

Make up after the break up: Men choose sex, women tears and quality time

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If a man wants to make amends with his girlfriend after an argument, he should dedicate quality time and shed a few tears while asking for forgiveness. However, these are not the best ways for a woman to make up with her boyfriend; men consider a kind gesture or receiving sexual favors as the best form of apology. This was revealed in a study led by T.

Joel Wade of Bucknell University in the US. Overall, it was found that showing emotional commitment is the best way of reconciling a conflict between romantic partners, but that there are systematic differences in how men and women prefer this to be put into practice. The findings were published in Springer's journal *Evolutionary Psychological Science*.

The study was done in two parts. Participants were first asked via an online questionnaire to nominate specific actions that men and [women](#) engage in to reconcile with their partners after a fight. These were then grouped by the researchers into 21 categories of possible reconciliation behaviors. The options given by the participants in Study 1 were then given to an additional group of men and women to ascertain which methods were preferred (most effective).

It was found that men, compared to women, rated a partner doing nice gestures and giving sex/sexual favors as more effective. According to Wade, these findings are consistent with previous studies that showed that men prefer a partner who is sexually accessible.

"Women may thereby use sexual favors as a way to reconcile with their [male partner](#)," says Wade. "Doing so may communicate to their male partner that they are still sexually accessible and as such do not want to end the relationship."

It was further found that women held it in high regard when a partner spent time with them after a conflict, apologized and even cried to show their remorse.

"Women may rate spending time together more highly because this behavior signals a partner's willingness to invest effort and limited resources (e.g. time) into their romantic pair-bond," explains Wade. "Such actions by a man may signal the likelihood of a potentially high parental investment which women prefer."

Women also rated crying and apologizing as more effective methods of resolving conflict than men did. According to Wade this might be because women view male partners who do so as being in touch with their emotions, without being feminine. Tears are seen as an honest signal of grief about a rocky relationship.

"Women may find the act of their male partner apologizing to be an effective reconciliation tactic because it is viewed as an altruistic act. A man's apology may redirect the cost of romantic [conflict](#) to himself rather than to his partner and thereby demonstrate his ability to provide emotional support and incur personal costs for his [partner](#)," Wade explains.

More information: T. Joel Wade et al, Sex Differences in Reconciliation Behavior After Romantic Conflict, *Evolutionary Psychological Science* (2017). [DOI: 10.1007/s40806-017-0108-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/s40806-017-0108-6)

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