

Marriage

after every wedding comes a marriage

by Florence Littauer

If any of us thought we were going to get divorced, we would not bother to get married. If we didn't plan on a long-range relationship, we wouldn't invest money in homes, furniture, dishes, crystal and silver. Yet statistics show that 50% of those getting married will end up divorced, suffering through the separation of themselves, their children and their possessions. Why does this happen and how can you prevent a similar fate in your marriage?

In the 20 years that Fred and I have been counseling people with marriage problems, we have developed some principles that may make a major change in your perspective.

We fall in love with opposite personalities. Although we seek companionship and compatibility, we usually choose to marry someone who is nothing like us.

We subconsciously select a person who fills in our weak areas, and when we do, the two of us fit together and become one. The one who loves to talk marries one who likes to listen. The one who likes to lead marries one who is willing to follow. Optimists marry pessimists, extroverts marry introverts.

We focus on our mates weaknesses. Once we come home from the honeymoon we begin to notice faults in the other person. She doesn't keep the house in perfect order or cook like mother. He's constantly giving instructions and isn't loving like father. We find that marriage isn't what we thought it would be, and that we don't agree on much of anything.

We decide to make our partner over. Once we realize we've married a person with totally different standards and opinions, we begin to remake our mate in our image. If only we could turn the person we have into what we'd like him to be, we could be happy. We want the fun-loving one to get serious and organized, the deep thoughtful one to lighten up, the aggressive worker to slow down, and the easy going one to speed up. We set about to change what we have into a new model.

We get discouraged. When we discover that our mate is resistant to change and doesn't get excited over our "partner-improvement program," we get discouraged and wonder if perhaps we've married the wrong person.

We need help. Fred and I, without knowing what we were doing, fell into this negative pattern. We thought being in love was enough and we spent no time looking ahead to possible problems. We had such a fantastic wedding that it was featured in LIFE, May 18, 1953, but neither of us realized that after every wedding comes a marriage. When we got home from the honeymoon Fred announced, "Now I'm going to put you on your training program." I was shocked to find that he didn't like me as I was but only as he hoped I might become. He showed me that I didn't walk or talk right and that I didn't even preheat the dinner plates. He tried to make me over. I resisted the transformation, and we both became discouraged.

After 15 years of a declining marriage, we discovered the concept of the “4 Basic Temperaments,” and for the first time, had a tool to use in examining ourselves and accepting each other. We found help.

We can appreciate each others differences. Once I saw that I had been created as a Sanguine, an outgoing, fun-loving optimist, and that Fred was born a Melancholy, a deep, thoughtful, introspective introvert, I could understand that we had been attracted to each other’s opposite strengths and discouraged by each others opposite weaknesses. Once we found out that we were naturally different and that one of us wasn’t out to get the other, we began to accept each other as we were.

We can become one. Look over the following chart together and check off what characterizes you. Discuss your differences before getting married and realize that there is no perfect person. With every set of strengths come accompanying weaknesses, but when you two focus on your assets, you will fill each other’s empty spaces.

SANGUINE: The Popular Person, The Born-entertainer, Likes parties, people and fun, Loves to talk, Wants to create excitement, Entertains everyone, Gets prize for best personality, Needs attention and approval, Has little organization or follow through, Gets Depressed when life’s not fun, Controls by charm.

CHOLERIC: The Powerful Person, The Born-leader, Likes action and progress, Loves to work, Wants to motivate others, Directs everyone, Gets prize for most accomplishments, Needs obedience and appreciation, Has little tolerance for incompetence, Gets depressed when losing control, Controls by force.

PHLEGMATIC: The Peaceful Person, The Born-follower, Likes harmony and rest, Loves to relax, Wants to calm people down, Gets along with everyone, Gets prize for best liked, Needs peace and sense of worth, Has little self-motivation, Gets depressed over conflict, Controls by procrastination.

MELANCHOLY: The Perfect Person, The Born-thinker, Likes solitude and silence, Loves to plan, Wants to analyze everything, Sets standards for everyone, Gets prize for most intelligent, Needs support and sensitivity, Has little need for sociability, Gets depressed over imperfection, Controls by moods, Pessimistic, Introverted, Soft-Spoken, Drained by people.

Florence and Fred Littauer travel constantly and speak on marriage and personal relationships. Florence has written 15 books. For further study on the subject of understanding others, read, “After Every Wedding Comes A Marriage”, “Personality Plus”, or “Your Personality Tree”.

Discovering your personality type can be an enlightening experience and an excellent way to improve marriage communication. Based on the knowledge of your spouse’s strengths and weaknesses, your communication will become more meaningful, your understanding and acceptance of your spouse more complete. The following test will help you establish which temperament you are, sanguine, phlegmatic, melancholy, or choleric, as well as point out the characteristics of each type.

The following charts are created by Fred Littauer.

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Personality Profile

DIRECTIONS: In each of the following rows of four words across, place an X in front of the one word that most often applies to you. Continue through all forty lines. Be sure each number is marked. If you are not sure of which word "most applies", ask your fiancé, spouse or friend. Now transfer all your X's to the corresponding words on the following page and add up your totals. Then visit weddingplanner-andguide.com to discover the personality strengths and weaknesses of you and your spouse.

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|----|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | ___ Adventurous | ___ Adaptable | ___ Animated | ___ Analytical |
| 2 | ___ Persistent | ___ Playful | ___ Persuasive | ___ Peaceful |
| 3 | ___ Submissive | ___ Self-sacrificing | ___ Sociable | ___ Strong-willed |
| 4 | ___ Considerate | ___ Controlled | ___ Competitive | ___ Convincing |
| 5 | ___ Refreshing | ___ Respectful | ___ Reserved | ___ Resourceful |
| 6 | ___ Satisfied | ___ Sensitive | ___ Self-reliant | ___ Spirited |
| 7 | ___ Planner | ___ Patient | ___ Positive | ___ Promoter |
| 8 | ___ Sure | ___ Spontaneous | ___ Scheduled | ___ Shy |
| 9 | ___ Orderly | ___ Obliging | ___ Outspoken | ___ Optimistic |
| 10 | ___ Friendly | ___ Faithful | ___ Funny | ___ Forceful |
| 11 | ___ Daring | ___ Delightful | ___ Diplomatic | ___ Detailed |
| 12 | ___ Cheerful | ___ Consistent | ___ Cultured | ___ Confident |
| 13 | ___ Idealistic | ___ Independent | ___ Inoffensive | ___ Inspiring |
| 14 | ___ Demonstrative | ___ Decisive | ___ Dry Humor | ___ Deep |
| 15 | ___ Mediator | ___ Musical | ___ Mover | ___ Mixes Easily |
| 16 | ___ Thoughtful | ___ Tenacious | ___ Talker | ___ Tolerant |
| 17 | ___ Listener | ___ Loyal | ___ Leader | ___ Lively |
| 18 | ___ Contented | ___ Chief | ___ Chartmaker | ___ Cute |
| 19 | ___ Perfectionist | ___ Pleasant | ___ Productive | ___ Popular |
| 20 | ___ Bouncy | ___ Bold | ___ Behaved | ___ Balanced |
| 21 | ___ Blank | ___ Bashful | ___ Brassy | ___ Bossy |
| 22 | ___ Undisciplined | ___ Unsympathetic | ___ Unenthusiastic | ___ Unforgiving |
| 23 | ___ Reticent | ___ Resentful | ___ Resistant | ___ Repetitious |
| 24 | ___ Fussy | ___ Fearful | ___ Forgetful | ___ Frank |
| 25 | ___ Impatient | ___ Insecure | ___ Indecisive | ___ Interrupts |
| 26 | ___ Unpopular | ___ Uninvolved | ___ Unpredictable | ___ Unaffectionate |
| 27 | ___ Headstrong | ___ Haphazard | ___ Hard to Please | ___ Hesitant |
| 28 | ___ Plain | ___ Pessimistic | ___ Proud | ___ Permissive |
| 29 | ___ Angered Easily | ___ Aimless | ___ Argumentative | ___ Alienated |
| 30 | ___ Naive | ___ Negative Attitude | ___ Nervy | ___ Nonchalant |
| 31 | ___ Worrier | ___ Withdrawn | ___ Workaholic | ___ Wants Credit |
| 32 | ___ Too Sensitive | ___ Tactless | ___ Timid | ___ Talkative |
| 33 | ___ Doubtful | ___ Disorganized | ___ Domineering | ___ Depressed |
| 34 | ___ Inconsistent | ___ Introvert | ___ Intolerant | ___ Indifferent |
| 35 | ___ Messy | ___ Moody | ___ Mumbles | ___ Manipulative |
| 36 | ___ Slow | ___ Stubborn | ___ Show-off | ___ Skeptical |
| 37 | ___ Loner | ___ Lord-over-others | ___ Lazy | ___ Loud |
| 38 | ___ Sluggish | ___ Suspicious | ___ Short-tempered | ___ Scatterbrained |
| 39 | ___ Revengeful | ___ Restless | ___ Reluctant | ___ Rash |
| 40 | ___ Compromising | ___ Critical | ___ Crafty | ___ Changeable |

