

from the author of the bestselling *for women only*

shaunti and jeff  
feldhahn



for men only

a straightforward guide to the  
inner lives of women



Quick Start  
Guide Included

“If you’ve ever asked, ‘Why does she do, think, or say that?’ then you’ve got to read this book. Shaunti and Jeff not only answer this question, they eliminate the confusion that has kept far too many men from bridging the gender gap.”

—DRS. LES AND LESLIE PARROTT  
Bestselling authors of *Love Talk*

“When we featured Shaunti’s book *For Women Only on FamilyLife Today*, the phone rang off the hook! When Shaunti and Jeff come back on our broadcast, I’m buying some more phones. This is fresh and relevant—good stuff for every marriage. Read it!”

—DENNIS RAINEY  
President, *FamilyLife*

“Once again Shaunti and Jeff Feldhahn have unearthed a treasure chest of insights that are not only eye-opening, but possibly life-changing.”

—ANDY STANLEY  
North Point Ministries senior pastor and bestselling author

“Most of my work helping passive Christian men become more like Jesus involves how best to relate to women. I’m going to make sure to keep a case of the Feldhahn’s excellent book handy at all times.”

—PAUL COUGHLIN  
Author, *No More Christian Nice Guy* and *Married But Not Engaged*

“Men, we’re supposed to love our wives and live with them in an understanding way. That’s the clear assignment God gives each of us in the Scriptures. So buy this book, read it a couple of times, underline a few key ideas, and then keep it where you can review it regularly. It will help you be the husband God wants you to be.”

—BOB LEPINE  
Cohost, *FamilyLife Today*

“Recently, in our weekly couples’ study, we read and discussed both *For Women Only* and *For Men Only* over the course of several months. It was fascinating and very helpful. The findings in these books about how men and women think were so enlightening, and led to some real revelations and ‘aha’ moments among the couples in the group. We think these books should be required premarital reading!”

—JEFF FOXWORTH & HIS WIFE, GREGG

# for men only

a straightforward guide  
to the inner lives of women

by Shaunti and Jeff Feldhahn



Multnomah Books

FOR MEN ONLY

published by Multnomah Books

*A division of Random House, Inc.*

Published in association with Calvin W. Edwards,

Post Office Box 88472, Atlanta, GA 30356

© 2006 by Veritas Enterprises, Inc.

International Standard Book Number: 978-1-59052-572-2

Cover design by Studiogearbox.com

Cover photo by PixelWorks Studios, [www.shootpw.com](http://www.shootpw.com)

Interior design and typeset by Katherine Lloyd, The DESK

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from:

*The Holy Bible*, New International Version

© 1973, 1984 by International Bible Society,

used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House

*Multnomah* and its mountain colophon are registered trademarks  
of Random House Inc.

Printed in the United States of America

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system,  
or transmitted, in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical,  
photocopying, recording, or otherwise—without prior written permission.

For information:

MULTNOMAH BOOKS

12265 ORACLE BOULEVARD, SUITE 200 • COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80921

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Feldhahn, Shaunti Christine.

For men only / by Shaunti and Jeff Feldhahn.

p. cm.

ISBN 1-59052-572-8

1. Men (Christian theology) 2. Christian men--Conduct of life.

I. Feldhahn, Jeff. II. Title.

BT703.5.F45 2006

248.8'42--dc22

08 09 10—10

2006000677

•

*To our parents;  
Who taught us through their example  
that working to understand one another  
is worth it*

# Contents

- Note to Women Readers . . . . . 9
- 1 Rethinking Random . . . . . 11  
*Why you need a new map of the female universe*
- 2 The Deal Is Never Closed . . . . . 25  
*Why her “I do” will always mean “Do you?”—  
and what to do about it*
- 3 Windows...Open! . . . . . 51  
*What you should know about the fabulous female brain  
(a guide for lower life forms)*
- 4 Your Real Job Is Closer to Home . . . . . 73  
*How your provider/protector instinct can leave  
her feeling more unsafe and less cared for*
- 5 Listening Is the Solution . . . . . 97  
*Why her feeling about the problem is the problem,  
and how to fix your urge to fix*
- 6 With Sex, Her “No” Doesn’t Mean You . . . . . 119  
*How her desires are impacted by her unique wiring,  
and why your ego shouldn’t be*
- 7 The Girl in the Mirror . . . . . 149  
*What the little girl inside your woman is dying to hear  
from you—and how to guard your answer well*
- 8 The Man She Had Hoped to Marry . . . . . 177  
*What the woman who loves you most,  
most wants you to know*

## A note from Shaunti, to women readers:

I want to give a warm greeting—and an important caution—to any curious fellow females peeking in at what we're telling guys about how we are wired!

As Jeff and I have talked to couples about the subjects of both this book and my previous book, *For Women Only*, we've seen a need for caution in how men and women handle each other's expectations afterward. Because men and women are processing these new findings about each other very, very differently.

Women tend to process things by talking them through. So when women read or listen to the findings in *For Women Only*, they often turn to their husband or boyfriend and say (usually in astonishment), "Is this *true*?" Which leads to a lively conversation, and a feeling of new closeness with their man.

Men, however, tend to process things by thinking them through, and not saying *anything* until they fully understand what they are thinking. So, when men read or listen to the findings in *For Men Only*, they usually get real quiet. They are processing internally, and simply aren't capable of talking about it for some time—or maybe much at all. Which...*doesn't* lead to a lively conversation!

This key difference could lead to disappointment if



women didn't know to expect it. We could easily think, "He didn't learn anything about me," or even, "He must not care about me."

In our experience, neither is true. It is so hard to do, but if we women will let men have the time to process, we've found that while men may or may not *talk* about what they learned, they usually start *doing* it.

So in the days and weeks after your loved one reads any part of this book, keep your eyes open to recognize and affirm when that happens!

—Shaunti

RETHINKING  
RANDOM

*Why you need a new map  
of the female universe*

**L**ike some guys I know, you might be tempted to skip this introduction and jump right to the sex chapter. And if you're chuckling right now, it probably means you already did it. Or were about to.

It's not a bad choice, actually. Just a little self-defeating. If you've been in a committed relationship with a woman for more than, say, a day, you know that going just for what you want isn't actually going to get you what you want for very long.

A week, maybe?


But let's be honest—one of the main reasons you're looking at this book is that you *are* trying to get something you want. Not sex (well, not *just* sex), but a more fulfilling, harmonious relationship with your wife, one that isn't quite so hard or confusing. And the back cover gave you the wild

idea that understanding her *might* actually be possible.

Either that, or for some reason, the woman in question just handed you this book.

Hmmm.

Well, either way, take a look at the revelations we've uncovered. We think you'll be convinced. Each chapter explains things about the woman you love that may have often left you feeling helpless, confused, or just plain angry. Each chapter points out simple, doable solutions. The only genius required is that you make a decision up front that you're willing to think differently. This is a short book, but if you read it cover to cover, you'll walk away with your eyes opened to things you may have never before understood about your wife or girlfriend.

 Each chapter points out simple, doable solutions.

That's what happened with me—Jeff. And I'm just your average, semi-confused guy. (Actually, sometimes totally confused is more accurate.) And since us average, semi-confused guys have to stick together, that's why, even though Shaunti and I are both authoring this book, I'll be the one doing most of the talking.

## First, Some Background

In 2004 Shaunti published *For Women Only: What You Need to Know About the Inner Lives of Men*, which quickly became a bestseller. Based on a nationally representative survey, scores of focus groups, and other research, it opened women's eyes to things that most of us guys had always wished our wives knew. Things like, most of us need to feel *respected* even more than loved. Or besides just getting enough sex, men also have a huge need to feel sexually *desired* by our wives.

I'm not sure exactly why, but women everywhere were shocked. To me, those revelations seemed obvious. But by the flood of letters from around the country—from both women *and* their grateful husbands—we've seen how much good can come when the opposite sex finally has their eyes opened to things they simply didn't understand before.



I'm not sure exactly why, but women everywhere were shocked by how men thought.

In this book, the shock is on the other foot. Now it's been Shaunti's turn to say, over and over, "I can't believe you didn't already know that!"

When Shaunti's publisher first approached us about doing a companion to *For Women Only* to help men understand women, I had two major concerns. First, I didn't think guys would read a "relationship" book since, for most of us, the last relationship book we read was in premarital counseling—and then only because we were forced to. But more to the point, I doubted that a woman could ever be understood. Compared to other complex matters—like the tides, say, or how to figure a baseball player's ERA—women seemed unknowable. Random even.

I explained my skepticism to one early focus group of women:


*Jeff:* Guys tend to think that women are random. We think, *I pulled this lever last week and got a certain reaction. But when I pulled that same lever this week, I got a totally different reaction.* That's random!

*Woman in group:* But we aren't random! If you pull the lever and get a different reaction, either you're pulling a different lever, or you're pulling it in a different way.

*Shaunti:* What men need is a sort of map to their wives. Because we can be mapped. We can be known and understood terrain.

*Jeff:* See, guys think of a woman as a swamp: You can't see where you're stepping, and sooner or later you just know you're going to get stuck in quicksand. And the more you struggle to get free, the deeper you get sucked in. So every guy on the planet knows that the best thing to do is just shut down and hope somebody comes along to rescue you.

When I came to, Shaunti and the other women in the focus group assured me—and I have since seen for myself—that guys don't have to live in a swamp. That realization led us to the eventual subtitle of this book: “A Straightforward Guide to the Inner Lives of Women.”

 “Guys think of a woman as a swamp: You can't see where you're stepping, and sooner or later you just know you're going to get stuck in quicksand.”


## The Seven Revelations

The most important key to “de-swamping” the woman in your life is to realize that some of your basic assumptions about her may be either too simplistic or flat wrong. By simplistic, I mean that we tend to operate with a partial or surface understanding of our wife or girlfriend. And to make

matters worse, most guys have no idea how to make their limited understanding work in actual practice.

For example, most guys have heard that women want security. Okay—but what does that mean, exactly? A regular paycheck? A big house? A growing retirement fund? It's a huge shocker to talk to hundreds of women and find that while financial security is nice, it isn't nearly as important to them as feeling emotionally secure—feeling close and confident that you will be there for her no matter what. And believe it or not, ensuring emotional security turns out to be a lot easier than ensuring the financial security you are probably busting your tail to provide.

*For Men Only* will help you move from surface understandings to the all-important recognition of what those things mean in everyday life with your woman. Once you start testing out these findings, I think you'll be amazed at the difference it makes for both of you.

 *For Men Only* will help you move from surface understanding to recognizing what those things mean in everyday life.

The book is organized around six major findings outlined on the next page. Some of these will be surprises to you. Some won't, at least to begin with. (But that's the thing about "swamps"—what you see is rarely what is really there.)


<i>OUR SURFACE UNDERSTANDING</i>	<i>WHAT IT MEANS IN PRACTICE</i>
Women need to feel loved.	Even if your relationship is great, your mate likely has a fundamental insecurity about your love—and when that insecurity is triggered, she may respond in ways that confuse or dismay you until she feels reassured.
Women are emotional.	Women deal with multiple thoughts and emotions from their past and present all the time, at the same time—and these can't be easily dismissed.
Women want security—in other words, financial security.	Your woman needs emotional security and closeness with you so much that she will endure financial insecurity to get it.
She doesn't want you to fix it; she just wants you to listen.	When she is sharing an emotional problem, her feelings and her desire to be heard are much more important than the problem itself.
She doesn't want much sex; she must not want me.	Physically, women tend to crave sex less often than men do—and it is usually not related to your desirability.
She wants to look attractive.	Inside your smart, secure wife lives a little girl who deeply needs to know that you find her beautiful—and that you only have eyes for her.



## How We Found Out: Our Methodology

For nearly a year, Shaunti and I worked to identify inner “map terrain” areas that are common to most women but that most guys tend not to understand. Besides conducting hundreds of in-person interviews, we gathered huge amounts of anecdotal information at dozens of women’s events where Shaunti was presenting materials from *For Women Only*. I spoke with stay-at-home moms, business owners, and secretaries; on airplanes, in focus groups, and over Shaunti’s book table as she was mobbed after women’s conferences. And I sifted through hundreds of e-mails and forum postings from Shaunti’s 4-womenonly.com website.

In all these venues, I was really just the “embedded male.” Like the reporters who rode with the armored cavalry divisions at the opening of the Iraqi war, I kept my helmet on, my head down, and my notebook handy.

 I was the “embedded male.” I kept my helmet on, my head down, and my notebook handy.

After all that research, we did a scientific national survey. As Shaunti had done for her previous book, we worked with survey-design expert Chuck Cowan, former chief of

census design for the U.S. Census Bureau, and professional survey company Decision Analyst. They came together to help us design and conduct a groundbreaking, representative survey of four hundred women all over the country. In the end, between interviews, surveys, events, and other input, we estimate that well over three thousand women provided input for this book.

I know you'll be fascinated by the results. While some of the findings may be challenging or difficult to accept, most men have been surprised by how helpful many of these truths are and how *simple* they are to implement for a better, easier relationship.

## The Map Key

Before we tackle each of the findings, some pointers on reading the map:

- **This book holds to a biblical world view.** Our aim is to be relevant and revealing, no matter what your worldview is. But because Shaunti and I view life through our Christian faith, we have seen that these findings are consistent with biblical principles. We believe that relationships are

most fulfilling when both people have a common commitment to serving Jesus Christ. We do not quote very heavily from Scripture, but we do draw from and reference it as the only truly dependable guidebook for relationships. For example, our starting-point assumption is that husbands need to love their wives just as Jesus does us—which means to love, serve, and be willing to sacrifice everything for her good, even above our own.

- **This is not a comprehensive marriage book.** There are already plenty of marriage books on the market—including many terrific ones from Christian experts. So we stay away from well-covered topics and areas that guys already tend to have a handle on, and we leave the heavy-duty theological discussions for those books. (If you want to investigate those further, we list several recommended resources at our website, [www.formenonlybook.com](http://www.formenonlybook.com).) Also, while we are writing more for married men, these insights will be helpful for anyone in a committed male-female relationship. That said, if your relationship is seriously on the rocks, this little book will probably

open your eyes in some important areas, but it is not designed to cover a real crisis situation. We encourage you to get the kind of counsel and support your marriage deserves.

- **This is not an equal treatment.** Just as *For Women Only* was purposefully one-sided—and if your wife read it, you may have benefited from that fact—so is this book. Yes, you have needs too, and there certainly may be relationship issues arising because *she* doesn't understand *you*. But *For Women Only* addresses many of those, and this book is not about them. This is only about the inner lives of women, and we're focusing entirely on how men relate to women, not the other way around. (That is also why the survey only polled heterosexual women.)
- **There are exceptions to every rule.** Recognize that when I say “most women” appear to think a certain way, “most” does not mean all. We make generalizations out of necessity to be helpful in the widest number of circumstances possible. Inevitably there will be exceptions.

- **Our findings may not be politically correct, but we try to be true to the evidence.** As a newspaper columnist on women's issues, Shaunti sometimes receives e-mails from women complaining that she is doing exactly what we intend to do in this book—making generalizations about women. Add the fact that I, as a *guy*, am daring to make those generalizations, and we recognize the potential for controversy. We don't quite know how to get around that, so we decided to just report what we learned. (For any woman sneaking a peak: We do not intend to be offensive; we just want to speak frankly to men, from a man's viewpoint, about *you*. Our sole intention is to help your man understand and love you better. Even if we have to poke fun at the male preoccupation with sex to do it.)



We decided to just report what we learned.

## The Thing to Do Next

We think in the pages ahead you're going to receive a lot of very promising invitations to try some new things. Most are

incredibly simple, but they may not come naturally. At least at first. Of course, if all you read about here is already instinctive to you, you wouldn't be troubled by randomness, confusion, frustration...and did I mention swamps?

My encouragement to you: Give the process time as you retrain years of incorrect assumptions and counterproductive reactions. Bring a humble attitude. Be willing to practice. Believe it can be done.

Because I've learned that it can be. After several months of being the embedded male, I was watching a movie with Shaunti one night. Halfway through, I casually mentioned that I didn't like the way one female character treated another. Shaunti sat up on the couch, grinned, and said, "You're thinking like a girl!"

Now, she meant it as high praise, but in the small Midwest town where I grew up, that kind of talk could get a guy slugged. But then I realized: Maybe I *had* learned a valuable thing or two about the female universe, just by listening in.

Here's hoping that you do, too.

Excerpted from *For Men Only* by Shaunti and Jeff Feldhahm Copyright © 2006 by Shaunti and Jeff Feldhahm. Excerpted by permission of Multnomah Books, a division of Random House, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this excerpt may be reproduced or reprinted without permission in writing from the publisher.