

# Marriage

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## Who are you?

The Greek philosopher, Plato, wrote in his 'Symposium', that human beings originally had two faces, four hands and four legs. His idea was that ever since, love instinctively calls back the halves of our original nature together. This ancient theory explains why people often end up with a partner with opposite qualities to them – we subconsciously spend our lives looking for someone who compliments us. Opposites attract!

However, opposites can also clash! Understanding our personality and our partner's personality can really help us see why we clash, especially when we are often so different to each other. Sometimes the difficulties we experience in marriage are due to not really understand each other's differences well enough, and appreciating that those differences impact how we live.

*"I wish I'd known that personality (those characteristics that make us unique) would profoundly affect our marriage", Gary Chapman, Things I Wish I'd Known Before We Got Married.*

Consider the pairings below and see which ones you can identify with.

### **The Early Bird and the Night Owl**

The Early Bird loves to get up and make use of the mornings. They are at their best at this time of the day. They can have good discussions about life, its meaning and the universe. All before 8am.

The Night Owl doesn't do mornings. They don't do breakfast. They can't enter into serious discussions over early morning coffee. They're just not there. They're in still bed.

HOWEVER...

The Early Bird is flaked out on the sofa by 9pm. They hate going to parties where they know it will go on until late. Late is anything past 9pm.

The Night Owl is at their best between 10pm and midnight. They come alive late at night and have their best creative times at the end of the day.

### **The Babbling Brook and the Dead Sea**

The Babbling Brook speaks freely about everything they see, feel and think about. They love talking about everything. Whatever they experience, will be told to someone. They have natural energy which people respond to.

The Dead Sea receives all kinds of thoughts, feelings and experiences through the day into a reservoir. They are perfectly happy not to talk about the things they are thinking about.

When a Babbling Brook is dating a Dead Sea, things seem wonderful. The Babbling Brook has a wonderful listener in the Dead Sea. The Dead Sea doesn't need to say anything. They can just sit there and nod their head. The Babbling Brook will fill up the evening.

HOWEVER..

After several years of marriage, the Babbling Brook may be saying "We've been married for a decade and I still don't know them". The Dead Sea may think "I know them too well. I wish they'd be quiet."

### **The Professor and the Dancer**

The Professor is someone who values logic. This determines how they make decisions. They need time to consider the outcomes, weigh up the best way forward and eventually, decide. Rational choices are everything to them.

The Dancer is someone who makes a decision through intuition. They cannot tell you the process they have used to make a decision. They just *know*.

HOWEVER..

The Professor cannot just make a quick decision. Their thoughts and feelings are determined by process which cannot be circumnavigated or hastened. When asked to make a quick decision, they will feel under pressure and close down.

The Dancer does not need to have a rational system to make a decision. It is extremely frustrating to them to have to be told to make a decision through a rational system. Reason only slows them down.

For all couples, the key is to acknowledge differences, and appreciate the traits of your partner.

**For discussion:**

- Can you recognise yourselves in these opposites? If so, which ones?
- How does difference impact your relationship?
- Does reading this help you understand where tension can arise?

*Credit: Some of the content and ideas used in this document were inspired by Gary Chapman's book 'Things I Wish I'd Known Before I Got Married'*