

# The Relationship Scale

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***Note from Tasi:** Pandora is a friend of many years who has the knack of asking probing questions – questions that have not always been easy or comfortable to answer and that have at times even annoyed or frustrated me. I realized long ago, though, that her sometimes unwelcome viewpoints had always required me to more thoroughly think through my own positions and beliefs.*

*I have asked her to contribute periodic columns in the hope that, in her own inimitable way, she will instigate the kind of lively conversation that leads us in the end to a deeper understanding of ourselves*

There are women who seem to have no problem with being told that their husband or SO is a crossdresser, and for some in this minority group, that is truly how they feel.\* For most women, though, even if they seem to take the news well and put up a good front, the news is a definite negative in how they see both their husband and their marriage.

Most male crossdressers know that telling their wife or SO about that other side of them is like crossing a wobbly bridge and heading into unknown territory. In fact, most would probably rather cross a literal bridge swinging deep in the Amazon than the figurative one of opening such a scary and personal discussion with the woman in his life. Sure, there are articles that offer help with how to broach the subject and how to best explain your lifestyle, but unless your wife or SO is so “cooperative” as to mimic the responses that the article imagines, the man quickly finds himself instead dealing with shock, anger, and tears. And believe me, the more you talk, the more your wife/SO may also feel that she would prefer that bridge swinging hundreds of feet high over an abyss to what she’s hearing at the moment.



Now, even at the best of times most men aren’t very good at decoding their wives emotions, and since telling her about crossdressing will most definitely not be on her list of “best of times,” her reaction may be even harder to understand. Why is something they might even offer to do totally out of sight or only on occasion so traumatic for the woman they love?

It is this seeming inability of their wives to “adjust” that I will try to explain a bit more in this article. In reality, it is a huge topic and I will return to it fairly regularly in this column, but for today I will limit myself to one small area — the concept of balance.

The single biggest division we make in the human species is the male-female one. Everyone reading this already knows that it is not always that straight forward, but the division remains nevertheless. It's the first question asked about a baby: "Is it a boy or a girl?" Not "What color are the eyes?" or "Does he have any hair?" No, the very first piece of information we usually get about a human being is its gender as commonly defined.

Fast forwarding to the time in your past when you first met your SO, that gender information was probably the first thing that registered. I've never heard a young girl say, "Wow, look at that great-looking person! I wonder if it's a guy?" Believe me, when she first decided you were of interest to her, she *knew* that you were male, and that piece of information was so taken for granted that when she and her best friend later spent hours dissecting every element of the new situation, never once was the statement made, "He's male." That was the *sine qua non* of her interest.



balances.

Think of a scale such as we see in judicial images, with a large arm across the top and a pan hanging off either end. A traditional relationship would put a female figure in one pan and a male one in the other, and it is exactly this image that your SO has in her mind if you and she entered your relationship based on "traditional" roles. I'm not talking about who earns more or who does the dishes, since I'm going to assume that in today's world most readers will not put an overly rigid interpretation on such matters. For most couples, though, who is the male and who is the female remains a fixed part of the relationship, and using the scale analogy, it's what makes it "hang right". It

Now, let's imagine that you're playing with a scale model and you take the male figure from its pan and instead put it into the pan with the female one. Obviously the balance disappears as the over-weighted side crashes downwards and the now-empty side rushes upwards. Even a young child knows that the scale "works better" if he divides up the figures, and, not surprisingly, most women feel the same way.

I know that sounds hugely simplistic, but very often our gut feelings *are* simplistic. We can be socially- and politically correct all we want, but in our heart of hearts we all carry stone-age-level wiring that often fights with what we're "supposed to" think. From the time women are little girls, they dream romantically of balancing their female with a male – the Prince Charming who we realize as we grow up will not always look like Prince Charming, but we never doubt that he will still be in the prince camp and not the princess one. His tummy may spread a bit and his hair may thin, but he can still be *our* prince who goes to check out the noise at night or who takes our car to the shop for us. .





When we look over and see the empty pan swinging in the air, we feel bereft. It's not about love, it's about leaving an empty space where there's not supposed to be one. It's about being asked to walk on a path where the male who we always imagined "had our back" suddenly wants to learn how to use an eyelash curler and wear bras that may well be lacier than our own. We may still love the big hunk, but that doesn't mean we're not sad or angry by the loss of that male image who was balancing us from across the scale – not some or even most of the time, but *all* the time. Our universe itself is out of balance.

When we read and reread Cinderella, we never knew that one night Prince Charming would change the dialog and instead ask, "Can I try on some of your dresses?"

\* There are many possible reasons for the welcome but relatively uncommon attitude of acceptance that I will talk about in other columns.