

# How Getting the Flu Led me to an Amazing Insight about Men

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**The drive to be a *gibor* – to be the strong and mighty man who saves the day. In other words, the hero. This drive can manifest in various ways...**

About three years ago I got sick with the flu. Quite frankly – it was bad. I kind of got worried for a little while there. Plus, I never get sick, so this situation was completely new to me and my family.

Laying in bed, barely able to move, weak, chilled and running a high fever, I felt as if it wasn't just my body that had shut down, but that a certain part of my brain had faded out as well.

I was able to just let go... I have no control and that's okay... The kids will manage... The house can go to pots... Nothing can bother me, it's all just blah blah...

For anything I needed I was like a helpless ragdoll dependent on husband for it all.

I found myself saying things in a way that I never do, as if I had had a little too much wine only it was the fever and weakness.

"Hi, you're home? I'm SOOOO happy to see you!!!"

"Did I ever tell you that you literally make the best tea ever?"

"Would your super strong arms mind carrying me over to the couch?"

LOL!

Another thing that seemed to have shut off in my brain was my need to hurry everything up. The here-and-now was the only time frame that existed. Now I had all the patience in the world.

So, when my husband told me about his day at work I listened with my absolute undivided attention as opposed to getting distracted or asking questions. Or offering my two cents. And – the only thing I could muster in response to his telling me about his day was, "Thank you for working so hard for us, you're the best!"

This went on for several days and then I got all better.

The next time my husband called me from work, he said something he'd never said before.

He called me wifey, as in "How's my wifey doing today?"

And then at dinner, he went on and on telling me all about his

day. In the past, he would give a few minutes' run down but now it was much more in depth and detailed.

And when a friend called to see if I was available to meet up the next night, my husband said, "You're not leaving me are you?"

WHAT?

Why was my husband suddenly so much more flirtatious, talkative and attentive?

I gave it some thought. I recalled hearing once at a shiur that the root of the word for a man in Hebrew – "*gever*", is the same as that of a "*gibor*" – translated as a strong and mighty person, or a hero. This is because part of a man's essence is to be strong and mighty in his accomplishment of his tasks and missions in this world.

I then went on to review notes from some marriage classes and courses I had taken such as Keshet with Rebbetzin Sara Yocheved Rigler, Home Runners with Rebbetzin Miriam Esther Altman, as well as re-reading Fascinating Womanhood, a really great book about love and affection between husband to wife.

Eventually I had a light bulb moment.

I realized that when I was sick in bed, I was in very rare form. It was a very different kind of mode I was in – a cross between damsel-in-distress and super relaxed, accepting and appreciative.

This mode unintentionally triggered a very deep drive that exists within my husband and in fact in all men. The drive to be a *gibor* – to be the strong and mighty man who saves the day. In other words, the hero. This drive can manifest in various ways, from making one's wife happy, to fulfilling the needs of those he loves, to providing for his family financially, to stepping up to a challenge, to succeeding in

something that he really enjoys and in general making the world a better place

*I recalled hearing once at a shiur that the root of the word for a man in Hebrew – “gever”, is the same as that of a “gibor” – translated as a strong and mighty person, or a hero...*

The *gibor* part of a man needs to feel strong and in command. He must feel like he is doing his job for which he was put in this world and he needs to know that he is doing it well.

Ever wonder why men sometimes seem to actually LOOK for challenges that we women would never bother with? It's because it is so very fulfilling to them to prove that they are up to task!

I noticed something very interesting: you know how men are often pegged for being unemotional? Well listen to this – when a man is successfully playing the role of *gibor*, this gets him to feel VERY alive and excited about life. THIS is an emotional experience for him. This is where their emotions show!

So how can a wife use this information to upgrade the bond with her husband?

Well, the more you, as opposed to his boss, friends, clients, etc. tap into his drive to be a *gibor* in an ongoing interactive kind of way, the more he will want to be around you, share with you, complement you and take care of you

You have the power to make him feel like a *gibor* as well as facilitating this quality whenever possible.

You can admire, appreciate and respect his hard work away from home.

You can do the same for his work and effort to help at home.

You can admire him for his accomplishments.

You can show him how happy you are with all he has done for you.

You can make him feel understood

You can let him know that you stand behind him.

You can cheer him on to pursue his interests

You know what message this sends to him? A message of the highest approval. Which actually propels him to become a braver and bolder *gibor*. This in turn gets him to FEEL more alive and excited.

And YOU are the source of these coveted emotions! This in turn leads to a deeper connection with... you!



*The gibor part of a man needs to feel strong and in command...*

Some practical examples:

1. Your husband asks you if it's okay for him to host a shiur next Tuesday night at your home. If it's appropriate for you to agree, don't just say yes. Tell

him you'll bake a cake for the occasion! Help tidy up before the shiur begins without being asked.

2. You receive a wedding invitation in the mail. Instead of just telling your husband about it or asking him if he's planning on going, ask him "Will you be my special date for this occasion?" (wink wink)

3. Occasionally, address your husband with the appropriate honorific – Mr., Rabbi, Dr., Attorney and so on.

"What would Attorney Slater like for dinner tonight?"

Yes, it's just you kidding around with him, but deep down inside it means a lot to his hero-self to be addressed in this manner.

4. You receive a letter from the municipality and some of it reads like Chinese to you.

Ask your husband, "Can I use your brilliance to figure out what it says here please?"

5. When he arrives home after work, instead of saying, "Hi! How are you?" greet him with a big smile and announce, "Welcome home! It's so good to have you home!"

6. When he tells you all about what a hard day he had at work, along with empathizing or trying to come up with solutions, say, "Thank you so much for all of your hard work that you do for us, and for everything that you go through for us. I so appreciate it!"

7. Look out for and acknowledge his strengths, such as a good memory.

“I think it’s so special that you remember all of our kids’ friends’ names after meeting them just one time. I’m sure they appreciate your remembering their names like that “

8. Your husband likes to keep in shape by bicycling three times a week. Promote his success by making sure his gear is always clean and, in its place, by not making him feel guilty about taking this time for himself, and by complementing his in-shape physique occasionally.

“I can tell all your hard work is paying off! Your leg muscles are quite impressive!”

Now, this is by no means a manipulation tactic. Rather, it is a call to one of the greatest kindnesses you can do for your husband – to be the one person in his life that cheerleads, encourages and is excited about his becoming successful in whatever it is in life that he would like to succeed in or feels driven to succeed at.

Remember, he will always try to feel like a *gibor* to someone or to some cause. It may as well be to you.

*Disclaimer: I am by no means perfect in this area; however, I have found that when I do interact with my husband in this manner it leads to a deeper bond, more affection and consideration, and some nice gifts too ☐*