

Your Wife vs Your Mother

Have you ever wondered why many women have trouble getting along with their mother-in-laws? Well, you're not alone. It's not uncommon for me to hear a man say that his wife absolutely must get along with his mother...no exceptions. This is especially true for men who are very close to their mothers and men who feel the need to protect their mothers. Hollywood has capitalized on the infamous and common mother-in-law versus daughter-in-law battle because it's so common in the American family. At the same time, men around the world (especially those in Western cultures) are scratching their confused heads trying to figure out how to bridge the divides between their wives and their mothers.

It's no secret that you want the most important women in your life to get along; after all, no man wants to feel like he's being forced to choose between his wife and his mother. Nevertheless, in order for this to happen (if at all possible), you need knowledge and lots of it.

Eight (Possible) Reasons Your Wife and Mother Don't Get Along

- 1. Your mother refuses to accept your wife-** It's not uncommon for a mother to feel that her daughter-in-law isn't good enough for her son, and when this happens, the mother may intentionally or unintentionally make the wife feel uncomfortable.
- 2. Some women feel the need to compete-** There's a problem that brews in many homes across America, and that is: Many women are made to feel that other women are their adversaries. One thing you'll notice about women is we don't like to be introduced to other women. We prefer to find our own friends. Of course, there's a reason for this and the reason is. What's the reason, you ask? There are a lot of women who were brought up to think they have to compete with any and every woman within ten feet of them and we don't want to be forced to hang out with them! As a matter of fact, I've come across a lot of women whose mothers belittled and competed with them while they were growing up, so being competitive became a lifestyle for them.
- 3. Your wife feels intimidated, threatened, or judged by your mother-** One thing a lot of guys don't realize is that God has given women a supernatural ability to know when they are liked or disliked without any words being exchanged. When two women meet, the first thirty seconds to a minute is crucial in how they see one another. When a woman meets her mother-in-law for the first time (and vice versa), the very first thing she pays attention to is her mother-in-law's facial expressions, body language, and tone. Is the mother-in-law smiling and speaking directly to her, or is she focused on a son to

the point where the daughter-in-law feels ignored or rejected? After the first meeting, the soon to be or actual daughter-in-law will often voice her opinion. She'll either say, "I love your mother. She's so sweet" or "She doesn't like me."

4. Your wife has issues- Let's face it. There are many women out there who need to change their minds and fast. There are many women who simply refuse to get along with other women, despite their best efforts. At the same time, there are many women who think that they must automatically dislike their mother-in-laws, and of course, such women have issues!

5. You are still cleaving to your mother, instead of cleaving to your wife- The reality is...many American men don't understand what the word "cleave" means. Merriam Webster Dictionary defines cleave as: *to adhere firmly and closely or loyally and unwaveringly*. The bible says a husband is to leave his mother and cleave to his wife. The problem in America is a lot of men try to cleave to their mothers and wives at the same time, and this just isn't possible. What is possible, however, is for a husband to have a loving, healthy relationship with his mother without it interfering with his marriage, but this won't happen if he treats his mother like his wife. Both women can't ride in the front seat.

6. Blame it on the culture- Again, Hollywood has capitalized on the mother and daughter-in-law divide for so long that it's almost become a part of American culture.

7. Your mother keeps trying to take your wife's place- Some mothers feel that their positions are threatened by their daughter-in-laws, and because of this, they try to take on their daughter-in-laws' duties. For example, let's say you are working a 9-5 job and your mother decides to bring you lunch everyday. Your wife is upset because she wants to cook you lunch. What's the deal here? After all, you'd think that your wife would be happy that she doesn't have to cook, right? *Wrong!* The reality is...It goes much deeper than a home cooked meal. The problem here is the wife recognizes that the woman she lovingly (or not so lovingly) refers to as mother-in-law is undoubtedly competing with her. Now, for men, this sounds outlandish because...*wait for it...*you're men! Plus, it's hard for a man to see his mother's "petty" side because, to him, she's Mommy and Mommy is as close to perfection as any human can get. Sure, some mothers do things out of habit, but trust me, every woman understands their limits. Some mothers cross those boundaries because they feel entitled to their sons, and a clingy mother has no problem marking what she sees as her territory. This doesn't mean that she's a bad woman; it simply means that her son needs to put his foot down.

8. Your mother prefers one of your exes over your wife- Oh, the horror stories I've heard! Did you know that more than 50% of mother-in-laws prefer one of their sons'

exes over his actual wife? Well, it's true, and some mother-in-laws aren't shy with sharing that information with the wife, be it verbally or non-verbally. You're probably wondering how this is communicated non-verbally, and the answer is: (1). Your mom keeps pictures of your ex on display, (2). Your mom keeps talking about your ex, and (3) Your mom is still hanging with your ex.

You probably have a headache by now; after all, men and women think differently and this can be frustrating to a man. Men are logical; women are emotional. Honestly, I believe that if both genders took the time out to learn how the other gender thinks and reasons, there would be far less confusion, fewer arguments, and fewer divorces. So, let's get straight to it. What can you do to bridge the gap between your mother and your wife? Below are a few pointers.

1. Respect your mother, but cleave to your wife- I can't stress this enough: It is absolutely necessary for you to cleave to your wife in order for the marriage to work. To cleave to your wife means you give her the most important role in your life after God. She is you and you are her. Nothing and no one should stand between you and your wife, not even your mother! This doesn't mean that your mother isn't important and doesn't have a role; it simply means that the roles in your life have to be redefined and your mother has to accept her new place in your life. If you keep trying to let your mother have whatever spot she wants; all the while, forcing your wife to take what's left of you, you will undoubtedly end up in divorce court. I tell guys all the time...the easiest thing to do is have a great and loving relationship with both women in their lives if they'll only cleave to their wives.

2. Make sure your mother respects your wife and vice versa- When a man marries, his wife has the most important role in his life after God. Along with her husband, the wife gets to make the decisions for her home and the mother-in-law has to accept that she can no longer make decisions for her son. This is simply a change of roles, and it's not hard to do if all parties take their God-given places and not complain. Your mother should NEVER argue with your wife or yourself about a decision your wife is making or has made. At the same time, your wife should always respect your mother. For example, she should NEVER compete with your mother or make her feel as if she's not welcome. Instead, both women should be kind, loving, and respectful of one another.

3. Always address the problem-starter- If your wife is the problem, address her immediately. If your mother is the problem, address her immediately. If your mother challenges your wife repeatedly and refuses to stop challenging her, you may have to do something drastic. You may have to disassociate from your mother UNTIL she accepts her new role in your life. You're not cutting her off or wronging her. You're simply

refusing to allow her to take the spot she wants in your life, all the while, leaving the right door open for her to come through. I've seen this happen many times and it has had favorable results, especially in cases where the mother of the groom refused to respect her son's wife. When the son removes himself from the mother's life, the mother goes through the stages of anger and disbelief, but many estranged mothers repent of their ways and accept their new roles. After that, the wife and mother get along well. Of course, some men have mothers who are manipulative, unrepentant, divisive, and vengeful, and in these cases, the guy has to fully disconnect from his mother for the sake of his marriage and his own sanity.

4. Sit your mother down and discuss her new role with her- Remember, the bible says that you are to cleave to your wife, therefore, it is utterly disrespectful to a wife when her husband treats the situation as if he's dealing with two mischievous children. By doing so, the husband makes the wife feel as if she doesn't have her God-given role as a wife. Discussing your mother's new role is simply you telling your mom what is and is not acceptable.

5. Sit your wife down and discuss your expectations of her- Again, remember...never make the wife feel as if she's being chastised, especially in situations where the mother-in-law is out of order. Tell your wife that you expect her to, for example, respect and be kind to your mother. Let her know what behaviors are unacceptable.

I'm going to be honest with you when I say that a wife versus mother-in-law battle isn't all that bad when the common denominator (the husband) immediately addresses the situation. Most women want to get along with their mother-in-laws. Honestly, most women want to have a mother-daughter relationship with their mother-in-laws, and this is possible when the head of the home (yourself) steps up and sets the order that God has instituted for marriage.

Nevertheless, when the husband does not correct ungodly behavior, the devil comes in and divides his home until it can no longer stand.