

# CENTER ON FATHERING

## Fathering is For Life

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## Center on Fathering Monthly Newsletter--- September 2020

### The Tale of Two Brains, by Mark Gungor



We're going to discuss men's brains versus women's brains and how they are very different from each other. I want to start with men's brains. Now, men's brains are unique.

Men's brains are made up of little boxes. We have a box for everything: a box for the car, a box for the money, a box for the job, a box for you, a box for the kids, a box for your mother somewhere in the basement. We have boxes everywhere, and the rule is the boxes don't touch. When a man discusses a particular subject, we go to that particular box, we pull that box out, we open the box, and we discuss

only what is in that box. Then we close the box and put it away, being very, very careful not to touch any other boxes. Women's brains are very, very different from men's brains. Women's brains are made up of a big ball of wire. Everything is connected to everything. The money is connected to the car, the car is connected to your job, and your kids are connected to your mother. Everything is connected. Everything! It's like the Internet superhighway, and it's all driven by energy that we call "emotions." It's one of the reasons why women tend to remember everything. Because if you take an event and you connect it to an emotion, it burns in your memory and you can remember it forever. The same thing happens for men; it just doesn't happen very often because, quite frankly, we don't care. Women tend to care about everything! And they just love it. Now, men, we have a box in our brain that most women are not aware of. This particular box has nothing in it. True, true. In fact, we call it the "nothing box." Of all the boxes a man has in his brain, the nothing box is our favorite box. If a man has a chance he'll go to his nothing box every time. That's why a man can do something seemingly completely brain dead for hours on end, like fishing. And we love it. That's why a guy can sit in front of a TV and space out. It glows—ahhhh. Of course, this drives our wives



nuts, because they'll come to us and say, "Stop that. You can't possibly be watching everything!" "I'm not. Go away." They've actually measured this. A couple of years ago, the University of Pennsylvania did a study that discovered that men have the ability to think about absolutely nothing and still breathe. They connected all the wires and stuff like that, measured the brain activity, and all of a sudden—nothing. Women can't do it—their minds never stop. They don't understand the nothing box, and it drives them crazy, because nothing drives a woman crazier and makes her feel more irritated than when a man is doing nothing! This just drives her nuts. A woman will see a man in that vegetative state, and she'll come up and say, "What are you thinking about?" "Nothing'." "But you got to be thinking about something." "No, I was thinking' about nothing'. In fact, I was on a roll until you showed up. Go away." Because that's how he handles stress. Now, when a woman is stressed out, she has to talk about it. I know men who run from their wives when they do this. I ask why they run from her. The answer is because they don't know what to tell her. (Dear God, man, who told you to tell her anything?) A woman doesn't want a man to tell her anything. See, a lot of guys feel obligated when women start explaining all their stress. They feel obligated to fix them, because that's what a man does. A man only tells his troubles to another man hoping that a man will fix it. But a woman's not a man. And if a man tries to fix her, she's going to kill him. Right? She doesn't want his advice; she doesn't want his help; she wants the man to shut up and listen. Now, I had one guy tell me, "Man, if she'd just tell me how she feels." I said, "She doesn't know yet." He said, "What do you mean?" "Well, that's how she figures out how she feels—by connecting this wire to that wire." Now, because they love each other, they offer to each other their answer, their solution. The man senses his wife is stressed out. He loves the girl. He offers the girl his best and finest solution: "Let's just quit talking about it. Just quit thinking about it." Now, a woman senses her husband's stress. She loves him; therefore, she offers to him her best and finest solution: "Talk to me. Why won't you talk to me?" He doesn't want to talk to you. Leave him alone. He will not die. He's not a woman. I know you've got to talk it through or you're going to be twisted inside. He's not like that. Leave the boy alone. When he's stressed out, let him go to his nothing box. Just stay away. Now, not only does this affect the way we respond to stress and stuff. The way our brains are wired also affects the way we use words. Men tend to use fewer words than women do. That's because women have all those wires they're trying to connect. They've got to explain each and every connection. They say that if a man needs to speak 10,000 words a day, a woman needs to speak 20,000. My wife says, "That's because we've got to repeat everything we say." To which I respond, "Huh?" Not only do we use different numbers of words, the words can mean different things to men and women. To most men, five minutes means five minutes. To a lot of women it can mean an indefinite period of time. "Are you ready yet?" "Five more minutes." Ugh! As we discussed, men understand nothing. Women don't understand the significance of nothing. If a woman says "Nothing," look out, it means something. "I don't know what happened. I don't know. I asked my wife what she was upset about." "What did she say?" "She said, 'Nothing.'" "Get out of the house now, man! Run!!" Now, a sigh is not a word, it is a vocalization. When a man sighs, it

means he is good with life. When a woman sighs, it means, “You are an idiot.” Now when a man says “Go ahead,” he is being polite. When a woman says “Go ahead,” she is giving you the opportunity to explain whatever stupid thing it was that you just did. But a man needs to be very careful with the explanation, because it is very likely to be followed with a sigh, which will lead to an argument over nothing, and then he isn’t going to have sex again for at least five minutes. Men’s brains, women’s brains—they also affect not only the words we use, but how we listen. Men go, “Yah.” Women listen, but men listen too; they’re just different. Women say men’s problem is that they have selective listening. You know what that is, right? That’s when a woman says, “Honey, go to the store, lay the mulch, wash and wax the car, get the kids to school, rent some videos, and finish the rest of the dishes.” Then he runs that through his selective filter and all he hears is, “Honey, go lay down and get some rest.” But that’s not what I’m talking about. What I’m talking about is the difference between single-tasking and multitasking. By and large, men are single-taskers. They do one thing and do it well. Women can handle lots of things. Men are not



wired that way. That’s why it’s not a good idea to put a man in charge of more than one kid at a time. They can handle the one. “Sweetheart, you’re doing such a good job with Johnny, but where are the rest of the kids?” “We’ve got other kids?” Women are wired differently. My wife is in the living room watching TV, reading a book, making knickknacks, and talking on the phone all at the same time. This affects the way that men listen, because when a man is doing something, he generally cannot hear anything. It’s true. Women can do a lot of things and hear three different conversations. A woman will walk into a room, see her husband reading a newspaper, and assume, “I multitask, and

therefore he must multitask.” But he’s running the “newspaper reading” program, and he can run only one program at a time. He’s not hearing jack and this makes the woman very angry. She needs to come over and close the “newspaper reading” program. She has to load the “listen to me” program, but—wait a minute—he’s got to re-boot. “I didn’t know you were here!” She laughs, but I’m serious, girls. If you see a man doing something, unless he’s wired differently, do not give him vital information because this is a train wreck waiting to happen. The problem here, guys, is we get ourselves in trouble because we have this natural defense mechanism that at all costs, we do not stop what we’re doing. So when someone starts talking to us, we automatically have this defense mechanism that goes, “Uh-huh, yup, uh-huh,” and we keep doing what we’re doing, and women think we’re listening to them. But we’re not listening. We need to stop what we’re doing: You’re big boys. Stop what you’re doing, turn to the girl, and pay attention to her. It shouldn’t all be on the ladies. You’re big boys. When she starts talking, stop, listen to the girl, and then you can go back to what you were doing. Sounds fair, right? I started doing this, and I thought, this is great, I’m doing a lot better. I’d be doing a single-task, and I’d say, “What? I didn’t hear that.” I’d tell her to back up, and she would then tell me the info. So, I thought I was doing a lot better, but I was still I getting into trouble. She’d walk up and say, “It’s six o’clock, are you ready?” “For what?” “I told you.” “No, you didn’t.” “Yes, I did.” And off to the races we would go. I thought, what in the world—I’m doing this single tasking thing, and I don’t remember her saying anything about this, and I

**First year of marriage: the man speaks, the woman listens. Second year: the woman speaks, the man listens. Third year: they both speak and the neighbors listen**

thought I was losing my hearing. So, I went to a doctor—true story—I went to the doctor, walked in, and he asked how I was doing. I said, “Okay.” He asked what seemed to be the problem. I said, “I think I’m losing my hearing.” He said, “Well, you’re getting up there in age, you know, and ears are one of the first things to go. Just go over to Nurse Cratchet, and she’ll check your ears.” So, I followed the lady. I walked into this room, and there’s a cheap box on a table with some real chintzy headphones. She said, “All right now, put on the headphones. When you hear the beep, raise your hand. If you don’t hear the beep, don’t raise your hand.” Anyway, I turned around and we began. Beep...boop... boop. Pretty soon she said, “Really, you can hear all that?” I turned around, and she’s hitting the box.

“What’s wrong?” I asked. “According to this, you can hear what dogs and cats hear.” She’s hitting the box. “I’m going to send you to a specialist.” We live in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and right in downtown Green Bay there is a place called Eye and Ear Associates. I had never heard of them before. I had no reason to hear from them, but the nurse said she was going to send me to these people. They have all this fancy equipment, and so she took the doctor’s pad and wrote “Eye, Ear,” and then abbreviated the word Associates and handed the paper to me. I said, “What kind of doctor is this?” She said, “What do you mean?” I said, “I’ve heard of eye, ear, and throat, but I’ve never heard of this.” She said, “Let me see that. I’m so embarrassed; I’m so embarrassed.” She wrote out “Associates.” I thought I was going to be in for a very uncomfortable test for a minute! So I went to the specialist. I sat down. The person conducting the test had to push the button to talk to me. “Okay now, put on the headphones. When you hear the beep, raise your hand. So I spun around and we began. [Beeps at different tones] I kid you not, she said, “Really, you can hear all that?” I felt like a moron. I took the printout to the specialist. He said, “What are you doing here? You have better ears than I do.” So, I came back from my ear test, and my wife asked what they said. I said, “I can hear what cats and dogs can hear.” She said, “Well, that’s not your problem. Your problem is that you can’t pay attention.” I thought, I’ve been paying attention. I did the single tasking thing. So I thought, I’m going to do a test. I want to see how far she gets away from me before I can’t hear her. So, the next day we’re sitting in the kitchen, and she comes up and starts talking to me. “Lalalalalalala.” and I say, “Uh-huh.” and she goes farther away and says, “Lalalalalala.” Okay, I can hear that. She goes farther away. “Lalalalalalala.” She’s doing her multitasking thing, and she goes into the living room and says, “Lalalalalalala.” She goes into another room—now she’s on the other side of the house and she’s still talking to me. I say, “Hey.” She yells back, “What?” and I say, “I’m on the other side of the house!” The next day I catch her, and this time she goes upstairs. She’s on another floor, still giving me vital information. That’s when it starts dawning on me. Wait a minute—we might single-task, but these women are so into multitasking, they just keep doing what they’re doing, and whether they’re in the same area code as you are is irrelevant. It’s the laws of physics, girls, and it applies to you.

# MONTHLY ACTIVITIES (free)



**Colorado Springs Labor Day Lift-Off.** The 44-year Colorado Springs tradition of a hot air balloon event on Labor Day weekend will continue with the Colorado Springs Labor Day Lift Off on September 5-6. Spectators are encouraged to look to the sky – from the comfort of their homes – between 7:30-8:30 am Saturday and Sunday morning to watch a spectacular array of 35+ balloons participating in the modified

citywide celebration, lifting off from 10-12 locations across the city (balloon launch site area map will be available at [ColoradoSpringsLaborDayLiftOff.com](https://ColoradoSpringsLaborDayLiftOff.com) as the event nears).



**Space Foundation Discovery Center Virtual Experiences.** Join the Space Foundation Discovery Center for great virtual content that you

and your family can experience from the comfort of your own home! Activities and experiences include downloadable videos, downloadable lesson plans, upcoming live webinars, science on a sphere webcast, tour the Discovery Center and more to come! Go to: <https://discoverspace.org/> for more info.



**Dragon Productions Virtual Performance's.** Dragon Theatre is a program of Imagination Celebration which welcomes performers of all abilities, ages, and backgrounds who can make the rehearsal commitment. They've put videos of some of their productions online to share with the world their amazing talent. Go to: <https://vimeo.com/channels/dragontheatreproductions> for more info.



**Join Pikes Peak Library District for virtual story time, crafts, and other fun activities for you kids to enjoy!** Check out Pikes Peak Library District's page every weekday at 10:30 a.m. for a fun virtual Storytime or activity! Go to: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/ppldkids/videos/> for more info.

# WHAT'S NEW?

## **Harvard Study Shows Fathers are Feeling Closer to Their Children During the Pandemic**

Authored by Richard Weissbourd, Milena Batanova, Joseph McIntyre, and Eric Torres, Harvard Graduate School of Education

The Harvard study research suggests that almost 70% of fathers across race, class, educational attainment, and political affiliation in the United States feel closer to their children during the coronavirus pandemic.

### **Key Findings**

68% of fathers report feeling closer or much closer to their children since the pandemic. (20% report feeling much closer, 48% report feeling closer, 31% report no change in their closeness to their children, and just over 1% report that they feel less close or much less close.)

57% of fathers report that they are appreciating their children more. (37% report no change.)

54% of fathers report that they're paying more attention to their children's feelings. (42% report no change.)

52% percent of fathers report that their children are talking to them more often about "things that are more important to them." (40% report no change.)

51% report that they're doing more activities with their children based on their children's interests. (41% report no change.)

## **Two New Center on Fathering Classes Offered through Pikes Peak Community College**

Beginning September 2nd and 3rd, the Center on Fathering will be offering its 15-week Fathering Class for free through Pikes Peak Community College. Classes will be held via the web every Wednesday from 3:30-5:00 pm and Thursday from 5:30- 7:00 pm. Contact the Center on Fathering at 719-634-7797 if interested in attending.

## **New Nurturing Fathers Class begins on September 22nd**

The Nurturing Fathers Program is an evidence - based, 13-week training course designed to teach parenting and nurturing skills to men. Each 2 hour class provides proven, effective skills for healthy family relationships and child development. To make a referral or enroll in the class, call the Center on Fathering at (719) 634-7797.

# DAD'S TIPS

## The Tale of Two Brains Rules:



If these rules don't apply to you exactly, don't have a fit, just interpolate for yourself. These rules don't go into all the shades of gray.

### Rule 1 – Boxes and the Big Ball o' Wire

Men – Their brains are made up of little boxes, there's a box for every conceivable subject, and the boxes don't touch each other.

Women – Their brains are made up of a big ball of wire which connects everything to everything, and it's all driven by the energy we call emotion. Important Note: If you ever tell a person with this kind of brain that their feelings IN ANY WAY don't matter, you are a nitwit who wishes to be stabbed.

### Rule 2 – Stress

Men – Men have a box in their brains with nothing in it. Appropriately, it is called the "Nothing Box," and it is where a man goes any time he has a chance, especially if he is stressed out. This is how a man can do something seemingly completely brain-dead for hours on end, like fishing or mindless channel surfing on the TV.

Women – Women need to talk about whatever stresses them out – they don't have a "Nothing Box" nor can they ever understand it the way a guy can. If a woman doesn't talk about her stress, her brain will literally explode. If you happen to be the one this woman needs to talk to, it is important that you just shut up and listen. She doesn't want your help or your advice, no matter how good you think it would be.

### Rule 3 – Remembering Details

Men – With as much time as men like to spend in the nothing box – not feeling or thinking about anything – men don't really hang on to a lot of details, and when they tell a story or, for example, recount what the plumber said, it is usually just the bottom line.

Women – As women's brains are driven so much by emotion, they have a strong tendency to remember EVERYTHING, and when they tell a story of, say, something that happened at work today, they don't just say what happened, they relive the entire event, practically transporting you into their experience.

### Rule 4 – Single-tasking and Multi-tasking (Communication)

Men – Men are single-taskers; they can focus well on one thing and do that one thing extremely well, but it shuts down their brain to any other tasks, including to the task of listening. If you see a man doing something, unless you know he's wired differently, you can assume that he cannot hear anything going on around him.

Women – The typical woman is a master of multi-tasking; capable of holding three different conversations, watching TV, cooking dinner, and reading a book, all at the same time. Important Note: Many women automatically assume that multi-tasking comes as easily to anyone else, including men, as it does to them. Remember, that if you have vital information to give to someone, to make sure first that they are listening.