

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Episode 167:

Masculine and Feminine (Hunter-Gatherer) Energy with Alison Armstrong

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J: You're listening to the Vibrant Happy Women podcast episode number 167. We're talking about masculine and feminine energy, or as our guest talks about, hunter and gatherer energy. Stay tuned. Hey, my friends, welcome back, it's Jen Riday and this is another episode of Vibrant Happy Women. Okay, we are talking about one of my all-time favorite topics and it has been one of the most life-changing topics for me, and that is masculine and feminine energy. My guest today is Alison Armstrong who was one of the foundational researchers on masculine and feminine, who has influenced many of the top names in the field including Tony Robbins where I first learned about it. In this interview with Alison, she talks about choosing to change the terminology of those words to hunter and gatherer because there is so much false connotation with the words masculine and feminine. I like to use the words interchangeably recognizing that masculinity has nothing to do with toxic masculinity, this idea of machismo and weight lifting and grilling and all the silly stereotypes that we associate with masculinity, and neither does femininity mean A-line dresses and pearls and vacuuming and June Cleaver, it's so much more than that. We're talking about energy and not stereotypes. We're talking about energy and not stereotypes, and definitely not gender roles.

So you're going to love this juicy stuff, it has completely juicified (Laughs)... (I know, I overuse the word juicy), it has completely juicified my marriage because my husband is a masculine energy kind of guy, and as I have relaxed a little bit more into my feminine gatherer energy, everything has shifted. Now, this does not mean you need to be weak. Feminine is not weak, in fact, it's like a mountain that just stands there in its glorious power; it's like warrior goddess energy. So don't think it's weak, but it's juicy and radiant and flowing and feminine and sexy and all those good things; and you can feel it in my voice, I hope, just as I share it. And neither is masculine all of that machismo negative stuff that we associate with toxic masculinity. Instead, it is strong and problem-solving and efficient and effective and helpful and service minded and expansive; so many great qualities. So instead of looking at men as blah-blah-blah like comedy and sitcoms portray and popular culture portrays, we as women can shift that focus and talk about men in a different light. I want to clarify, masculine does not necessarily mean men and feminine does not necessarily mean women, we all have both energies and that is beautiful. As Tony Robbins teaches, we all have a core energy, one we feel most comfortable in. I spent a good portion of my life in a masculine energy because I was raised on a farm and everything was about work and efficiency, which you might have heard 2 episodes ago on episode 165 when I interviewed my mom. And she's very much in that masculine work energy, however she shifts into her feminine energy when she's in her garden and when she's crafting and creating and doing the things that relax her.

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So these words and these ideas surrounding energy go back through all of time. You may have heard in Eastern cultures about the ideas of yin and yang; yin being restorative and calmer and flowing and relaxed, and yang being get it done, achieve, be efficient, get the prize, the hunting energy. So I'm intermingling all these words so you can grasp on to whatever feels the best for you. We're talking about feelings and energy, and these words don't always perfectly capture what we're talking about. So just feel into this one with your intuition and feel into what Alison is going to be sharing in this interview and see intuitively how you might apply this. But the goal would be to celebrate both types of energy, no matter which energy is your core or no matter which energy is your partner's core energy. And these energies are played out with our kids, at work, all over the place. It is the ability to celebrate the great qualities of each type of energy. Male and female, masculine and feminine, hunter and gatherer, it all plays out beautifully, yin and yang, it all plays out beautifully.

Instead of expecting everyone to match up to our core energy, let's say you, like me, might (like I used to be) be very driven and accomplished, an achievement-oriented and get it done fast. Well, everyone around me didn't want to be in that energy because I was handling it for the whole bunch of us. So then when they were in a more feminine energy, that would kind of frustrate me, "Why aren't you being like me?" instead to see this interplay of energy and see we need the contrast in the balance and the complementariness, the way they complement each other, then it is beautiful. It's like a team, it's like offense and defense. It's like a dance on a dance floor with all of these energies and people swirling in and out and among, and that's how relationships thrive the best, to see and recognize these differences and to celebrate them and to respect and to admire them, and not wonder why everyone isn't just like us. And also to give ourselves permission to shift into a different energy at times. And that is a big part of this podcast is learning for... learning as women to shift as needed into a more relaxed and feminine/gatherer energy; connective nurturing and fun. For some of you, may be your challenge in life is to shift into a more masculine energy where you focus on getting more done and just being more focused in general and achieving the goal. So it's a beautiful dance, we're going to learn all about it in this interview with Alison Armstrong. Let's jump in.

My guest today is Alison Armstrong and her exploration of human behavior began in 1991 with her decision to study men to find out how she was bringing out the worst in them, and she said, "Hopefully how to bring out the best." So her success in understanding men naturally led to studying women's behavior and making vital connections between the two. Alison distinguishes human instincts that compel both men and women to behave in ways that contradict and undermine our own purposes, goals, values, needs and relationships. She offers partnership based alternatives giving millions of people access to more fulfilling lives, loving relationships, stronger families, and productive organizations. Alison is a sought-after speaker and thought leader amongst people with the desire to live lives. Welcome, Alison, I am super excited to have you on the show.

A: Thank you, I'm glad to be here.

J: So let's start with your quote and then we'll dive into your story.

A: Wow. When I heard you were going to ask me that, there's so many... so many people have inspired



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me over the years, but right now, it would be something that Buckminster Fuller said and... oh my gosh, he said so many amazing things, but one of my favorite things is he said, "It appears that I am a verb." (Laughs)

J: Ooh.

A: Yeah!

J: That's fascinating. (Laughs)

A: "It appears that I'm a verb." And so... and so I thought about, "Okay, if I'm a verb, what if I'm a verb, what verb would I be?" and the word is illuminate.

J: Mm.

A: And I find that I am vital, right, that I'm a happy, vital, vibrant human being when I am being my verb, when I'm in the process of elimination.

J: Mm, I love that, being instead of doing maybe.

[Laughter]

A: Yeah.

J: Beautiful, beautiful. Well, we always start off the show with your low point, a low point you want to share with us, and then we'll dive into what that means in your life now. So let's go to your low point.

A: So like many women, most women, I was very independent and prided myself on my independence and not needing anything from other people, and especially from men. And this was 1988 and my son was probably maybe 6 days old.

J: Mm.

A: And he had been up every night with colic since he was born and his dad had to get up really early in the morning and go to work. And so I was protecting his dad...

J: Mm-hmm.

A: ... by just staying up all night with Jeff and doing everything I could think of and putting him down to sleep and then he'd wake up again and just everything that I could do to take care of this little baby, my first child. And it was September and it was hot in Southern California, and I open the front door and there was a cool breeze and I thought, "Oh, that's the problem, he's just too hot in here."

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J: Ah, mm-hmm.

A: "He's just too hot, that's the problem. You know what? I'm just going to set him down outside for a while and I bet he'll feel a lot better." And he was in his carrier and I sat him down in the courtyard outside our apartment and I was on my way through the door, I was going to close the door.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: I was like I was on my way back inside, I was going to close the door and go to sleep.

J: Oh, oh boy.

A: Yes. And I can still feel it in my body, my son's 30 years old and I could still feel my body at this moment of, "Oh my gosh." (Laughs)

J: Yeah.

A: "Oh! Oh! Oh my gosh! Okay, oh boy! Oh boy, look what I was about to do! Oh boy!"

J: (Laughs)

A: Right?

J: Yeah.

A: And I... and I picked up my son and I went into the bedroom and I shook his dad awake. (Laughs)

J: Mm, yeah.

A: It's like, "You got to do something about this, I almost did a terrible thing and I'm sorry. I'm sorry that you got to work early in the morning, you got to take care of him." (Laughs)

J: Yeah.

A: Yeah. But it was... I mean, I had to get to that point before I would ask for help. And this was 2-and-a-half years before I started studying men and found out, not only how willing men are to help but how much they want to help, and how when they offer to help us, they're hoping we'll say yes.

J: Oh.

A: Yeah. I found out later that I assumed they were like women where women, our instincts will cause us to offer to help many times when we hope someone will say no.

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J: Ah (Laughs), that's true, that's true. That's so funny.

A: Yeah, we just want credit for offering because we're these herd animals, right, and so being liked and having affinity and being valuable to other people is one of the ways we survive. And so we'll offer help for the goodwill that it will get us meanwhile hoping they say no. And so we turn men's offers of help down because we don't know that they're sincere.

J: Yes. Ooh, that's so fascinating. Well, since we're going here, let's go all the way here. Tell us...

A: Okay.

J: ... everything you know about the differences between men and women...

[Laughter]

J: ... however... however that works. (Laughs)

A: Tell you everything, okay, let's see. I only have, I don't know, probably 200 hours of recordings...

J: Ooh!

A: ... trying to capture everything I've learned in the last 28 years. But let's see, so given your audience, I'm so glad you told me how many are moms, well, that would be one of the most important things to know that infrequently will a man offer something that he isn't sincere about; he means it. And men offer to do things for us not for the other reason that women offer, which is we think someone can't do it, we'll offer to do something we think they can't do.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: And... and so women will get insulted by a man's offer for help.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: Like... and they'll even respond like, "I can do that myself."

J: Mm.

A: And they, what they said about helping us, and they've said it in so many beautiful ways. One of my favorites was a man who says, "I want to do everything for my wife that I can so that she can be everything that I can never be."

J: Aww, yes! That's so beautiful.

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A: Yes, yes! Another man said to me, he said, "Well, you know, Alison, women are the unicorns in the forest."

J: Mm-hmm.

A: "Anything that we can do for you, we're privileged to do."

J: Ah, beautiful.

A: Yes, yes! So this helped me to have the courage to expose what could be interpreted as a weakness by asking for help.

J:Mm-hmm.

A: And then on one of our workshops, we always had panels of men in our live workshops and those panels of men, you know, recorded in our online curriculum now, but we would always ask them, "What makes a woman the most attractive?"

J: Ooh.

A: Yeah. And one time, someone wrote, "What makes a woman the most attractive to marry?"

J: Mm.

A: And when this 1 man answered it, the 3 other men on the panel were all nodding their heads vigorously, and what he said was, "A strong woman who's voluntarily vulnerable."

J: Ooh, yeah. He used those words!

A: He did.

J: Wow, he was with his emotions; wow.

A: Well, he just... he just did, "A strong woman who's voluntarily vulnerable." So they love how strong we are, they love how smart we are, they love how confident we are. And when we go ahead and expose ourselves and say, "I need your help,"...

J: Mm-hmm .

A: ... to them, that is amazing.

J: Yes.

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A: That they would get to contribute to someone that they admire so much it's thrilling for them.

J: Mm-hmm. Would it be going too far to say men like to be needed?

A: (Laughs) It wouldn't be going far enough.

J: Oh! Okay.

A: Yeah, they actually need to be needed.

J: Aww, they want to be a hero (Laughs). You know, that song, "I will be your hero baby,"? We (Laughs)... we need that playing in the background. (Laughs)

A: Well, it's more than wanting to be our hero. My book, 'The Queen's Code', is all about what we call the hero language...

J: Mm-hmm.

A: ... and that because of the effects of testosterone on the brain, men are more naturally committed and focused by the way that their brain is formatted, and they'll miss the opportunity to be a hero if you don't use the words that to them equal hero.

J: Oh, okay.

A: Yeah.

J: What are the magic phrases we need here?

[Laughter]

A: Well, I'm actually not willing to tell you.

J: Oh, okay.

A: Because if these words are used the way that women would naturally use it, which even only don't mean to, we can be manipulative, it goes terribly awry for her and for him.

J: Okay.

A: So 'The Queen's Code' which teaches these words also provides the transformation that we need to use them for both our benefits.

J: Mm-hmm.

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A: But I can tell you that one of the words is 'help'.

J: Ah.

A: "Will you help me?"

J: Mm-hmm.

A: And this is how committed men are. Naturally, if you ask a woman, "Will you help me?" her most natural answer is, "That depends. What do you need?"

J: Hmm.

A: If you ask men, "Will you help me?" they'll either say no (Laughs) when they can't, they'll say no, most of the time, they'll say, "Yes. What?"

J: Ah, okay.

A: They commit themselves commit themselves; "Will you help me?"
"Yes. What?"

J: Aww.

A: They'll commit before they know what it is, and then when you tell them what it is, if they can't do it, they're actually bummed. And if you're not crummy with them about them not being able to do it like, "Oh, come on," right, if you're just like, "Okay, well, thank you," they're like, but I know somebody who can. Wait, let me call someone for you," and so they'll help you find the help you need; It's naturally part of who they are. And we also know that men will leave women who don't need them.

J: Oh. How do we know that?

A: Well, it's one of the things that they say.

J: Oh my.

A: They'll either say... one of the ways they word it is they'll say, "You're just too independent, you don't need me, so I'm going to find someone who needs me."

J: Mm.

A: And they don't mind independent like having a mind of our own, they actually hope we do, it's when we just decide what we're going to do and go do it. Even like when we're married to them or in a committed relationship with them, we just announce what we're going to do or what we did instead of, "I'm

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thinking about doing this, I'd like your input."

J: Yeah, oh.

A: Yeah. And by the way, this is really important, ask for their input.

J: Mm.

A: If you ask for their input, all you have to do to show respect is consider their input.

J: Yeah.

A: If you ask them for their opinion, when a man is willing to give you his opinion, he's taking accountability for your results.

J: Oh, wow.

A: Yeah, yeah, we give a lot of trouble this way. So if you ask a man's opinion and then you don't follow it, that is really disrespectful.

J: Okay, got it.

A: So, yeah, input and opinion. Ugh, language is so important with men; oh my gosh! So asking for input, like, "I'm... I need to make a decision," so you own our decision, "I need to make a decision but I'd like your input, please, because I know you always have things to say I never would think about. So is there anything you think I should think about as I'm making this decision?"

J: Hmm, ooh, that's nice.

A: Yes! And then if he tells you, then you're like, "Okay, I'm going to think about that. I'll let you know how that affected my opinion, if you'd like me to... my decision if you like me to." So you have to be really careful, I checked this out with hundreds of men. If you ask for their opinion and they're willing to give it to you, they are taking accountability. And that means they're taking on the result, and if you don't do your part like what they're telling you to do, then they can't produce the result for you...

J: Mm-hmm.

A: ... and so they'll feel like you just wasted their time and energy.

J: Right, right.

A: And they'll get really mad.

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J: Well, let's say there's a woman or 2 or 3 or many listening who do exactly what you said and are independent, they don't need a man (Laughs) and they're cringe... they're cringing at the fact that you just said men need to be needed and to ask for their input.

A: Mm-hmm.

J: Advice for those of us who might struggle there.

A: Hmm. Well, men don't need you to need them for everything. So... and it's better that you don't need them for everything because that freaks them out; that's called needy.

J: Yeah, true.

[Laughter]

A: They do need to be needed for something that matters to you.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: They don't want to do what's trivial, but that doesn't mean it isn't simple. So for example, I feel best when every day, I drink a mixture of avocado and spinach and lemon and apple and mint and... we call it a green drink.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: And Greg just left on an overnight trip, and what he did before he left is he made enough for me for today and tomorrow.

J: Oh yeah.

A: Yeah. It's a simple thing to do, but he did it because he knows how much it matters to me.

J: Yeah, he...

A: And he also knows that if he doesn't do it, I probably won't.

J: Right.

A: (Laughs)

J: Exactly, yeah; that's beautiful. Well, what about women, what are some... you know, you mentioned what men need, they need to be needed and they like when we ask for their input, what about women? What do women generally need, in your research?

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A: Hmm. Well, this is one of the things I was talking about earlier that I'd like it if Tony did a better job, but I don't mind him teaching it to tens of thousands of people.

J: Oh, let me explain what you're talking about.

A: (Laughs)

J: Before we began the recording, I was telling Alison that I had been at Date with Destiny and Tony Robbins talked about masculine and feminine energy. And then you can go ahead and explain what you said and go into depth there, as far as you need to go, yeah.

A: Well, so what we did years ago when I was studying men and then I learned all this stuff about women and then I needed... I wanted men to understand our graduates. Because at that time, we only had women graduates and they were working so hard to bring out the best in men, while the men were inadvertently bringing out the worst in the women.

J: Ooh.

A: And so I wanted the men to support the women because they were working so hard to be extraordinary. So I had to figure out a way to explain women to men. Well, at the time, all I had observed was the biggest ways that women were different than men, and what I could see is that they were consistent with the instincts that go with being someone who gathers versus hunts, right? So hunting is focused and committed, gathering, you actually have to stay open to all the possibilities. That's what shopping is, right? Shopping, you go out and you're open to all these options and possibilities and, "What could I make out of that?"

J: Mm-hmm.

A: Right? But sometimes, women have to go hunting. Like, if you've ever taken a child to hunt for a prom dress... (Laughs)

J: Mm-hmm.

A: ... it's miserable, right?

J: Right.

A: "I have to have a prom dress by tomorrow!" right? That's not shopping, that's hunting. So the program that we produced over a dozen years ago that Tony watched was all about women in gathering mode...

J: Mm-hmm.

A: ... and when we're open to options and alternatives and possibilities. And it's actually an entire way of

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thinking and it affects perception and hearing and speaking, and we even move our bodies differently when we're in gathering mode; and very useful information, awesome information. However, these days, most women spend most of their time in hunting mode, not in gathering mode.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: Most women are organized around producing results and are often caught between 2 different modes, the desire to produce results and the desire to connect.

J: Mm.

A: And often what it takes to produce results will actually cause a disconnect, and what it takes to stay connected, you sacrifice results. Does that make sense?

J: Oh, wow. Yes, for sure.

A: Yeah. So we end up in a real pickle between there's 2 different sets of instincts, and why it's a pickle is because has to do with experiencing (and I use this word carefully), experiencing being safe.

J: Oh.

A: So we're always going to get the best from women when women experience being safe.

J: Ah, yes.

A: Yes, it's a constant monitoring. This is where the biggest difference is between men and women is that women are constantly monitoring, "Am I safe? Am I safe? Am I safe? Am I safe?" And the way that our brains are affected by estrogen actually allows us to monitor our safety in the middle of everything else we're doing.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: (Laughs) We don't have to focus on, "Am I safe?" it's this macro program constantly going on. And when we're in gathering mode, we feel (and that's the word that we'll use), we feel safe through being connected. And this is why we care so much about people being interested in us, having common interests, and why we care so much about being paid the right kind of attention.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: The right kind of attention has us feel safe, the wrong kind of attention has this to feel unsafe. But we just naturally pay attention to interest and attention and connectedness and how connected are we now and how about now. (Laughs)

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J: Yeah, that's so true.

A: Yeah!

J: And men aren't really interested in that as much, would you say that's true?

A: It's a different word; oh, they're so into connection. Men are very, very much into connection, but (this is a critical difference) their instincts don't say that that's how you survive.

J: Oh, okay.

A: Okay? So our instincts say we... tell us that we'll survive through being connected.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: Most men spend most of their time in hunting mode, and men's instincts say the way to survive is to produce results.

J: Aha.

A: Yes, the way to survive is to be respected.

J: Aha.

A: So a man will get as freaked out about something that communicates disrespect as a woman will get freaked out by something that scares her.

J: Mm-hmm. So you mentioned the right kind of attention has women feeling safe, what is that attention exactly?

A: Well, for example... oh, here's another contrast; you'll get a kick out of this, Jen. So one of the kinds of right attention is being interested in you and interested in what you care about.

J: Mm-hmm, (Laughs) yes.

A: Right? So one of the things that we have taught men for many years in our Understanding Women course which is a co-ed because women don't understand themselves much better they men understand them...

J: Mm-hmm.

A: ... we've taught them that women have favorite questions.

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J: Hmm.

A: And if you find out a woman's favorite question, then you don't end up in what you could call the 'How are you?' swamp...

[Laughter]

A: ... right, because part of a woman's instincts is to be accurate. And so if someone says to you, "So, Jen, how are you?"...

J: Hmm, details, details.

A: ... well... exactly, exactly! So if I'm going to be truthful and accurate, I need to report to you on my physical self, my mental self, my emotional self, my spiritual self, and all the little selves that are really expressions of myself. So I have to tell you about my son, I have to tell you about my 2 daughters...

J: (Laughs)

A: ... I have to tell you about my husband, I have to tell you about...

[Laughter]

A: Right? I'm going to have to... that would be a complete answer to how are you.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: Right? And when a man says, "How are you?" he always forgets that he's hoping that just that you'll say, "Fine, good, great," and then will move on.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: They forget you're going to give this complete and accurate report. Well, the reverse happens, we say, "How are you?" to a man like, "So, how are you?"
"I'm fine."

J: (Laughs) And then we get mad that they're not talking. (Laughs)

A: Exactly, exactly! This is now a man who's emotionally unavailable, he's shut down, he doesn't want to include me, no, it's not that at all, he's just built different. So we ask women, we've asked hundreds of women, thousands of women in front of hundreds of men, "What are your favorite questions?" and women will report their favorite questions like, "What have you learned lately?" and, "Where have you been?" or, "Where are you going next?" or, "How's your horse?" or, "How's your grandson?" or... I mean, like we have all these questions that ask about our passions, right?

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J: Mm-hmm.

A: And then... this is so funny. So then I ask men (Laughs)... the first time I did this, I'll never forget it. So we're talking about all our favorite questions and that if you know a woman's favorite questions and you ask her those instead of, "How are you?" then the answer you'll get will have passion in it.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: And when a woman is passionate, it actually feeds energy to the people around her. So men will listen for the longest time to a woman talk about what she's passionate about because they actually end up with more life force.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: And I've asked men this, at the end of Understanding Women, I'm like, "How many of you are better off now than when we started?" and all the men will raise their hands.

J: Ah.

A: Because I'm clearly passionate about this, right?

J: Mm-hmm.

A: So I teach men, "If you ask a woman her favorite questions, then her response would be expressing her passion. You won't need it to be over in 10 seconds because you're dying, being drowned in details, you're actually instead in this like passion wave, you know?"

J: Yeah.

A: And it's awesome. So after teaching men all this, one time, I said, "So, men, what are some of your favorite questions? You've heard ours, what are your favorite questions?" And I'm looking at them and I'm holding my hand up, you know, so they'll raise their hand up, and they just keep looking at me and nobody raises their hand and nobody raises their hand.

J: (Laughs)

A: And then I'm looking at them and then they start shaking their heads.

J: Uh-oh. (Laughs)

A: Yeah, they start shaking their heads. And one of them near the front row, I said, "What?" (Laughs) he says, "No questions."

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J: Oh boy. (Laughs)

A: Yeah, oh my gosh! And that was the beginning of me researching this whole reality of men that they call being interrogated.

J: Oh my goodness, I have heard that.

A: Yes, yes!

J: "Why are you interrogating me?"
"What do you mean? I'm not. I'm asking questions." (Laughs)

A: Exactly, exactly! So this... so this is what had me chase down this whole thread (many, many years of this) how... if you think about a man as being both a hunter, right, so he's going to commit to something and chase it down and drag it home, and being a warrior, so he's a provider and a protector.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: And that actually is what shapes his relationship to communication, which his default relationship to communication is conceal everything that can be used against you.

J: (Laughs) Oh my goodness, oh my goodness.

A: Yeah.

J: That's so funny. (Laughs)

A: Yeah. That is instinctive. He doesn't decide to conceal, its built-in.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: And so as one man said, "Every time I reveal myself is a victory of human spirit."

J: Wow.

A: So the instinct is to conceal. And we can tap into this by just think about the people that you don't trust. The people you don't trust, you actually default to concealing.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: When they ask you, "How are you?" you say, "Fine."

J: True, true.

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A: Yeah!

J: So you're saying men don't trust anyone because they default to that?

A: Well, okay, trust is a whole other thing, I can't even go there. You have to earn it.

J: Mm.

A: And men will reveal themselves to people who they believe can't hurt them or have proven that they won't hurt them.

J: Mm-hmm, they want safety too, yeah.

A: Oh, they absolutely do. Don't... if I can't count on you to not use what I say against me, I'm not going to say anything. And unfortunately, this is one of the things that has communication just go down the toilet in relationships because women's instincts are opposing. So a man tells us something juicy about himself, we want to go tell our girlfriends.

J: Uh-oh (Laughs); connection.

A: And then our girlfriend who now knows something juicy about him wants him to know that she knows something juicy about him because that increases her status, that she's been told something juicy. And so she tells him that she knows this about him and now he knows that his wife betrayed him.

J: Mm-hmm, right.

A: Because that's how to curse for him is it she betrayed him. Or if they tell us something in a vulnerable moment and then we throw it back at them and in a fight, like, "Oh, you're just like your father. You think you're different, but you're just like your father."

J: Mm.

A: And the end, like the end of Revelation.

J: Wow.

A: Yeah.

J: So both people want to be safe?

A: Yep.

J: And men need to be needed and so we just need to ask. And you said to use the word 'help', right?

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A: 'Help' is a really good word.

J: Okay, okay. And then the bigger details we need to read 'The Queen's Code'.

[Laughter]

A: 'The Queen's Code' or Understanding Men online, both of those courses teach, not only about the hero language and ways to speak to men and listen to men to bring out the best in them, it also illuminates what... (there's that word) it also illuminates what we're doing that brings out the worst in them. Because most of it is unconscious, most of it, we don't know the effect we're having on men, we don't know that we're causing for example a reaction of fury, we actually make men furious. And when you don't... which then makes us feel unsafe and then we're scared and then it gets worse, but we don't know what did that...

J: Mm-hmm.

A: ... because it generally wouldn't have the same effect on us.

J: Yeah.

A: So that was the first thing I had to learn was, "How was I bringing out the worst in men?" And it wasn't obvious to me because I was normal.

J: Right.

A: I just did what every woman did.

J: Yeah.

A: And so I actually had to (Laughs)... I actually had to be able to see something that was largely invisible.

J: Mm-hmm, and what is it that makes men furious? I'm so intrigued.

A: Well, okay, this goes into what we were just talking about. So their survival from... purely from their instincts, their survival depends upon producing results.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: So what makes men have this really big emotional reaction of anger or fury (it can also can end up in deep, deep depression) is when we do something that diminishes their ability to produce results.

J: Mm-hmm.

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A: One of the ways that we diminish men's ability to produce results is we don't tell them what we need.

J: Mm, yes.

A: How can they provide that for you if you haven't told them that you need it?

J: Mm-hmm.

A: Well, most women will react, "He should already have known, it's obvious."

J: Mm-hmm.

A: So we withhold quality information because we don't know that he really does want you to have what you need, but he's so different, he's not going to be able to guess what you need. In fact, if you watch carefully, he's already trying to give you what you need, he just is assuming you need what he needs; and that's, for example, why keeps trying to give you an orgasm.

J: (Laughs)

A: He's convinced that that's what you need. And in absence of other information like, "No, honey, what I really need is 4 hours alone," or, "What I need is 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep and then I could get interested in orgasm,"...

J: Right.

A: ... but he doesn't know that. So when a woman says to a man, "Well, honey, I just... I need to connect with you first," well, what we've learned is men connect through sex.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: So when a woman says, "No, I need to connect with you before having sex," he's like, "So we need to have sex then."

"No, I need to connect with you before we have sex."

"Oh, so I should put it in?"

"No!"

J: (Laughs)

A: I don't know if I'm allowed to say that on your podcast, Jen.

J: You are, you are, totally. Oh, that's so fascinating. One of the big shifts for me is I realized that my husband connects through sex, and when I really paid attention, I realized I could connect that way too...

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A: Mm-hmm.

J: ... just by reframing it. So I think...

A: Yes, good job!

J: ... yeah, just understanding each other though, you know, maybe we can override these instincts and... and try to meet in a common ground somewhere (Laughs), you know, I don't know.

A: Yeah. The word I like is 'upgrade' because our instincts (which they all boil down to some form of procreate then protect then provide)...

J: Mm-hmm.

A: ... they have an extraordinary amount of energy in them. I mean, they're... everything on the planet is procreate then protect then provide; from a bacteria to a sequoia tree, right?

J: Mm-hmm.

A: So to overcome one's instincts takes a tremendous amount of energy.

J: Yeah.

A: I'm more into (and this has everything to do it being able to be happy and vibrant) is if you can capture the energy that's in the instincts and upgrade it. So for example, in gathering mode, we have an instinct to convey to the people we trust a tremendous amount of information, including detail that will allow them to go find this very important thing. So this is what has us like be thwarted if we're not allowed to give detail (Laughs). But if you know you have an instinct to provide detail, just knowing you have that instinct and you're going to feel tension when you can, when you can't, you can take a moment and go, "Okay, but what really matters? If I could only tell them 5 things about this, what are the 5 most important things?"

J: Yeah.

A: And make that conscious choice, right? Or if you know that you have an instinct to create beauty, for example, you're compelled to create beauty, well, you can be Martha Stewart of creating beauty or you can go, "Okay, but what really matters?"

J: Mm-hmm.

A: Right? We call it hostess head.

[Laughter]

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A: Right?

J: Yeah.

A: Hostess head is when you start out with, "I need to vacuum," and you end up buying all new matching napkins and placemats.

J: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

A: I'm having... my daughters getting married 4 months from today and the wedding reception's happening at my house...

J: Mm.

A: ... talking about hostess head. (Laughs)

J: Yeah, for sure. Oh my gosh, you are brave.

A: Well, so I keep like thinking what's on the list and what's going to go off the list, and what really matters and what matters less. And my daughter, she grew up in all of these teachings and she's just being amazing, she's like mom, "Anything that has you have less fun, we're not going to do."

J: Aww, that's really nice.

A: Yes!

J: Yes.

A: Oh, it's so... it's so beautiful. And it really... I mean, we... women need to support each other in taking more time to be.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: Which means we have to do less, so it's good. It's good to be supported by someone else going, "No, let's do less, let's have more fun."

J: And women can share all those details and do that gathering mode with each other, you know, instead of expecting men to act like women, I feel like.

A: Well, if the women are in gathering mode, a woman giving details to a woman in hunting mode, she may be even less gracious than a man would be about that.

J: True.

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[Laughter]

A: A man... they've taught us this. So a man will go through the process of, "Was that the point? Was that the point? Is there going to be a point?"

J: (Laughs)

A: "Is this your point?" right? And then he goes, "Oh my gosh, how am I going to remember all this?"

J: Yeah.

A: And that's when his eyes glaze over...

J: Mm-hmm.

A: ... and he just becomes inert.

J: Right.

A: A woman in hunting mode will actually be like, "What does this have to do with me?"

J: Ooh, fierce. (Laughs)

A: "Why are you telling me this?" Oh yeah, we're much more rude. We're just...

J: (Laughs)

A: "Why are you telling me this? I don't need to know this."

J: Mm-hmm.

A: (Laughs) Yeah. So you have to be careful. Two people in gathering mode, lots of details will be fine.

J: Yeah.

A: As long as it's something that the other person cares about. If you give them a lot of details about something they don't care about, they'll actually act all insulted, "Why are you telling me about that? You know I don't care about that?"

J: Mm-hmm.

A: "You're wasting my time."

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J: So do men ever shift into gathering mode?

A: Yeah, they do actually. Some men are naturally more in gathering mode more of the type. They will consider themselves creative people, artistic people usually, but all men can be in gathering mode when they're what I call "at play".

J: Oh.

A: Meaning that there are no results to produce.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: So it's not like they're playing a game and the results to produce is to win, it's when they're at play and they're really spontaneous and very connected. We fall in love with them when they're in gathering mode.

J: Mm-hmm, ah.

A: And then they go back into hunting mode and we wonder what happened because he disconnects and goes and focuses. So, yeah, being able to read the signs for both men and women, "Is he hunting? Is he gathering? Is he hunting? Is he gathering?" can keep us from getting our feelings hurt.

J: Yeah, yeah. Well, with your language, I love it because we can both be hunters and gatherers. And I feel like in the broader context, I've heard some other words and I want to apply them so those listening can make sure they've got it all down. So Tony Robbins uses the words masculine and feminine, saying that both men and women have masculine and feminine energy; the masculine being the hunter and the feminine being the gatherer. And then I've heard the words yin and yang; the yin being more feminine and gathering and the yang being more masculine and hunting, the problem-solving. Would you say that's accurate, applying those words in that way to the hunting and gathering?

A: I used to use masculine and feminine a lot.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: In fact, in that video that Tony watched all those years ago. I abandoned those words in all but one context where I talked about masculine and feminine forms of power.

J: Mm.

A: And I abandoned them because I spent a couple decades trying to have them lose their baggage...

J: Ah, yeah.

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A: ... and I couldn't; I couldn't. They still have such a right wrongness to them...

J: Mm-hmm.

A: ... and a way we're supposed to be, and one that's considered weak and the other is considered strong.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: And I spent so much time trying to recontextualize it for people and I finally just gave up, like, "I got to find a better way to talk about this."

J: Yeah.

A: I do however though, I like the terms masculine and feminine forms of power because they actually have a correlation to what happens in a physical world. Well, frankly, masculine forms of power are like an erection.

J: Oh, okay. (Laughs)

A: Yeah. So the masculine forms of power take up space. (Laughs)

J: Mm-hmm.

A: Masculine forms of power are you have to make way for them.

J: Yeah. (Laughs)

A: Masculine forms of power, you can see them at work, you can see for example force at work, logic at work, convincing at work, you can see it; pressure at work, you can see that. Whereas feminine forms of power are more like a woman's body, so they're invisible, they're an unoccupied space. I mean, if you think about a woman's ability to have babies, the biggest difference is that she has an unoccupied space.

J: Right.

A: Right? She has a uterus, right?

J: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

A: And so feminine forms of power are ways of being that creates space for things to happen, and it's... men actually taught me about this because they kept talking about how magical women were...

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J: Mm-hmm.

A: ... and I didn't know what they meant, and then I started to pay attention to different qualities and how for example one of the feminine form of power is compassion.

J: Mm, for sure.

A: And if you think of compassion as an open space, an unoccupied space, what arises in the space of compassion is understanding...

J: Mm-hmm.

A: ... and maybe acceptance. And you can just like having a battle with someone and then choose to be compassionate and it will literally transform the next moment.

J: Beautiful.

A: Yeah.

J: So it's just as powerful but in a different strategy, a different way.

A: Yeah. I avoid the word 'strategy' because it has to do with enemies. (Laughs)

J: Ah, true.

A: By definition, 'To move yourself into the best possible position before engaging with an enemy'. So, yeah, it's a different approach, if you will. And one of the things that we learned is that women can produce tremendous results through feminine forms of power and they tend to not be as exhausting as masculine forms of power. And men have between 15 and 30 times more testosterone than women do.

J: Wow.

A: So when we spend a lot of time in hunting mode, we burn out, we burn out our adrenals for example, which half of our testosterone comes from when we're before menopause and almost all of it comes after menopause.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: And so I'd say before perimenopause. So we literally can kill ourselves, we can end up with heart attacks at young ages and stuff by being in hunting mode too much.

J: Mm-hmm.

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A: And, I mean, people wonder how I do it, I... I mean, I'm going the CEO of a company and there's a lot that I'm always creating and producing, and one of the biggest ways that you can still do that but not kill yourself is change your pace.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: If you give yourself more time than you need to get something done, then you can do what I call putter it.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: Right? Like, if it's going to take 15 minutes to get ready, start a half hour ahead of time and putter it and you'll end up feeling more peaceful, more...

J: Ah.

A: ... yeah, more peaceful, more alive, more grounded, more centered, more optimistic, just by not putting yourself in a time squeeze.

J: You know, there's truth there. I had a guest a few weeks ago, she gave me advice to be on time. And she said she always knew people who were late couldn't manage money. So I took the challenge.

A: (Laughs)

J: And I don't know if I saw any difference in my money necessarily, but I did feel a difference in my mood and my peacefulness, just from being early everywhere. It was crazy, and I'm still working on that so that's true, I agree.

A: It's awesome, yeah, yeah, I recommend it.

J: Beautiful. Well, you've shared so many great tips and we'll have a link to your website on our show notes page at jenriday.com/167. Really quick, Alison, what does it mean for you personally to be a vibrant happy woman?

A: Oh boy. Well, vibrant has everything to do with vitality, and so I think it requires that we feed ourselves.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: Right? We feed what feeds our energy and our passion. The happy part was one of the most stunning things I learned studying men, how much they need us to be happy...

J: Mm-hmm.

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A: ... how much it matters to them. And what I did many years ago that changed my life entirely was I stopped pursuing happiness.

J: Yeah.

A: Like the Declaration of Independence says, right? (Laughs)

J: Yes.

A: I stopped pursuing it and I just committed to it.

J: Uh-huh.

A: And... and so I have a lot of practices from my commitment to being happy. And one of my values is contentment and it... it means happy enough with what one is or does or has.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: And my husband blesses me for this because I... I literally practice not coveting what I can't have or what I'm not willing to do what it would take to have.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: I just don't spend time in a fantasy land.

J: Mm-hmm.

A: And as a result, the things that I spend time and money and energy on are things that make me really happy.

J: Nice.

A: Yeah.

J: Oh, beautiful. That's excellent advice, we'll end it right there, but thank you so much for sharing your wisdom on our show.

A: You're welcome, my pleasure, it was fun.

J: Alright, thanks, Alison.

Alright, my friends, I told you that is a juicy, deep, amazing topic and I want to challenge you to take a deep breath and to take a pause sometime the next 4 to 12 hours while this is in your head to journal

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about your thoughts. What do you think is your core energy? What do you think is your partner's core energy? How about your kids, your co-workers, your boss? How can you shift to be in the energy that feels better to you? And how can you more deeply respect the type of energy you find the people around you spending most of their time in? What energy would you like to be in? So many questions, just let your thoughts go and write and write and write, and let your intuitive side, your heart centered side communicate with you, and then practice being in that feminine energy, which is juicy and open and flowing and vibrant and radiant. Maybe you imagine opening your heart area (that's what I do) and just being in your full warrior, your goddess power, like a mountain; it doesn't make itself loud or obnoxious, but it's there standing in its strength, influencing everything around it with beautiful radiant energy. We as women can do that.

Now, maybe for you, you want to experiment with being more in your masculine, it's up to you; what feels right to you? I know for me, I've spent enough of my life in that masculine, I feel really juiced up and excited about spending more and more time in my feminine energy, and I happen to know my husband and my kids love it so much. The more time I spend in my feminine, the more I find my kids opening up to me, loving my presence rather than being afraid I'm going to ask them to unload the dishwasher (Laughs) or sweep a floor and be productive again. But it just really feels like an energy of love and connection and juice, which I love. That's my take on it, what's your take? I would love to hear. Follow me on Instagram and DM me your thoughts. Maybe even send me an audio of your thoughts. You can just use your audio recorder on your phone and email that to me at support@jenriday.com, I would love to hear it. I don't have to share it on the air, but I can if you want, just let me know in your email. Let me know how this changes your life to think about masculine and feminine, hunter and gatherer, yin and yang; it's all good stuff. Well, I will be back later this week with a Happy Bit talking more about how shifting into my femininity has influenced my family, my marriage, my life. I'm going to get into the details of what that has looked like for me and maybe it will help you with something. I will see you again later this week, and until, then make a vibrant and happy, juicy day. Take care.

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