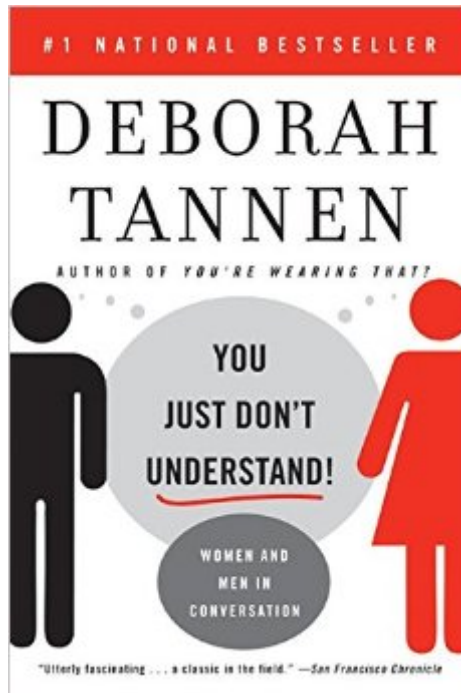


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# You Just Don't Understand: Women And Men In Conversation



## Synopsis

Women and men live in different worlds...made of different words. Spending nearly four years on the New York Times bestseller list, including eight months at number one, *You Just Don't Understand* is a true cultural and intellectual phenomenon. This is the book that brought gender differences in ways of speaking to the forefront of public awareness. With a rare combination of scientific insight and delightful, humorous writing, Tannen shows why women and men can walk away from the same conversation with completely different impressions of what was said. Studded with lively and entertaining examples of real conversations, this book gives you the tools to understand what went wrong -- and to find a common language in which to strengthen relationships at work and at home. A classic in the field of interpersonal relations, this book will change forever the way you approach conversations.

## Book Information

Paperback: 342 pages

Publisher: William Morrow Paperbacks; 1 edition (February 6, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060959622

ISBN-13: 978-0060959623

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (182 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #4,740 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #3 in [Books > Reference > Etiquette > Conversation](#) #5 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Communication & Media Studies](#) #8 in [Books > Health, Fitness & Dieting > Psychology & Counseling > Counseling](#)

## Customer Reviews

Deborah Tannen has written an excellent book analyzing the verbal interaction between men and women. I highly recommend it to anyone. For many years I have been only generally aware of some of the symptoms she describes, mostly through personal communication problems that arose in my marriage. After reading her book, I now have a much better understanding of these challenging problems of differing perspective and I hope I can even change my reactions when these problems reoccur. I even note on pg. 201 (page numbers throughout refer to the Hardcover Edition) that the author herself, "as a result of doing this research, learned not to use machine-gun questions or cooperative overlapping with people who don't respond well -- a tangible benefit of understanding

conversational style."I don't believe her book is at all one-sided. It presents examples of how some people (often women) feel they are always being interrupted and not allowed to present their views. It also describes how a male speaker, through his style, fails to get a professional group's attention or credit for bringing up a major point -- that is then later repeated by another speaker, who refers to the earlier speaker but still gets all the credit. In order for others to gain an appreciation of this book, I quote below from several selections.WHO DOES MORE OF THE TALKING, AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES?"Who talks more, then, women or men? The seemingly contradictory evidence is reconciled by the difference between what I call public and private speaking. More men feel comfortable doing `public speaking,' while more women feel comfortable doing `private' speaking. Another way of capturing these differences is by using the terms report-talk and rapport-talk.

One of the things I've noticed about books like this is that the author comes up with a "matrix" of different, usually opposing, characteristics (in this case, human behaviour), then uses that matrix to explain \*all\* the differences in behaviour. Here Tannen expresses every described conflict between men and women \*solely\* in terms of gender differences. Some are, some aren't. Books like this sound very plausible when you are reading them, but then if you read another similar book, you notice that the second author uses an entirely different set of "parameters" for their own matrix (which is quite plausible when you're reading it as well). Trouble is, the two matrices that sound so compelling are totally incompatible and in fact contradict each other. Moral of the story: it doesn't have to be accurate, it just has to be plausible enough to get a publishing deal. Good case in point: Tannen mentions the trouble she had with a new computer purchase. The first time she took it back to the shop, the repairman was very unhelpful and spouted a bunch of gibberish at her. Later, she took the computer back and talked to one of the saleswomen, who solved her problem. Conclusion: men are unfriendly and one-uppers, while women are helpful and nurturing. Problem is, I've known many women who act like the uncommunicative repairman. And I've seen many males who are very helpful and can easily help solve people's problems. So this wasn't a male-female difference that Tannen experienced, it was simply that the first person she encountered (who happened to be male) was a very technically oriented type; he probably wasn't trying to be rude or unhelpful, he was just not too great at verbal interaction.

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