

## READ MY MIND!

**Read my mind!** Has your spouse ever reacted totally inappropriately when you've been upset? Maybe he or she has tried to comfort you when you really just wanted to be alone. Or maybe your spouse has left you alone when you wanted a great big hug. Does your spouse never remember your birthday the way that would just thrill you? Maybe you would love to have your husband have roses delivered to your office. Or maybe you would really enjoy having your wife throw a big barb-b-q and she be the one to do the grilling. Your spouse probably wants to make you happy and react appropriately to every situation. ***But how can your spouse make you happy when only you know what will please you at any given moment.*** It's your job to let your spouse know how to make you happy. Tell your partner what you want and then be happy when you get what you asked for. It's as simple as that. Oh yes, it would be very romantic, just like in the movies, if your spouse could swoop in and surprise you with just the thing you want or react in just the way you are looking for, without prompting. But this is not the movies (where actors go by the script, by the way). This is the real world. So be specific. When it comes to telling your spouse how to react to your feelings, you will need to be specific each time because we don't always want the same reaction. For example, "I feel lousy. I need a hug" or "I feel lousy. I want to be left alone for a while" or "I feel lousy. I want to talk while you comfort me, but I don't want any input-I just need for you to listen." **Being specific will not only give you the best chance of getting you what you want, but it will also give your spouse the confidence of knowing they're doing exactly the right thing. You both win!** And try to communicate completely. For example, if you are feeling badly and you ask your spouse to pick up dinner—if that's all the directions you give, be happy with whatever is brought home. If you particularly want pizza, ask for pizza. If it needs to be a large pizza with extra cheese, then ask for a large pizza with extra cheese. When each of you says what you mean and mean what you say, you'll find that you both will get more of what you want much more often in your marriage! And what about surprises? Once you have more concrete information about your spouse's likes and dislikes, you can throw in a surprise from time to time that is more likely to hit the target. (Based on MASTERING MARRIAGE by Michael and Brown as seen in "Marriage Magazine" Summer 2008.)