

The Man From Mars

Man

It's not so much that men and women are from different planets – it's just that we live on different planets. Or at least different universes.

I realized I had a problem communicating. My girlfriend and I were having a lot of fights lately. I think. I'm not really sure. In any case, our pattern of dialog usually went something like this:

Woman

So I just got off the phone to Gladys and she said that her best friend Irma was having a terrible time because her cat had gotten a skin problem from being outside during the heat and she said that Irma said that the vet said she had to give her a series of shots. So she did this and it was very traumatic to the cat even though the cat got better. So now her cat hates her and it just breaks her heart every time she walks in the front door because her best friend runs away from her and hides

Man

She said what?

Woman

I hate you you uncaring beast!

Man

So now I've made a distinct effort to improve my listening skills.

Woman

So I just got off the phone to Gladys...

Man

Gladys

Woman

Yes. And she said her best friend Irma was having a terrible time.

Man

Her friend Irma

Woman

That's right. Irma's vet said she had to give her a series of shots. So she did this and it was very traumatic to the cat even though the cat got better.

Man

She shot her cat

Woman

No! She had to give shots to the cat. it was very traumatic to the cat even though the cat got better. So now her cat hates her and it just breaks her heart every time she walks in the front door because her best friend runs away from her and hides.

Man

She broke her front door.

Woman

It breaks her heart!

Man

She hates it when the cat comes through the front door.

Woman

When **she** comes in the front door!

Man

(Bewildered) Her best friend's cat died?

Woman

I hate you you uncaring beast!

Man

I went to see a specialist in the field. Her name was Dr. Dakker. Or something, I'm not sure. Anyway, she specialized in communications and was pretty highly recommended by my girlfriend's friend Irma.

(To the Dr.) I'm having trouble communicating with my girlfriend.

Dr.

Actually, it's much more likely you're having trouble listening. Men often don't listen to what women are saying to them.

Man

So I was hoping you'd help me with my communication problems. I'm not sure why my girlfriend keeps getting mad at me.

Dr.

Women often just want to be heard. Just by paying attention to what they are saying you can often solve the whole problem right there.

Man

So you don't have any specific advice to help me?

Dr.

You are looking for something specific. I am telling you that a good first step to try is to repeat back what you think you just heard.

Man

Do you **know** of anyone who might be able to give me some specific advice?

Dr.

(Trying a different approach) The other problem we find is that men tend to blame other people for their own problems. And also men tend to...

Man

I think the main problem is she isn't very good at communicating.

Dr.

The other problem is that men tend to interrupt pe...

Man

What could I say to her that might be effective?

Dr.

(Getting angry) And they when they interrupt they don't...

Man

I'm thinking that maybe I should try and be more assertive. Tell her exactly what I'm thinking. That should solve the problem.

Dr.

I hate you you uncaring beast!