



The great debate

Perth endocrinologist Dr Ricky Arenson explores the science and psychology behind a particularly heated topic

Dr Ricky Arenson may be one of WA's most sought-after endocrinologists and geriatricians but it's his strong views on a different topic that are at the forefront of his first book, *Women Are Superior to Men*. It explores the science and psychology behind why — you guessed it — females are the fairer sex.

Dr Arenson draws on his decades of experience counselling couples through challenges, due to hormone abnormalities, as well as lessons from his own 20-year marriage in the factual yet lighthearted read.

From solving marital disputes to how to survive WWII (aka having children), nothing is off limits.

Here, he shares an edited extract of chapter one, eight ways women are superior to men.

MEN CAN'T FIND THINGS

A wife sends her husband to get the butter in the fridge. He looks hard for a while before shouting out: "There is no butter in the

fridge!" She yells back: "Yes, it's in a new package on the shelf." He looks again and replies: "No, not here. You must have forgotten to buy it." His wife, after briefly contemplating grabbing a blunt heavy object to strike him with, marches over and finds the butter in two seconds. "It's right here!" How is this possible? There is some science that explains this phenomenon. Men have a hard time finding things right in front of their eyes because they have evolved to be protectors and hunters; they approach tasks with a single-minded focus.

Functional brain-mapping using MRI equipment has demonstrated males focus activity in one area of the brain when they are concentrating, whereas women tend to use their brains more diversely.

This difference is evidenced in how we see most men manage their thoughts in a compartmentalised fashion, whereas women think more fluidly and use rapid sequencing to think

of multiple things one after another.

Men are always "busy thinking" while women are thinking busy.

This difference in physiology also impacts on peripheral vision, with studies demonstrating significant female superiority in this area.

By design or necessity, the last several hundred millennia of human evolution have seen women charged with the role of being mothers and primary caregivers to their families.

They require emotional intelligence and specialised skills for the complex task of managing human psychology in raising children and caring for their male mates.

Many wives can keep in mind the location and emotional status of all their family members, while at the same time cooking three dishes, conducting a Zoom work meeting, and assisting children with homework.

Being an effective mother requires multidimensional focus

and the ability to keep "many balls in the air" at once.

By contrast, in evolutionary terms when men hunt and fight, these are single-minded activities. For them, it often boils down to "kill or be killed". There is no opportunity to think about what children's homework is due tomorrow or whether there are too many unwashed dishes in the sink.

Because of the intensity and singularity of male brain focus, when men look for an item, they have a clear and finite picture of what they are looking for.

If what they see differs even slightly from the image in their brains, they cannot identify the correct object.

For example, they might search for the butter in its usual blue packaging they are familiar with. If they see butter in a red box, they will not recognise it.

This becomes more complicated when the object is hidden underneath or behind something because that makes it even less recognisable to them.

For men, the problem is compounded by their inferior ability with peripheral vision.

The male's laser eyes home in on one spot in the fridge with a specific target in mind.

If the image they see differs from the template they are applying in their brain, confusion results and they are unable to complete their mission, often to the frustration of their commander-wife.

You could say that women are able to use their brains, whereas men use one small part of their brains at any given time.



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