reads them. He'll set them on his desk amongst the pictures he has of you and the children. Once in a while he'll glance at them and remember how much he's loved. And anyone who walks by his desk and even glances at what's there — for even just a moment — will know that *this* man is someone else's territory, and the woman to whom he belongs will protect her territory with a vengeance if necessary.

Send the message to him as well as to anyone else who has the unmitigated nerve to look at his personal stuff.

*Anybody who believes that the way to a man's heart
is through his stomach flunked geography.*

— Robert Byrne 1930—

■ YOU DON'T ALWAYS HAVE TO BE RIGHT

If you have to prove you're right and he's wrong, in the long run you're the wrong one for him. Who cares who's right? The two of you are partners. As long as one of you is right, it doesn't have to be you. Be easy for him — especially if he's being easy for you.

You lose it if you talk about it.

— Ernest Hemingway 1899–1961

■ ENCOURAGE HIM TO FANTASIZE

He'll be more playful with you. And, oh yes — you may not have to be available to him sexually so much of the time if you don't feel like it. Tell him stories in the kind of voice you'd be talking to him with if he were on the other end of the 900 number some of his friends call. You know the kind of voice I'm describing. "When you were 15 years old and you had this little neighbor girl who thought you were so cute and she loved to wear old, a little bit too small, cutoffs with a little tee-shirt that was short and showed her midriff. And one day, when she saw your mom leave the house — perhaps to go shopping — and she knew you were alone, she came over to your house to see if you had seen her history book that she thought she left at your house the last time she was there." That's the kind of story I mean. Do you want me to describe the story further? Ask my wife to do it. She's the one with the imagination.

■ COMPROMISE EASILY

It's probably not too difficult to imagine the world these days, outside of your home, as a big, bad place. It's really a scary place to be for most of us. Oh sure, we all pretend we're secure, confident, happy, centered, and so on and so forth. But the truth is we all struggle.

We struggle financially, regardless of how many zeros there are at the end of our annual income. We struggle emotionally. Most of us have some baggage we carry with us from traumatic things that were said or done to us during our lives. We struggle to become better human beings every day. We struggle to maintain healthy relationships, both at work and with our friends. Just trying to keep up with all the things we have to do each day is a struggle.

So when it comes to you and your best friend, your partner, the one with whom you've chosen to spend the rest of your life, be easy. That, of course, goes for him, too. Compromise easily when it comes to the minor things. Try to peacefully find common ground when it relates to the big things. You two are working together to survive in this big, bad world of ours, so you both need to compromise easily. You can only really survive with peace and happiness if it's easy to be peaceful with your partner. Pick your spots to make a stand. But try not to make that stand on too many issues. Move easily toward that center point. Teach him to do it, too. It'll help to make being "Best Friends Forever" really attainable instead of just a fantasy.

■ PUT YOUR ARM INSIDE HIS AS YOU WALK BESIDE HIM

Be "his" girl. He wants you to be "his" girl. He loves the feeling. Allow yourself to let him feel what he needs to feel.

■ **ARRANGE HIS PILLOWS AS HE GETS READY TO FALL ASLEEP**

You know it's just a few seconds away from the time the two of you put your heads down for the night. You reach over and arrange his pillow(s) in the position you know he feels most comfortable. You reach over and place your hand on his head and gently move him down toward the pillows. You pull the covers up above his shoulders and tuck him in. He's now cuddled down for the night. He whispers "I love you, honey," and he's off to sleep.

■ **GIVE HIM A MASSAGE**

It's as good as sex.

■ **LET HIM KNOW THAT STAYING HOME ON A SATURDAY NIGHT CAN BE PERFECT**

He's tired. He might have even worked that day, too. He knows that Saturday night is generally the night the two of you go out to play. Once in a while, maybe even *more* than once in a while, light some candles. Give him a glass of wine. Turn the lights down low. Kiss his forehead and say, "We're staying home tonight." Hopefully by now, if you've read this book together, he's learned that you know best anyway. So he sighs, says "thank you" and later that night he massages your feet (or better!).

■ **DON'T SHOP FOR CLOTHES WHEN YOU KNOW HE'S UNDER FINANCIAL PRESSURE**

Is that too obvious to be in this book at this point? Maybe so, but I feel it needs to be said.

■ **INCLUDE HIS FAVORITE FOODS IN YOUR SHOPPING LIST**

He won't tell you that he noticed you were thinking of him as you walked through the market, but he'll know that you wanted to please him.

■ BE SURE HE KNOWS THAT YOU ARE PROUD OF HIM

Okay, so not everything he does is perfect. There is no such thing as a perfect man. He may really be trying to be everything he promised you he'd try to be, though.

If he is really trying — and most of the time succeeding — actually *tell* him that you're proud to be his wife, partner, or best friend.

■ NEVER EMBARRASS HIM

Anything you say in front of others — or just to him — that embarrasses him is a major breach of trust. It's a major breach of friendship. To him it plays directly into his insecurity. It's important to remember that even though we may pretend we're wonderfully intelligent, aggressive, athletic, and so forth, down deep we don't really believe it. It has nothing to do with the reality of our performance. We all think that we're less good looking, less smart, less capable of making lots of money, and deficient when it comes to making love to you and comparing ourselves to whoever in the world we perceive are the "big time winners." Does all this relate to a man's perception of the size of his penis? Of course it does!

If you say anything to him that touches one of those "insecurity spots," it undermines the confidence he has in himself that he works so hard, every day, to maintain. Of course, down deep, when he's really being honest with himself, he knows the truth. But he feels angry that you, the person he trusts the most not to uncover his vulnerability, said something that "blew his cover."

The problem is not that momentarily he will feel vulnerable — the real problem will be his reaction to what you said. Your words will elicit an angry response from him, and that response will be aimed at one of your vulnerable spots. An argument ensues, and most often a couple won't be able to see through the reality of what took place. You each add another brick to your respective barriers and life goes on, with the two of you a little less "in touch."

I have to say, though, if you have a really good base established of trust — and you really are Best Friends — a little poke now and then won't cause any damage and should elicit the funny moment it was meant to generate.

Here's a personal example of what I'm referring to. Susan and I were getting ready to go to brunch one Sunday morning at our friends Noreen and Howard's home. Now you have to understand that, at 51 years of age, in 30 minutes — no matter at what point she's at — Susan shines. She is truly the most beautiful, brightest human being I've ever met. Anyway, she is a woman — and because she's a woman and as such so very bright, she can be dangerously and devastatingly quick. So basically, I just don't mess with her, even playfully. This one morning I could see out of the corner of my eye that it was going to take her just a little longer to "shine." I'm in the bathroom looking in my mirror, she's on the other side of the bathroom looking in her mirror, and I think to myself, "Do I dare say anything?" I then think, "What the hell, let's play." So I say "Honey," (just the way I said "honey" she knew something was coming) "Do you think that you can get it together in about 30 minutes?" She whips around and within one fraction of a second says to me "Do you think you can lose 30 pounds in 30 minutes?"

Now come on. How funny and brilliant and absolutely magnificent is that? We both laughed hard. I trust Susan and she trusts me. (Although she doesn't trust that I won't open my big mouth and tell the world stories like I just did.) But you've got to be patient to get your man to the point where his vulnerable spots can be tickled — not poked — by an "exposing" remark. Understand how fragile men really are, regardless of how we pretend to be otherwise. Be his best friend. Stroke him a little. I'm sure you understand what I mean. Incidentally, I recently lost 30 pounds...good stroking, huh?

■ DON'T COMPARE HIM TO OTHER MEN

To him, comparing him to other men comes in many forms. You might innocently say "He has nice hair," "He smells so good," "He's so polite," "He dresses so nicely," or "That's a really nice car he's driving." You might say "I wish we lived in such a nice house" or "He must have a really good job." He hears your words differently than you mean them. He hears "His hair is nicer than your hair," "I wish you smelled good like him," "You don't say or do those things for me," or "You don't look that great in your clothes," etc. Your words may trigger his feelings of inadequacy. Remember, as I mentioned earlier, it doesn't matter how secure he looks or acts, he's still not sure that he's "all that."

■ LISTEN TO HIM WITHOUT INTERRUPTING

Generally, he'll want to talk about his job or something that's happened at work. Unlike with you, listening to him is not foreplay. It's his reward for going out each day to slay the dragons. He needs to be rewarded. Listening to him, sympathizing with him, making him feel like you understand how difficult it all is, makes him feel that you appreciate what he's doing for you and your family each day. Sure, I know that it sounds like I'm saying he's like a little boy who needs your approval. Well, yes — I am saying just that. I know that I'm saying just what you think most of the time anyway. So don't be so disappointed that your big, strong knight in shining armor is really a little boy dressed up in shining armor needing to be told how cute and yet powerful he looks. Accept it. It's a fact. Nearly all of us are little boys pretending to be all grown up. We'll try harder for you if you understand that we need to be held, comforted, and told we're really doing a good job. It's not about listening, as it is with you. It's about comforting him and letting him know that you appreciate the struggles he faces each day.

■ **BE PATIENT WHEN HE WANTS TO WATCH HIS FAVORITE SPORTS ON TV**

Only if he's being your best friend.

■ **MAKE GOOD EYE CONTACT WITH HIM AND HELP HIM TO DO THE SAME**

Perfect eye contact is critical. You can see into his soul if his eye contact is good. If he continually looks away from you, *gently* touch his face and move his head back to the position where you can see his eyes. Tell him that you can understand what he's saying better if you can see his eyes. Teach him. He needs to be taught. We all need to be taught. Be his friend. Teach him to be his best. If he's not teachable, dump him.

■ **LIGHT CANDLES IN YOUR BEDROOM BEFORE GOING TO BED**

You don't think this is important? Try it and see how much sexier your room feels when you get into bed at night.

■ **TELL HIM THAT HE'S THE BEST YOU'VE EVER HAD**

Lie if you have to. He just needs to hear the words. If you do, though, he'll always *want* to be the best you've ever had.

■ ESTABLISH AND LIVE WITHIN YOUR BUDGET

Neither you nor he can be at peace with yourselves or one another if together you spend more money than your income permits. Everything in your life together may be wonderful. You may be achieving the highest level of success at being his best friend. You will not, however, be able to eliminate as many levels of his anxiety as you would like to eliminate unless you successfully live within a responsibly established budget that the two of you establish together.

If you are unable to meet your financial responsibilities, seek help *together* from a consumer credit counseling organization or a financial advisor, and *together* make those difficult decisions that most of us, at some time in our life, must make. Include him in all of those decisions so that he understands that unless your financial state of affairs is well balanced, the two of you will not be able to connect as freely and comfortably as you would like.

■ RUN A BUBBLE BATH FOR HIM

If you want to make him feel loved just a little bit extra, run a bath for him, put bubbles in it, light candles and place them around the tub, and put a towel in the dryer so that it's hot when it's time for him to dry off.

■ BE HIS PLAYMATE

From time to time, glance deeply and carefully into his eyes. Touch his face gently with your hand. He loves it when you do that. If you are being his friend in the sense we are describing, you will almost always be able to create within him the twinkle that he's waiting for you to bring out in him. Allow your twinkle to play with his twinkle and you'll find that the two of you will be making love without being in bed, and smiling at each other much more.

■ TAKE A SHOWER WITH HIM

Of course, this isn't something you do with him or for him daily. It's a once in a while thing you do because it can be a playful thing for both of you. Allow him to help you dry yourself off and you do the same for him. It's fun. It may have been something you did while you were first dating. It will remind him of the excitement he felt while you were first dating. It can help to sustain the sensuous part of your relationship.

■ MAKE SURE HE EATS BREAKFAST AND TAKES HIS VITAMIN PILLS

He's rushing to get ready to go to work. Perhaps he's exercised, caught up on some work he'd brought home with him, taken a shower, and dressed. You both know that he's got to be at work shortly. Hand him his vitamin pills, a glass of water, and a banana if that's all you have time to do. If there's a little more time, put a bowl of cereal in front of him with a glass of orange juice and say "Sit down and eat." He'll get the message: you want him to have enough energy to feel good during his day. You love him and want him to be healthy. If you do this consistently, he'll honestly hear those words without you having to verbalize them.

■ SUGGEST CHANGES RATHER THAN COMPLAINING

I don't know how often I've heard both men and women say during mediation, "Nothing I do is good enough." Of course, by the time a couple gets to mediation, barriers have been built. Very little each of them does for the other seems acceptable. Each is feeling too much anger at themselves for the things they did that brought them to the point of dissolving their marriage and anger at their partner for the things that they did. Each is feeling remorseful and they're both experiencing the difficult time we have "making ends meet financially" and being able to succeed at the balancing act we all go through every day of our lives trying to get done everything we need to get done. By the time a couple gets to my office each has good reason to complain.

It's easy, especially when we're tired, to find things that we wish were a little different.

So suggest changes rather than complaining. Suppose he's dirty when he walks in the door after work and doesn't wash his hands, but instead sits down at the dinner table. You might say to him "How can you sit down for dinner when you're so dirty?" or you could say "Honey, you might feel a little more refreshed if you cleaned up a little." Perhaps you're going out on a Saturday night and he wants to go to the movies. You want to go dancing. It may not be a good idea to say, "We always have to do what *you* want to do." Try this instead: "Honey, it might be fun if we go dancing tonight."

I know it shouldn't be so much work even having to think about your choice of words, but for many a man, critical words may remind him of the way that his mother spoke to him. If your man was raised by a mother who seemed not easy to please, any button you push that makes him feel like you are disapproving of his behavior will cause him to react angrily. So think about your choice of words. This suggestion is, of course, equally true for men.

■ **TELL HIM TO BE SAFE AS YOU KISS HIM GOODBYE IN THE MORNING**

This is another way of saying, "I love you." It tells him that you cherish sharing your life with him, and that you understand how dangerous our world has become. It tells him that you want him to pay attention to everything going on around him, so that you're safely back together again that evening.

■ **TELL HIM HE'S SOOOO BIG AND STRONG**

Men (and I'm embarrassed to say I'm definitely included) are so gullible when it comes to hearing a woman say "Oh, wow, you're amazing, you're so big, oh my, ohhhhhh!" So big deal: Tell him what he needs to hear — most of us go to sleep afterwards anyway, while you laugh quietly to yourself about the fact that he really believes you.

■ **CARESS HIM OFTEN**

Men need to be caressed often, just as you do. Caressing him often makes him feel that he is still attractive to you. It feels good, too.

■ **LET HIM PAT POWDER ON YOU AFTER YOU SHOWER**

As young boys, most men looked at *Playboy* and pictures of nude women. It excited them. As men, if we've invaded your privacy anyway and you're at a point where you're about ready to powder yourself, ask him to pat powder on you. He'll love that you do that for him. It's just another something you can do to be his playmate.

■ THANK HIM FOR WORKING SO HARD

It's important to remember that most men honestly believe that their work is more difficult than your work. It's so untrue that it's unimaginable to me that any man could possibly *believe* that it's true, but men really believe it. It's not that men are stupid, it's that men have not been designed to carry four or five full-time jobs. Working outside the home is one job. Feeling primarily responsible for meals, doing the wash, cleaning the house, following up when the credit card, utility and telephone bills are incorrect, and driving the children from place to place is job number two. Being primarily responsible for raising the children is number three. Raising *him* is number four, and somehow making time for themselves is number five. As little boys, most men watch their mothers do all of those jobs. As little girls, most women watched as their mothers worked themselves to the point of exhaustion and girls just expected that one day they would do all of those things, too. Men expected that their partner would be responsible for five full-time jobs. Women, over their lifetime, conditioned themselves to being able to handle all of those responsibilities and somehow get through it daily. Men, throughout their lifetime, were conditioned to believe that they are primarily responsible for making a good living and are exhausted by even *thinking* about the prospect of doing more. (Notwithstanding the foregoing, men really *do* feel a lot of pressure as they compete everyday to make more money.)

The words "thank you" are nice for you to hear from him and for him to hear from you. They're especially nice to say when there doesn't seem to be any reason to be saying them. This "thank you" is a different "thank you" than the one said when he brings you a glass of water or clears the dishes from the table after dinner. He'll know what you mean. Try it.

■ KISS HIM OFTEN ON HIS LIPS

Kissing him on his lips — and I mean *really* kissing him, is a sensuous thing to do for him. It makes him tingle. It's something he feels throughout his entire day. It's a great way to say "good-bye" in the morning or "hello, you big handsome stud" in the evening when you see him again. Kisses on the cheek are for "mothers-in-law," not him. No, I don't mean you have to "put out" every time that you kiss him, but I'm suggesting that you don't forget to intersperse your kisses with the special, "I love you baby and I want you to love me, baby" kisses.

■ DON'T YELL AT HIM

Try to remember that, in his mind, "he's the man" — even though he questions the reality of it (only to himself) daily. If you yell at him, he'll become defensive. His mother probably yelled at him. When she yelled at him he reluctantly did what she wanted him to do. When you yell at him it reminds him of the times when his mother yelled at him and he wanted to yell back but suppressed the urge to do so. He *will* yell back at you. So be careful, please — try to remember that even though you're exhausted almost every moment of every day that "asking gently" works better. If asking gently doesn't work, open this book to Appendix A and say, "Honey, do me a favor. Would you read all of this for me?" If that doesn't work, and you still have to yell at him to help you, then stop yelling anyway. Accept the really positive parts of him and give up the effort to change him. If you can't do that, be his best friend and your own best friend, too — and, as sad as this sounds, think about making a major change in your life.

■ WEAR A FRAGRANCE HE LIKES

There are fragrances you love and fragrances you wear that elicit a positive “You smell good.” Wear his favorites more of the time when you’re with him. Wear *your* favorites when you’re at work, shopping, or going out with your girlfriend.

■ LET HIM CHOOSE THE CAR HE WANTS TO BUY

Provided the cost of it is not more excessive than is affordable for the two of you.

■ DON’T EVER IMPLY YOU WISH HE EARNED MORE MONEY

His ego is more fragile than you ever imagined. We all know that none of us can ever make “enough” money. We all struggle to pay all our bills and still be able to afford all those nice things we’d like to own. He is really sensitive to the slightest indication that you wish he could earn more money. He feels that you don’t appreciate how hard he is trying. He feels your lack of consideration for how hard he’s trying to improve his earning capacity. Now, if he’s copping out of trying doing his best every day, that’s a different story. But remember: don’t complain — suggest changes. Help him think through the problem. Your perspective is clearer than his is. Share it with him really *gently*. He’s feeling the same frustration you feel about not having enough money to “keep up” with your ever-growing expenses. Out-think his defensiveness. Choose your words carefully.

■ DON'T CHECK UP ON HIM

Well, let's see. If you're checking up on him it's probably because you're feeling really insecure about yourself and projecting that feeling of insecurity onto him — or you believe he's not telling you the truth. If you're feeling insecure about yourself, get to work on the biggest struggle we all experience in life — that struggle to become the person we always wanted to become. I realize that's easier said than done. But be careful that you're not projecting your feelings of insecurity onto him before you start playing detective.

On the other hand, if you're checking up on him because you sense he's not telling you the truth, remember that you may actually find out the truth. Is that a bad thing? No.

But if he's not telling you the truth, then he's not being your best friend, and you've already begun building barriers that shelter you from him. He's probably not feeling loved either because of those barriers you built, and he's begun to build his own barriers because of that. So what's checking up on him got to do with it? When you begin to check up on him you venture into what could very well be a final stage of your relationship with him. Be sure you're ready to go there before you choose this direction.

■ PREPARE THE COFFEE MAKER SO IT'S READY FOR HIM IN THE MORNING

If he gets up earlier than you do in the morning and he likes to have his coffee when he awakens, it's nice for him to simply be able to click on the coffee maker and know that in minutes it'll be ready. It takes a little extra effort when you're exhausted and ready for bed yourself but he will appreciate it.

■ EXERCISE REGULARLY AND ENCOURAGE HIM TO DO SO ALSO

You don't have to become frumpy, you know. He doesn't have to become flabby either. Set some time aside to exercise together if you're able to do so. If not, take that selfish time I spoke of earlier. Encourage him to take that time, too. In addition to keeping him healthy, it'll give you the space you need from him so you can take a deep breath — and maybe a bubble bath, too.

■ ENCOURAGE HIM TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH HIS FAMILY

Some men will naturally want to stay in touch with members of their family, and they will do so. Other men want to stay in touch, but forget to do so. Still others can't stand to even speak on the telephone to certain members of their family. If your man wants to stay in touch with members of his family, he doesn't need encouragement to do so. For those of you who are with men who *know* they should keep in touch, but put it off, a gentle reminder now and then is a good idea. And if you are married to one of those men, if he's too busy or puts it off for whatever reason, once in a while make the calls for him — if only to just say "Hi, we were thinking about you." He'll really appreciate that you do that for him. Don't cover for him too often, though. He should be making those calls himself.

If you are partners with a man who can't stand to even *think* about his family, let alone speak with them, you may be experiencing problems with him that go far deeper than "just encouraging him to stay in touch with his family." In these instances, encourage him to seek the help of a therapist who is able to help him get over the anger he feels at both members of his family and perhaps even at himself.

If he's really angry with others and perhaps with himself, that anger inhibits his ability to freely love you the way you should be and need to be loved.

■ **ENCOURAGE HIM TO GO OUT WITH HIS FRIENDS**

As long as he and his friends play nicely together.

■ **ACCEPT HIS NEED FOR SEXUAL RELEASE IF...**

Now this topic — for me at least — may be difficult to explain. It's somewhat obvious that most men have masturbated since they've been teenagers; and masturbation is "fine" but it's not exactly like the other stuff that's really fun. I'm not completely certain that women also don't have a frequent need for sexual release. So what I'm trying to say rather clumsily is, please don't hold it against me if I'm discussing this topic as though it's exclusively a "man thing."

Please try not to feel disgusted by his need to masturbate. Try not to feel as though you're less than adequate for him in a sexual context. In other words, don't take the fact that he masturbates personally. For most men, it has nothing to do with the quality of your sexual relationship or the number of times each month you have sex. For most men masturbation is much more of an emotional release rather than a sexual release.

It's a very brief vacation from the pressure he feels to earn a good living and fulfill all of his other obligations. It's not a reflection of any deficiency in you. If you allow yourself to feel that his need to masturbate relates to your lack of being able to please him, it may inhibit your ability to be peaceful about having sex with him. That will detract from your own enjoyment and may cause him to feel inadequate about his being able to please you while the two of you are making love.

■ LET HIM KNOW HE MAKES YOU FEEL GOOD

Perhaps you do this by sending little notes or cards to him at work. Perhaps you do it by saying the words “thank you” when it’s not necessarily appropriate to say “thank you.” Maybe it’s that you remember to tell him to take his vitamins or tell him to be safe as he leaves for work. There are many ways to let him know that he makes you feel good. Of course, the best one is to permit him to sleep in your bed each night.

■ ENCOURAGE HIM TO REACH FOR HIS DREAMS

I dream of the day when the divorce rate is 25% rather than 50%. I dream of the day when we all donate four hours of our time, every year, doing anything we can do for charity (see www.servicexchange.org). I dream of the day when we all record the story of our lifetime so our great-grandchildren will be able to learn everything about us, not just be able to see pictures of us (see www.playinheritance.com — coming fall of 2002) If he’s a dreamer, encourage him to reach for his dreams — provided it doesn’t force the two of you into bankruptcy. Encouraging him to reach for his dreams is one of the best rewards you can give him for being your best friend.

■ NEVER SAY ANYTHING THAT WOULD MAKE HIM FEEL UNWORTHY

We are all sensitive to negative input, especially from someone we love. Anytime you say things like “You’re lazy,” “You’re sloppy,” “You’re a pig,” or “Why can’t you earn more money?”, he will shut down emotionally in order to protect himself from being hurt by you again. Verbal abuse is as devastating as physical abuse. If you say things that cause him to feel unworthy, he might go through the motions of being with you — perhaps even for years — but you’ve hurt him, you’ve not been his friend, and he will retaliate by saying things to you that are intended to make you feel unworthy.

■ **MAKE SURE HE HAS REGULAR PHYSICAL CHECK-UPS**

Most women take it for granted they will go to their gynecologist at least once a year. They'll have a mammogram. To a woman, the discomfort of being examined by their doctor is simply something they must do for themselves regularly. Most men are just the opposite. They have to be so sick they're sure they are dying before they'll go to a doctor. Don't just remind him to make that appointment to see his doctor; tell him he can't come home that night unless he does so.

■ **UNDERSTAND AND BE PATIENT WITH HIS INSECURITY IF YOU EARN MORE MONEY THAN HE EARNS**

I'm not saying that you have to like it. I'm only saying that although he suppresses the feeling, it probably makes him slightly nauseous — especially if he wants to always be your knight in shining armor. So the question is, "What are you to do if you really do earn more or even much more money than he earns?" Make it seem irrelevant. The two of you are a team. You're bound together for eternity. Which one of you earns more money, which one puts the children to sleep, which one writes the checks to pay the bills, or which one does the grocery shopping is completely irrelevant. If you earn more money than he earns, make certain that he understands this concept.

If he equates making more money with being smarter, and if you earn more money than he earns, then he's far ahead of most men and you're lucky. He understands the primary point behind my perception expressed in *Best Friends Forever*. Most women are far smarter, more clear-thinking, and stronger in every way than most men. Nevertheless, be gentle and understand that he wishes you didn't have to work if you chose not to. He really wants to be your hero.

■ BE PATIENT WHILE HE'S LEARNING TO BE YOUR BEST FRIEND

Provided he's teachable, be patient. For example, if you say to him, "Would you please wipe the water marks off of the mirror and wipe the bathroom sink when you finish shaving in the morning?" and after you ask him he does it consistently, he's teachable. If you say, "Please don't share our entire lives with our friends next time we go out with them" and from then on he shares only *half* of your entire lives, he's teachable. For some of us it takes more time than it should. But if you're patient and he loves you enough to be teachable, someday he'll be a "keeper."

■ IF HE'S NOT TRYING TO BE YOUR BEST FRIEND FORGIVE YOURSELF FOR NOT WANTING TO BE HIS

Hopefully, you're not at the point in your relationship where each of you has built barriers that prevent you and your partner from connecting with one another and being best friends. If you *are* at this point in your relationship, though, you may be feeling that you yelled back at him too much of the time or you were too critical, and that at least *some* element of the problems that exist have been caused by you. Indeed, the truth *may be* that at least some of the problems have been caused by you. But now it's time for you to be introspective and objective. It's time to read the headings of Appendix A located just prior to this appendix and ask yourself this question: "If he did everything contained in *A Man's Guide to Being A Woman's Best Friend* every day, would I have been his best friend, too — in the truest sense of the words?"

So turn to Appendix A and close your eyes for just a minute or two. Allow yourself to go back in time to the moment when you first met, and picture him doing everything (and I mean *everything*) contained in *A Man's Guide* every day of your lives together. After you've completed reading only the headings of that section, ask yourself this question: "If he did everything contained in that section every day, would I have been critical of

him? Would I have yelled at him? Or would I have given him the best of myself everyday of our relationship?"

If he didn't do 99% of everything contained in *A Man's Guide To Being A Woman's Best Friend*, you probably had good reasons for being angry with him. You would not have yelled or been critical of him. So, since he hasn't consistently been your best friend, forgive yourself for not wanting to be his.



APPENDIX C

Best Friends Forever Wedding Vow

With this ring my sweet love, I thee wed.

In doing so I promise to be your best friend forever.

I promise to carefully listen to
and accept your perspective
and always compromise mine.

I promise to maintain a heightened awareness
so I can anticipate your needs.

I promise to hold you close and never cause you
to build a barrier between us.

I promise to always admit when I've been wrong.

I shall keep every promise whether expressed
or implied that I've made to you.

I promise to never take any other
person's side against you.

You are my darling. You are my love.

I promise to cherish and protect the trust
you've placed in me.

Thank you for allowing me to become your
husband/wife and best friend forever.

I love you _____ (Name)





BEST FRIENDS FOREVER

a couples guide

Best Friends Forever: A Couples Guide is written to help those of us seeking love to find and maintain a loving relationship forever. If you're already *in* a relationship, it is the guide you and your partner should try to follow every day of your lives. If you do:

- Neither of you will ever have a need to build a barrier that separates one from the other.
- You'll "make love" from the time you get up in the morning until the time you fall asleep — by doing things for each other that make your lives more comfortable.
- You'll be encouraging positive feelings of self worth in each other.
- You will trust each other implicitly. Your partner will know that you are on their side all of the time, and you'll know they're on yours. You'll feel peaceful when you're in your partner's presence.



Author Michael Levin has participated in the mediation of more than 2,000 dissolutions of marriage since 1991. He hopes this book will help those seeking love to find and maintain a loving relationship with their "best friend," as he has with his wife, Susan.

Best Friends Forever Press
4350 E. Camelback Rd., Suite F-100
Phoenix, Arizona 85018
(602) 852-3662



ISBN: 0-9720777-0-7

\$13.95