

KISS ME LIKE YOU MEAN IT!

Solomon's Secrets to a Passion-Driven Marriage

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**To Bill and Kathy Clarke,
who have had a Song of Solomon love
for over fifty years.**

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE	
“HELP! I’M LIVING WITH AN ALIEN!”	5
CHAPTER TWO	
CAN PASSION REALLY LAST, AND WHAT DOES SOLOMON KNOW ABOUT IT, ANYWAY?	18
CHAPTER THREE	
“EVEN THE DOG IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN I AM!”	27
CHAPTER FOUR	
“YOU’RE MY NUMBER ONE, BABY!”	37
CHAPTER FIVE	
THE SHEET HOG AND THE MAD SNORTER	46
CHAPTER SIX	
“YOU’RE THE MOST WONDERFUL PERSON IN THE WORLD.”	56
CHAPTER SEVEN	
“WE’RE NOT HAVING ANY FUN!”	66
CHAPTER EIGHT	
MAKE YOUR MARRIAGE A ROMANTIC COMEDY.	75
CHAPTER NINE	
“WE CAN’T KISS ANYMORE.”	88
CHAPTER TEN	
“I WANT TO BE KISSED PASSIONATELY!”	97
CHAPTER ELEVEN	
“I’M MARRIED TO A SECRET AGENT!”	107
CHAPTER TWELVE	
PUT GOD WHERE HE BELONGS.	117
CHAPTER THIRTEEN	
UNFORGIVEN	128
CHAPTER FOURTEEN	
THE LITTLE DOG, CONFLICT, AND ME	145
CHAPTER FIFTEEN	
FACE CONFLICT, DEAL WITH IT, AND MAKE UP AFTER IT.	154
CHAPTER SIXTEEN	
“DO YOU WANT TO HAVE SEX OR MAKE LOVE?”	165
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN	
HOW TO HAVE A SENSUOUS WIFE	175
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN	
HOW TO HAVE A SENSITIVE HUSBAND	183

CHAPTER NINETEEN	
STOP MAKING THE SAME OLD MISTAKES IN THE BEDROOM	194
CHAPTER TWENTY	
SOLOMON AND SHULAMITH'S SPECTACULAR SEX!	205
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE	
DON'T QUIT, AND DO WHAT THE SONG SAYS	217

CHAPTER ONE

“HELP! I’M LIVING WITH AN ALIEN!”

Why doesn’t passion between a man and a woman last? Why, in 100 per cent of all marriages, does passion disappear just a handful of years after the wedding? What kills that glorious, heart-pumping, electric, sexually-charged feeling of love and desire?

I have the answer. And it’s not pretty.

After two decades of intense marital research, I have discovered the shocking truth about passion. To cushion the emotional blow you’re about to receive, I urge you to sit down, take a deep breath, and hug your favorite stuffed animal to your chest. Ready? Here are my findings.

Something completely unexpected and terrible happens two to fourteen years into a marriage. The person you fell passionately in love with is replaced by an alien. I’m not kidding. The alien looks exactly like the wonderful person you married, but its behavior is bizarre, unbelievably annoying, and obviously designed to drive you insane.

You and your spouse used to have so much in common. You enjoyed the same activities. You laughed at the same things. Your feelings and thoughts were so in tune. You were soul mates. But now you and your alien have virtually nothing in common. The differences between you could fill a book. Actually, an entire library.

My research has also revealed that aliens always replace both spouses in a marriage. In my twenty-one years as a clinical psychologist, I’ve worked with a lot of married couples. Hundreds and hundreds. Marital therapy is my specialty. Every husband and wife has said words like these to me privately: “Doc, who is this person I’m now living with? You wouldn’t believe the changes I’ve seen in my spouse. I want the person I married to come back!”

I’m telling you, it’s aliens.

Here are some alien transformation stories. Draw your own conclusions.

COMMUNICATION

When the man was dating you, Ladies, he could communicate. He actually talked to you and shared personal things. Now, his communication skills have vanished. He has very little to say to you. Everything in his life is a secret. It’s as if he’s joined the CIA and all of his information—thoughts, feelings, opinions—is on a “need to know” basis. And, apparently, he believes you don’t need to know much at all.

Almost every day you ask him, “What happened today?” He almost always responds with the one word that drives you crazy: “Nothing.” You’d like to reply, “Nothing? Really? Were you drugged when you got to work and tossed into a storeroom for the entire day?”

He’s angry, agitated, and irritable. Obviously, something is bothering him. You ask a simple question motivated by compassion: “Honey, what’s wrong?” He slams the door, conversationally speaking, on your fingers with his trusty one word answer: “Nothing.” Now, you’re angry, agitated, and irritable. You know good and well something’s wrong! How can you help, if he won’t tell you? How can you get to know him better and build intimacy, if he won’t tell you?

The man's other tried and true response is: "I don't know."

Woman: "How was your day?"

Man: "I don't know."

Woman: "What did you think of the movie?"

Man: "I don't know."

Woman: "When do you want to discuss finances?"

Man: "I don't know."

Woman: "How do you feel about what I just said about our marriage?"

Man: "I don't know."

With these three words, he indicates there may be some information in his head, but he is unable to access it at this time. He'd love to talk, but unfortunately, he's drawing a blank. Of course, you're on to him and his little game. No one draws a blank that often. Either he's in the early stages of dementia, or he just doesn't want to talk to you.

When you were dating the woman, Husband, you knew she was expressive. She'd talk about all kinds of things, and you enjoyed listening to her. You didn't mind. Now you mind, because it seems as though she talks five times as much. She's gone from being a medium-size waterfall to Niagara Falls. She is drowning you in her torrent of words!

She wants you to know absolutely everything that happens to her every day. No event is too trivial to share. And you will hear not only what happened, though she'll cover that in incredible, minute detail. You'll also have to hear her feelings, her thoughts, the feelings and thoughts of the other persons who were there, the feelings and thoughts of persons who weren't there but to whom she talked and found out their feelings and thoughts, past events in her life that this current event triggered, and what the event means about her, and you, and your relationship.

If you can somehow gut your way through her long-winded, detail-studded monologue, you're not done yet. She's not just telling a story. She wants your feedback, and she's going to ask you for it. Repeatedly. She'll pepper you with all kinds of questions. She wants to know your thoughts, responses, reactions, and feelings. It's like living with a private investigator who's always probing for information. She wants to know how her experience of this event impacts you and resonates with you and your relationship with her. She wants to know how this event has helped you to understand her better. All you can think to say is:

"I wasn't even there!"

"I don't know."

"Nothing occurs to me."

"Who cares?"

"I'm not interested in the lives and problems of the four women you were in line with at the grocery store while you waited for a price check on lima beans."

"Can you wrap this up? I'm hungry."

None of these reactions will please her, and you'll be in trouble. Unfortunately, it's not over yet. Now, you'll have to hear—in detail and with intensity—how upset and hurt she is with your pathetic and uncaring responses to an important event in her life.

MEMORY

He has the memory of an amoeba. He forgets nearly everything, except all the vital statistics of his favorite sports teams. He can't remember the items you asked him to get at the store. He can't remember the chore he agreed to do. He can't remember the party on Friday, the one you've been telling him about for a month. He can't remember so many things you know you've told him--to his face.

When you remind him of something he's forgotten, he replies with the same two, lame lines: "I forgot," and, "You never told me that!"

In the areas of his personal life, your relationship, and communications between the two of you, he can recall only the last half hour of his life. And, that's on a good day. So, when he says, "I don't know," there's a pretty good chance he's telling the truth.

She has the memory of an elephant. She hardly ever forgets anything. She has an uncanny ability to re-create scenes and conversations that occurred decades ago. "Bob, a discussion about my mother took place in our kitchen twelve years ago. It was a Wednesday evening, seven o'clock. I was sitting at the table, and you were slouching against the counter. I was wearing a blue top and white slacks. You had on a chili-stained tee shirt and those old, ratty, red gym shorts. I began the discussion by saying I didn't appreciate your comment about Mother's cooking..."

LEVEL OF SENSITIVITY

The man you dated and fell in love with was charming, sensitive, and mature. You were certain you'd landed the next Cary Grant. Now, you're beginning to realize you ended up with one of the Three Stooges. His behavior is often crude, offensive, and adolescent. You'd call him an animal, but you don't want to insult animals.

A family visited a Nature Museum and, for some strange reason, there was an exhibit of animal droppings: flying squirrel, bighorn sheep, raccoon, white-tailed deer, and field mouse. The wife and her daughters were horrified and quickly moved on to the next exhibit. The husband and his son lingered over the droppings and laughed their heads off. They found it hysterically funny and still bring up the exhibit at inappropriate times. (One guess whom I'm talking here.)

When you eat at a restaurant, he rips off the end of the paper covering his straw and blows the paper tube into the air. The fancier the restaurant, the better he likes it. You never know where the straw paper will go (into someone's drink, someone's hair, down someone's shirt), and that's part of the fun.

He likes to read in the bathroom. He calls it "the reading room" or "the library" and can spend up to twenty minutes in there. It's the only time he can multi-task.

Of course, a well-timed belch or passing of gas is always good for a laugh.

Husband, your wife is increasingly disgusted with your behavior. You believe you're perfectly normal and that her standards are too high. You didn't realize you married royalty. She prides herself on being a refined and elegant person with excellent tastes, who values socially appropriate behavior. She used to find your antics funny and endearing. Now, she looks down her nose at you. It's no fun being married to Miss Manners.

ENTERTAINMENT CHOICES

Before you married her and for the first few years of your marriage, the two of you seemed to enjoy the same television shows and movies. You'd watch together, and it was a lot of fun. Now, she will watch only serious dramas and romantic comedies. She loves a lot of talking, a lot of crying, a main character taking forever to die, and long, drawn out romances.

You watched *A Walk to Remember* with her. It's the tragic story of a teenage girl who is slowly dying of leukemia. She and her boyfriend get closer and closer as she fades away. Talk about depressing. But the longest death scene ever filmed is the horribly burned man in *The English Patient*. This extremely disfigured guy talks about his ill-fated romance with some chick for three solid hours! Every man who is forced to watch this nightmare of a movie thinks the same thing:

"I can't take this much longer. I'm going to die before he does. Would someone please suffocate him with a pillow and put him--and me--out of our misery?"

But the ultimate chick movie is *Pride and Prejudice*, Jane Austen's classic story of the Victorian romance of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet, one of five sisters seeking suitable husbands. I'm not talking about the two-hour version. Oh, no. I refer to the gold standard of the *Pride and Prejudice* films: the six-hour marathon miniseries produced by the BBC and the A&E Network. If Jane Austen were still alive today, I'd find her and slap her face. If I ever come across the individuals responsible for making this miniseries, I'll slap their faces. And then I'll sue them for emotional distress and trauma.

This six-hour drama documents--in excruciating detail--the longest romance in the history of the world. For the unfortunate man viewing this sort of, kind of, maybe-but-not- quite, it'll-take-a-little-longer romance, the experience rivals childbirth in terms of pain and suffering. Finally, at the end of six of the longest hours of your life, Mr. Darcy and Miss Bennet get together. There's a lot of sitting around and talking, a tremendous amount of whimpering and sobbing, and not one person dies!

Why couldn't Mr. Darcy, in the first half hour of the movie, simply walk up to Elizabeth and say, "Hey, I like you. Do you want to go out on a date? And, by the way, I'm filthy rich." I'll tell you why. Because that would defeat the purpose of a chick flick, which is to entertain women and torture men.

At the end of every chick flick you endure, your wife will be crying. You'll be crying, too, but for different reasons. You're upset because you've wasted precious hours of your life watching this piece of sappy drivel, and now you'll have to listen to her drone on and on about the movie and what it means about her, about every woman she's ever known, and about your relationship.

You really thought your man liked your type of entertainment. Why, he watched dramas and romantic comedies with you and seemed to enjoy them! You were sure he was different from all the other guys. But that was before marriage. Before the alien showed up. Later in the marriage, it dawned on you that he had been humoring you so you'd marry him.

You can handle the sports he watches. That's not too bad. But how is it possible that one of his favorite actors is Jim Carrey? He'll watch both *Ace Ventura* movies and *The Mask* over and over! His all-time favorite comedy is *Dumb and Dumber*, probably the crudest and the most incredibly stupid movie ever made. He laughs until he's sick at the same old nasty, offensive parts. You're forced to face the fact that you're married to a man with an emotional age of twelve.

If it isn't gross-out, insipid comedies, it's brutally violent action movies. When the body count doesn't top fifty, he's seriously disappointed. Death and gore and destruction and absolutely no plot are what he looks for in an action-adventure movie. And Mr. Cro-Magnon Man wants you to watch this kind of movie with him! You're beginning to think that you should have had him take an I. Q. test before marrying him.

SEX

You were both absolutely certain that sex would not be a problem in your marriage. You were very attracted to each other and your physical relationship during courtship was exciting, beautiful, and natural. But as with every other area of your relationship, after the wedding tremendous differences surfaced in your lovemaking.

The woman remembers *everything* . . . except the last time she had sex with her husband. The man remembers nothing . . . except the last time he had sex with his wife. One spouse—usually the husband, but not always—desires sex a lot more than the other spouse.

The woman needs to be prepared for sex with communication, teamwork with the chores and kids, and romance. The man needs only an erection to be prepared for sex. The problem is, he thinks his erection is all the woman needs to be ready, too. The woman likes to be approached for sex in a subtle, gentle, and loving way. The man's idea of a subtle, gentle, and loving way is to pinch her bottom and say, "Let's do it."

The woman prefers—needs—a slow, careful, and gradual progression in foreplay and intercourse. The man prefers speed. He's proud that he can complete foreplay and intercourse in five minutes or fewer. He may get his name in the Guinness Book of World Records, but it will become extremely unsatisfying and frustrating for his wife.

GOODBYE, PASSION

The bad news is, I've only touched on a few of the differences that disrupt your relationship after marriage. I could easily fill a six-volume set with the avalanche of differences that rush into your once passionate marriage.

Your spouse doesn't get replaced by an alien, but it surely seems that way.

All these differences crush your passion. You don't know how to make the adjustments and so you do your best to find ways to survive and cope. Add children, the stress of finances and careers, and the speed and chaos of everyday life, and you have zero chance to keep the flame of passion burning.

Oh, you're still married and that's good. You still love each other and that's good. But you're not having much fun, are you? You're not madly in love, are you? There's a world of difference between being in love and being *passionately in love*.

WELCOME TO THE CLUB

Well, join the "No More Passion Club." And, it's a big one. A very big one. Believe me, you're not alone. The loss of passion in marriage is universal. It happens to every married couple. Sooner or later. It might be two years, seven years, ten years, or fourteen years after the wedding. But the loss of passion will get you.

It got my wife, Sandy, and me. We had been married for about ten years. We had three baby girls in that ten years. Our little darlings were taking a major bite out of our passion. Emily, Leeann, and Nancy were consuming our lives. They spent all their time—and all our time—screaming, crying, whining, belching, spitting up, pooping, making massive messes in every room in the house, demanding attention, creating huge loads of laundry, and eating all the food in sight.

Life was unbelievably busy. Life was stressful. Life was numbingly monotonous. Life was all about the kids, my career, friends, making enough money to pay the bills and put food on the table, and church. Life was all about everything and everybody but Sandy and me.

Sound familiar? I'll bet it does.

The loss of passion happens so gradually you're not even aware of it. Until one day you suddenly see with sickening clarity that it's gone. Typically, one spouse realizes the passion is gone before the other.

It dawned on me one day that something important, something precious, was missing from our love relationship. That something was passion. I went to Sandy, and told her. She agreed. Over the next few months, as Sandy and I discussed the state of our marriage, we decided passion was something we couldn't live without. We didn't want to be just parents. Roommates.

Good friends. That's not why we got married! We got married because we were passionately in love with each other. Period. And we determined to get that passionate feeling back and keep it.

HOW ABOUT YOUR PASSION?

Be honest. Your infatuation has fizzled out. Your many differences are painfully apparent. Annoying habits have set in. One child (or more) is in your home. And that child is not leaving home for a long time. Or, maybe it's just the two of you in your home, and you've realized there is no spark left in your marriage. The routines of life have taken over. Your passion is dead. Or, at least, it's in bad shape.

Your relationship is blah. Ho-hum. Boring.
You wonder: "Can we ever get our passion back?"
You wonder: "Can we ever again be crazy in love?"

God has an answer for you. It is a big yes!

You can't help losing your passion. That happens to every married couple. What you can do is what Sandy and I did. You can get it back.

There is a book, from God Himself, the most beautiful and powerful love story ever told. It was given to you to show you how to get the passion back into your relationship and how to keep it there until life ends.

The book is the Song of Solomon. It is a magnificent, sublime poem describing the godly, passionate love between Solomon and his wife, Shulamith. Of the over one thousand such songs Solomon wrote, God has saved this special one for us.

God wants every couple to be as crazy in love as Solomon and Shulamith. And, God wants you to stay that way throughout your marriage. Loving with passion is God's design for marriage. To live without passion is not healthy—in fact, it's downright destructive.

In the Song of Solomon, God provides a "Crazy in Love How-to Manual." The Song is a detailed explanation of how a husband and a wife can experience unending passion. And have a blast doing it! This amazing book of the Bible teaches you how to break through your many differences and relationship obstacles to a powerful, permanent passion.

THE PATH TO PASSION

In Chapter Two, I cover the myths about passion and about the Song of Solomon. A lot of experts are dead wrong about marital passion. A lot of other experts are wrong about the teaching of the Song. Someone has to set the record straight, and I'm that guy.

In Chapters Three through Twenty, I teach the passion principles contained in the Song of Solomon.

There are two chapters for each principle: one chapter describes the mistakes couples make, followed by a second chapter that explains—with teaching from the Song—how couples can master that passion principle. I devote three chapters to resolving conflict and preparing for physical intimacy.

Finally, in Chapter Twenty-One, I examine the Song of Solomon, Chapter Eight, Verses Six and Seven, the beautiful definition of Solomon and Shulamith's love.

Ready to get your passion back? Let's go.