

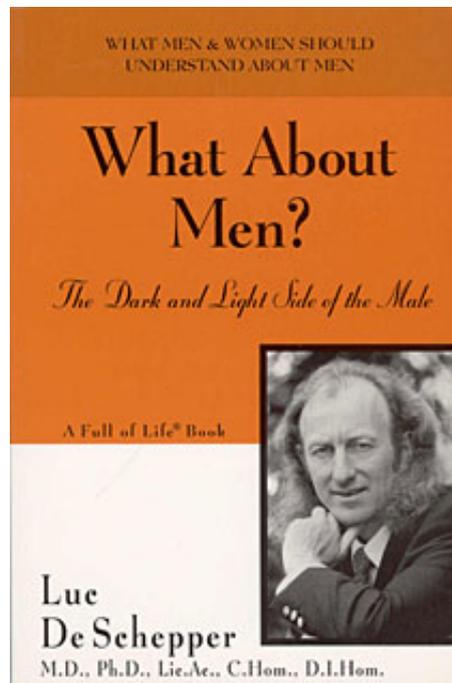
Luc De Schepper What About Men?

Reading excerpt

[What About Men?](#)

of [Luc De Schepper](#)

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Introduction

I can't leave him now. He needs me more than ever. The only way I can show him my love is to take care of him.

When Joan, 42 years-old, first came to see me she was suffering from scleroderma. She looked haggard and tense with a mask-like face so typical for this auto-immune disorder, and complaining of all its symptoms. She was over fatigued, had joint stiffness with muscle weakness, and suffered from heartburn and pressure on the esophagus due to the progressive nature of her disease. Her skin was dry and hard, she was craving sweets and pastries, and woke up every morning with a hangover feeling. As a Realtor she suffered from performance anxiety and had memory blocks during exams and public speaking. When she had married Paul 17 years ago, she was a very ambitious woman, outgoing, radiant, slender and graceful with arresting, sparkling eyes, plenty of self-confidence and dressed in the latest fashions. Yet, when I first saw her, her eyes looked dull and her limp handshake reflected a lack of self esteem and confidence.

The decline of Joan's health appears to have started four years ago when a series of family mishaps occurred. Looking for the triggering factor of her disease, Joan was not going to shift responsibility to some one else.

Really, my husband is wonderful. He is introspective, can be very charming, and is very intelligent. He never forgets my birthday and goes to the children's soccer

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games. I guess I am not able to do enough for the family.

She told me that Paul was very successful in everything he wanted to do, and in spite of a busy schedule, used to have always time for his children.

I guess, everyone in the neighborhood envied us. Paul is very good-looking, always showed great respect for me and has a romantic nature. He would bring flowers home for no special reason and surprised me with idyllic dinners out. He was the man made in heaven.

As I listened to Joan, it was hard for me to imagine why someone in such happy circumstances would look as pallid as she did. Obviously, she did not tell me everything. As a physician trained in alternative medicines, I am always looking for the cause and effect of each illness. So far, nothing in Joan's story would explain to me this auto-immune condition that seemed to have come on like a vengeance and destroyed not only her outer beauty but her soul as well. There was a complete contradiction in what I heard and what I saw. What changed such a successful career women, a go-getter, into a fearful, low self-confident person?

I pressed her gently to tell me some more about the year that "was the worst one in her life." It had clearly been the turning point not only for her, but for the whole family as well.

My husband never thought it could happen to him. He always succeeded in everything

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he wanted to do, and money was always plentiful. But that year he had put everything on the wrong horse. The business failed, and we had to sell our house. I could have lived with all this were it not for my husband's behavior. I always perceived him as the Rock of Gibraltar, self-confident, cocky and witty. But from the first crisis moment, he fell apart and suffered a tremendous nervous breakdown.

Joan began to cry as she continued talking about what she recalled as her most heartbreaking days. It had nothing to do with the material loss but much more with the ruin of the perceived image she had of her husband.

I never thought he could fall so low as to attempt suicide. I became the sole caretaker of my husband, the failed business and the rest of the family. To make matters worse, some unresolved conflicts between my eldest son and my husband came to a head. I was constantly pulled between these two forces and any choice between the two would have been devastating to me. As it was, I could not prevent my son from leaving home that same year. I was devastated. I guess I failed as a mother because I couldn't keep the family together. I have never been the same since.

As I listened to Joan, somehow her story hit home. Her plight was so similar to many others I had heard in my 25

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year career as a physician. There was no doubt in my mind that the traumas four years ago were the onset for the heavy price Joan was paying now. How could this have been prevented? It would be too easy to put the blame on Paul. But one thing was certain. Paul did not behave like the husband she thought she married and Joan was ultimately overwhelmed by the grief, the guilt and the monumental responsibility that befell her. Her Rock of Gibraltar failed, and the emotional stress of that failure, by far, surpassed all the material losses she suffered. What a price to pay! I thought, what if Joan and every woman in this world, would have a guideline to choose a partner, something as close as possible to a scientific approach, with objective as well as subjective guidelines. What if Joan could read a book which explained how to look at physical and emotional signals in a man, that would provide more insight than just counting on instinct, intuition and love at first sight, to help her choose her partner for life?

Of course, any relationship should grow slowly so that one can see the partner in different circumstances, not just on a date or in a social setting. But that common sense usually goes out the door when two people are overpowered by infatuation. Who doesn't like romance? Alas. All too often romantic blinders keep the relationship in the dark and it is rare indeed that this romance lasts forever. Because often, it was based purely on fantasy. She will say things such as, "He could not stop phoning me," "He would skip a meal just to be with me," "He would bring flowers just to show how much he loved me." And he always told me "I never met anyone like you before." This does not necessarily mean deceptiveness on the man's part. We all remember whirlwind courtships that swept us off our feet. Little mistakes in the partner are "cute," and his outgoing personality and

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heavy socializing makes you think how lucky you are that he wants to be with you.

If he is that popular and he makes you feel that wanted, he *must* be the greatest! When he lies, you think he is doing it to save your feelings. Yet, years later, repetitive mistakes become a nuisance, his socializing and partying isolates you more and more at home, and frankly, you find out that his lies are a way to justify the childish behavior he has always shown.

Acupuncture and homeopathy are truly ancient sciences. What makes a science is not the collection of facts, but the organization and formulation of those facts in principles and laws. Both of these sciences have been the result of years and years of observation, confirmed for hundred of years thereafter by clinical work. It might come as a shock to you, but one needs only to closely study the history of modern medicine to discover that most of its findings are really accidental, and not the result of pure scientific thinking. If humans want to predict with more certainty, I would say, with almost scientific certainty, who their partners should be, then we will have to rely on sciences that take the whole person in account: mental, emotional and physical. This has always been the pillar on which alternative medicines survived and was never matched, even now, by Western medicine. Therefore it occurred to me, that using acupuncture and homeopathy in describing the constitution, or the sum of all the characteristics in a person, is as close to science as we can come in selecting a suitable partner.

As young people, we all have a dream picture of our future partner. We often have a set description as what this partner should look like, how he should behave and how he will bring us happiness forever! Why then is there a 50% divorce rate in most States? Because, like modern medicine,

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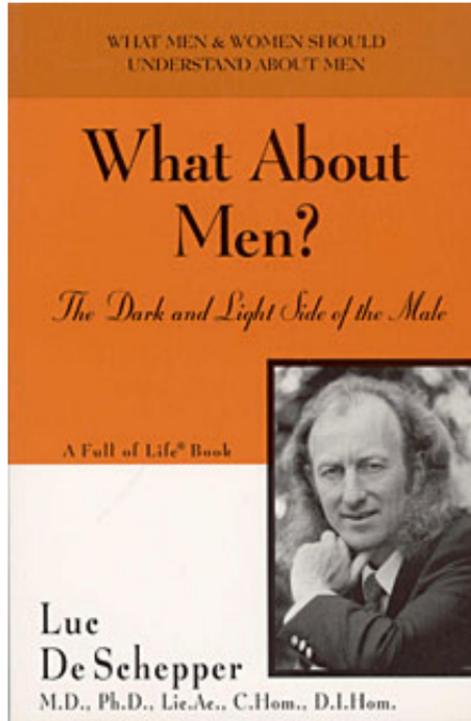
our selection is mostly based on a hit-and-miss situation. How often have I heard my female patients telling me: "I wish there was something I could have looked out for when I met him first, some tell tale signs but I just followed my heart." There is nothing wrong in listening to your heart, but this book wants to give you physical, emotional and mental signs you can actually see in the person in front of you. "Does he match your dream picture now?" Sure, some people are very good at deceit but I have yet to see the first person who is able to fake his total physical and psychological picture. Do you know why? Because that person might know how to use some deceit and flattery but he does not know the physical signs that will expose his constitution, unless he studied acupuncture and homeopathy or unless he reads this book that describes the whole person, not just his physical being, not just his mental and emotional picture.

A lot of self-help books for women I have read are written by psychotherapists. For the most part, the goal of these books is to teach women to stand up for themselves, take charge of their own lives and ban the classical man-monster out of their life. That is like trying to repair the situation after the damage is done. What is wrong with this picture too, is that very often it reflects the painful situation the psychotherapist has once experienced herself. I had enough psychotherapists as patients in my office who behaved very aggressively to show me how far beyond their previous heart-break they were, how by "dwelling over the past", they felt now much better and were taking charge of their lives. They would be very good therapists indeed, for people in the *same* situation. But trying to group together all people who went through the same trauma and applying the same technique, is committing the same cardinal sin as Western medicine

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that groups patients in catalogues of disease pictures and then looks for a common therapy. Not everyone reacts to the same trauma in the same way. Some people might react to grief with complete isolation and not show as much as one tear (silent grief) while others might overflow their friends with cascades of tears. In effect, the particular emotional manner of reacting to the impact of mental, emotional and physical factors, constitutes for each individual the most finished and exact expression of *his or her* temperament which he brought into this world. There is no wrong or right here, just different people. This is why I don't believe that all women want to be Gloria Steinem. Some want a husband who provides for them and are pleased with an uneventful life at home, their castle. Others want adventure and excitement and continuous changes. Joan wanted to have an equally strong partner, not one who fell apart at the first sight of trouble. Some women find their happiness in making their house spotlessly clean: remodeling and refurnishing is their true merriment. And yes, some want to be out there in the world, making decisions and want no part of being tied to home by children. Should we condemn some of them? Of course not! What is more important and what this book wants to answer, is to give to each of these women the opportunity to meet the men who will respect their choice of life. Not men who will try to change them later in the marriage, but men who are compatible with *the women's* dreams, and not with the picture the psychotherapist or husband have in mind.

Before you can change any relationship, and even better, before you enter one, you have to be able to *do* something different. Too many people blindly enter an alliance with a man and hope for the best as they go along. Hoping and praying is one thing, but clearly observing objective and



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