

PERSONALITY AUDIT

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Before entering into any healthy, intimate relationship, you need to know yourself. One important aspect of identity is personality. Generally one's personality develops unconsciously. It's not something that you plan, although you can work on acquiring desirable traits that do not come naturally.

As you consider marriage, try doing a personality audit. The Personal Style Inventory is one way to understand yourself better. Ask your fiancé(e) to take it, too.

Directions:

Think of how you typically feel and act in a social or home environment (not your job). There are no right or wrong answers so there's no need to figure out the best answer or the way you'd like to be. Just go with your first inclination — what comes naturally to you.

I tend to be more: (Circle one phrase in each row.)

| | A | P | C | T |
|-----|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. | result-oriented | people-oriented | | |
| 2. | | enjoy meeting new people | have a small group of close friends | |
| 3. | | | lighthearted | industrious |
| 4. | a director | | a supporter | |
| 5. | | talkative | | a listener |
| 6. | quick | | | methodical |
| 7. | | outgoing | reserved | |
| 8. | competitive | cooperative | | |
| 9. | | | relaxed | conscientious |
| 10. | generalist | | | detailed |
| 11. | | spontaneous | | disciplined |
| 12. | impatient | | patient | |
| 13. | aggressive | emotional | passive | thorough |
| 14. | take charge | persuasive | steady | careful |

Totals: ____ + ____ + ____ + ____ = 14

Total up the number of circled phrases in each column. Totals across should equal 14.

Circle your highest letter: A, P, C, or T



STEP 1

Understanding your Personal Style Inventory

If A is your highest letter, your personal style tends to be Authoritative.

The following characteristics may come easily to you:

- High Achiever
- Competitive
- Quick
- Strong Ego

If P is your highest letter, your personal style tends to be a People-Oriented.

The following characteristics may come easily to you:

- Sociability
- Emotionally Expressive
- Talkative
- Persuasive

If C your highest letter, your personal style tends to be Calm.

The following characteristics may come easily to you:

- Loyal
- Relaxed / Laid Back
- Rooted in Family
- Patient

If T is your highest letter, your personal style tends to be Thorough.

The following characteristics may come easily to you:

- Fact / Detail-Oriented
- Perfectionist
- Careful / Conscientious
- Diligent

If your highest letters are tied or close, you probably tend toward both personal styles.

Do not look at your Personal Style as a box that determines your behavior. It is merely a personal preference that comes naturally to you. In life we need to adjust and compensate for our natural inclinations in order to meet deadlines, get along with others, and accomplish tasks. When you identify your Personal Style you can better understand your strengths and where you may have to stretch to accommodate others, especially a spouse.

Do you think the Personal Style indicated by this inventory basically fits you? If so, fine. It's time to look at how your style works with that of your fiancé(e). (Step 2)

If not, is there another Personal Style that seems more accurate? Get feedback from your fiancé(e) as to whether he/she agrees with your choice. If your choice is confirmed, use this new letter for your couple combination.

If more than one Personal Style is very strong for you, or if there is a conflict between how you see yourself and how others see you, review two Couple Combinations — one for each Personal Style — and see which one feels more like you.

STEP 2

Assessing how YOUR Personal Style meshes with that of your FIANCÉ(E)

It's not necessarily better for both partners to have the same Personal Style. Two authoritative people may argue a lot about who will get their way. Two very calm people may never get around to making a decision. Two very thorough people may be workaholics and have a hard time giving themselves permission to play. Sometimes opposites attract and complement each other.

In time, however, couples who are very different on one of these letters will have tensions in their relationship. One is not right and the other wrong. They just have two different ways of seeing the world.

Although basic personality preferences don't change much, you can decide to make the effort to develop your 'shadow' side — the traits that are necessary to succeed in a job, a team, or a marriage. Strengthening your shadow side doesn't come as easily as your natural preference but it can be done. It's like a right-handed person trying to write with the left hand (or vice versa). Be patient with yourself or your fiancé(e) as you try to develop a fuller, balanced personality.

STEP 3

Find your COUPLE COMBINATION below.

After both partners take the Personal Style Inventory and know their highest letter, combine your highest letters to get your "Couple Combination." Review how your type relates with another person. Does this fit your relationship? If not, do any of the others fit better?

A — A (Authority/Authority)

Both partners are strong, independent individuals with strong opinions about how they want things done. In conflict situations, they tend to go head to head. Each partner thinks he/she is right. This couple takes the direct (perhaps even blunt) approach to conflict. They may have many fights (but they are out in the open early). They are achievers who can produce a lot if not bogged down in detail.

Strength: High energy, achievers

Challenge: Need to learn to compromise and respect the feelings and values of the partner

A — P (Authority/People-Oriented)

A seeks to win out by force of personality while P tries to persuade and debate. A is apt to become impatient with P because A wants to make a quick decision about the issue (preferably his/her way) while P wants to talk it through and make sure his/her feelings are understood.

Strength: High energy, active, movers

Challenge: Learn to compromise. A needs to respect feelings. P needs to be careful not to submerge his/her personality in an effort to please everyone.

A — C (Authority/Calm)

A says, "Let's do it!" C says, "Wait, I'm not ready." Cs are uncomfortable with change that comes too fast or threatens long-held loyalties or traditions. Change and variety, however, are energizing to As, so this couple may experience stress over this difference. As tend to be extroverted and results-oriented while Cs tend to be withdrawn (unless around very close friends and family) and people-oriented.

Strength: This combination can give balance to each other. The C will protect the A from too quick a decision, while A can help C get to the point.

Challenge: A must learn patience, restraint, and listening skills. C must learn flexibility and openness to new ideas. Since A and C are opposites on so many levels, compromise is key.

A — T (Authority/Thorough)

In an argument, T will fight with facts. A just wants to win. A may tend to walk over the T. Both partners tend to be task-oriented but T will be more thorough (perhaps even to the point of being a perfectionist) while A will usually want to resolve the disagreement quickly.

Strength: Balance, protects from overly quick decisions.

Challenge: T must learn flexibility. A must learn patience and restraint. Both could benefit from paying a little more attention to the relationship and not just "getting the job done."

P — C (People-Oriented/Calm)

Both partners are people-oriented but P is usually more of an extrovert and, therefore, more comfortable in large groups, while C would prefer a small group of close friends. C is easygoing and supportive while P is enthusiastic and spontaneous.

Strength: Both partners put a priority on the relationship and are willing to tune into feelings.

Challenge: P needs to respect C's need for time when change is needed. P also may need to temper the desire to be center stage. C would benefit by learning assertiveness skills.

P — P (People-Oriented/People-Oriented)

Both are extroverts and people-oriented. Ps fight by talking and talking. They may easily get off track. They easily tune into feelings.

Strength: Very people-oriented, social, tuned in. Ideals dominate.

Challenge: Need to develop objectivity and not get carried away by emotion. Since both partners like the spotlight, sharing is key. Need to be clear about who will do the follow-up or detail work of a decision.

P — T (People-Oriented/Thorough)

This combination may miss each other. The P values intuition while the T values facts. T, therefore, may think P is too talkative, disorganized, or impulsive. P may think that T doesn't care enough about the human dimension of a problem.

Strength: Couples will complement each other well if this difference is understood.

Challenge: Need to develop some of the partner's strength such as T lightning up on details and P becoming more thorough.

C — C (Calm/Calm)

These couples are steady, stable, and reliable, although they may sometimes seem boring to others. There won't be many decisions to make or things to fight about because life will stay much the same and both will try to be peacemakers.

Strength: Cooperation, teamwork

Challenge: To be flexible when needed. Each partner needs to make an effort to take some initiative.

C —T (Calm/Thorough)

These couples are even-tempered and value security. Both partners tend to be introverts but C is more of a people person than T. Quick change threatens C. In fights, T may prevail because he/she has the facts, but since it takes awhile to gather all the facts things won't change too quickly.

Strength: Calm, careful, steady approach

Challenge: To give spice and excitement to life; not to stagnate. T should make an effort to share feelings.

T —T (Thorough/Thorough)

Couples who share the thoroughness trait are compatible as long as they don't get bogged down in details. They may need to push for decisions because one could always gather more information.

Strength: Careful, thorough

Challenge: To see beyond the facts, have vision, appreciate feelings and relationship time.

STEP 4

Making the most of your Couple Combination

Once you've studied your Couple Combination ask yourselves the following questions:

1. Think of at least one difficulty you and your fiancé(e) are likely to have in problem- solving together. Describe it.
2. What could each of you do to make it easier?
3. Discuss how your Couple Combination will affect your marriage.