



The Love (W)rite Unplugged Podcast
Speaker: Dr. Venessa Marie Perry

Venessa Perry: Welcome back to the LoveWrite Unplugged. My name is Dr. Venessa Marie Perry, your host. Today I want to talk about needs versus wants.

I've been talking to a lot of people recently, personally and professionally, and inevitably the conversation always turns to what he or she is looking for in a partner. For example, I may hear a woman say, "I want him to be six feet tall. I want him to be professional. I want him to make six figures." Or, "I want her to have a nice body," he says, "I want her to be able to cook. I want her to be beautiful."

Mind you, all of these things are wants. And these things are fine, however, it's important to understand the difference between wants and needs. It seems as if everyone has a list of criteria, and often times the list is so long that the person with the list doesn't even measure up to half of what's on the list.

I fully support and believe that a person should have a list of characteristics that they want in a mate. But what's more important is to have that list of non-negotiables, or those needs. And those things should not be so out of reach that the average person can't attain them. The flip side of that is that a person should have a list of things that they don't want in a mate. Deal-breakers. What breaks the deal for you?

So when you're addressing your needs versus wants in a partner, focus on those things that are going to move you to the end result of a happy, healthy, loving relationship. And often those things are not superficial, they are intangible items. They are deep items that really will help you move forward in life, and also in love. Let me give you an example.

Recently, I was having brunch with an associate, and we talked about what he needed in a relationship. Now, I know this person fairly well, and he talked about how he needed to be attracted to the woman. He wants her to be attractive. He wanted her to have her own stuff. He wanted her to have a



nice body. And the funny thing is that his criteria was so basic that anyone could have met those characteristics.

So I really challenged him to dig deep about what he needed versus what he wanted, because at the end of the day you could have those things, but are those things going to give you the loving, successful, healthy relationship that you want? As we went on in our conversation, I gave him an example that I give to many people when I'm talking about my needs, and what I need in a relationship.

The funny thing is that not everybody comes to what they need in a relationship at the same time. I think, for me, and many women, we fall into the fairy tale, when we're younger, of what it is that we want. And we believe that wants and needs are the same thing, and they're really not. When I was younger, probably in my early 20s or so, I believed that I wanted someone who was six feet tall, and he had to be successful, and he had to be educated. He had to be professional. He had to be handsome. He had to be Greek, because I was also Greek. I'm talking about Greek as in a fraternity, because I'm in a sorority, because I had bought into the whole notion of this Delta Q wedding.

So, I ended up with all of those things, and at the end of the day I ended up divorced. And why? Because I really didn't know what was important. I really didn't. Coming out of a divorce, I really began to understand what I needed. When I began to give my associate a peak into the things that I needed in a partner and a mate, the list sounded like this:

I need him to love the Lord, because if he doesn't love the Lord then he can't love me, and he can't love his family, and he won't know how to pray for me or his family.

I need him to be honest. Brutally honest. But I also need him to be able to speak the truth in love.

I need him to be loyal. I need him to know that we are there for each other. He needs to be right or die.

I need him to have his own job. The job doesn't have to be a job where he makes six figures, but a career that he's happy,



fulfilled with, and he makes a salary in which he can support himself, and ultimately support a family if need be.

I need him to have a good relationship with his parents, particularly his mother. Because how he treats his mother, and the type of relationship that he has with his mother, will ultimately be an indicator of how he's going to treat me.

These are just a few of the things that I said to him, and there are many more other things, but I'm very clear about what it is that I need. So when I asked him the question again, after I had given him my examples, he came back with, "Well, I need her to be spiritual." And so I pushed back on him and said, "Well, what does spiritual mean?" We paused, and he said, "Well, she doesn't need to go to church all the time because I don't go to church, but, you know, she needs to know how to pray."

Okay. What does know how to pray mean? Just anybody can cite the Lord's Prayer, or, you know, what does that really mean? I really challenged him on that. I mean, he talked about she needs to be healthy. Now, this is a man that goes to the gym four or five times a week, so I said to him, "Does she have to go to the gym four or five times a week? Because maybe she doesn't. Maybe she goes two times a week, but she's still healthy."

These are the things that I said to him, and I even gave him an example from my own life, as it relates to being healthy. I lead a healthy lifestyle. I exercise on a regular basis and I eat healthy. I do a great deal of traveling and walking, and so, therefore, my partner needs to be able to keep up with me, and I'm very, very clear about that. He needs to be healthy. He needs to be mindful of his weight. He needs to be mindful of what he's putting in his body because he only has one.

I fully believe that your body is your temple and so you have to take care of the body that you have, because if your body isn't healthy, your mind and your spirit is not going to be healthy and strong. And ultimately a healthy body will lead you to a healthy, long-lasting relationship. I'm not going to get into what all of that means, but what I am going to say is



this. Men and women who are very healthy tend to have healthy relationships. They are active, and they have active sex lives, and so that is key in a healthy relationship.

Again, going back to wants versus needs, I think it's important to recognize the undercurrent of what people are saying when they say they want something. So when I hear a woman say that she wants a man that is tall, he has to be six feet or over, what I really hear her saying is that she wants to make sure that this man can protect her, that she is safe with this man. When I hear a woman say that she wants a man that makes six figures or more, she's not saying that she wants a man that makes all this money so she can take advantage of him, but because she wants a man that can provide for her family, and she needs to be confident and understanding that he can provide for her, if need be, but also for their family.

Often times when people say they want specific things, there are really other underlying things that they need, and that's why it's important to listen. When you're out and you're meeting someone for the first time, and you're on a date, what are the things that they're saying? I hear a lot of people talk about, "Oh, I want a man that can take care of me." There are some women that want men who can take care of them, but I don't think that's the vast majority of women. I believe that they're saying that they want to make sure that that individual is a good provider, at the end of the day. Or that he's ambitious. He's got his own career. You know, he wants his own life. His life is full. He is happy. He is successful, personally and professionally.

There's a lot of things that people say as it relates to wants and needs, and it's really important to be able to discern the difference. Relationships are all about negotiating, and they're all about negotiating wants and needs. But if you come into the relationship and you're crystal clear about what you need versus what you want, I guarantee you that you will be much more successful in finding the partner that you desire. You'll be successful in your relationship, in your marriage, in your partnership.

That's all I've got for today, and as always, thank you for



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