

Growing in Love: The Three C's of Marriage Connecting Well

Apostolic Christian Counseling and Family Services
877-370-9988 www.accounseling.org info@accounseling.org



CONNECTING WELL



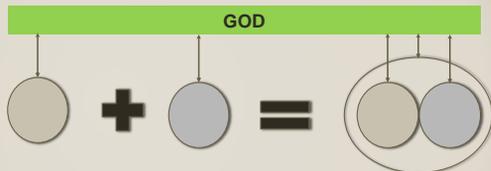
Introduction

“What counts in making a happy marriage is not so much how compatible you are, but how you deal with incompatibility.”
Leo Tolstoy

Definitions and Scope

- Merriam-Webster Definition
 - Connect – “to become joined”
- Implications for connection in marriage
 - Knowing and being known
 - Emotional intimacy – “into-me-see”
 - Temporarily putting aside your own agenda

Uniqueness and Oneness



Overview of Connection Section

1. Scriptural Principles
2. Purposeful Time Management
3. Understanding Attachment Styles
4. Understanding Personality Differences
5. Developing Spiritual Connection
6. Developing Empathy

Scriptural Principles (and Targets)

Romans 12:4-6 "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us..."

- Target - Demonstrate understanding and appreciation of differences to strengthen oneness

Romans 12:10 "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;"

- Target - Increase understanding of preferences of the other

Scriptural Principles Cont'd

1 Peter 3:7-9 "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."

- Target - Increase instances where honor is given to one another
- Target - Increase feelings of compassion to one another
- Target - Decrease number of times we argue in a way where we are trying to repay evil for evil while increasing Christ-energized forgiveness

Scriptural Principles Cont'd

Priority of the marriage relationship above other human relationships

- Only family relationship referred to as a "one flesh" relationship
- Only family relationship that is clearly compared to the relationship between Christ and the church

Ecclesiastes 4:8-9

Remember the Blessing of Companionship in the midst of the busyness

8. "There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.
9. Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.

Ecclesiastes 4:10-12

Remember the Blessing of Companionship in the midst of the busyness

10. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.
11. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?
12. And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

TIME

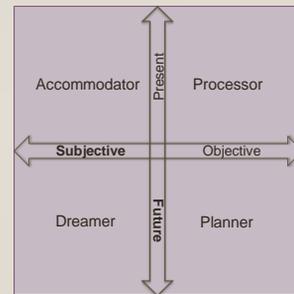


Time

- Some dedicated time together is required in order to increase the sense of connection.
- Many couples have difficulty in blocking out time together to nurture their relationship.
- Two strategies can help you to find the time that you need:
 - Learn to say “No”.
 - Work together on time management by recognizing your Time-Style combinations.

Adapted from Les & Leslie Parrot *Your Time-starved Marriage*

Time Styles



Adapted from Les & Leslie Parrot *Your Time-starved Marriage*

Time Style: Accommodator

- The Accommodator says: “Sure I have the time.”
- **Strengths:**
 - Easygoing
 - Fully present.
- **Challenge:**
 - Setting better boundaries.
- **Under stress becomes:**
 - Disorganized and lacks follow-through.

Adapted from Les & Leslie Parrot *Your Time-starved Marriage*

Time Style: Dreamer

- The Dreamer says: “I’ve got a great idea for us.”
- **Strengths:**
 - Spontaneous
 - Visionary
 - Optimistic
- **Challenge:**
 - Becoming more realistic
- **Under stress becomes:**
 - Immobilized
 - Unreasonable

Adapted from Les & Leslie Parrot *Your Time-starved Marriage*

Time Style: Planner

- The Planner says: “I’ll be with you in just a minute.”
- **Strengths:**
 - Efficient
 - Prepared
 - Takes action
- **Challenge:**
 - Live more fully in the present (not multitasking)
- **Under stress becomes:**
 - Impatient and insensitive

Adapted from Les & Leslie Parrot *Your Time-starved Marriage*

Time Style: Processor

- The Processor says: “I’ll be ready at 9:15.”
- **Strengths:**
 - Punctual
 - Disciplined
 - Paced
- **Challenge:**
 - Relaxing by going with the flow
- **Under stress becomes:**
 - Compulsive
 - Legalistic.

Adapted from Les & Leslie Parrot *Your Time-starved Marriage*

Exercise

- Interview
- Website for assessment is:
 - <http://www.timestarvedmarriage.com/>

Targets for Time Management

1. **“Divert” Daily:** time to discuss what is on your mind, what is happening in your schedule, and how you are doing.
2. **“Withdraw” Weekly:** time to be together, share, prioritize, refocus, and connect.
3. **“Maintain” Monthly:** time alone to enjoy each other’s company (ex. date night, etc.)
Also, try to periodically get away for a weekend.
4. **“Abandon” Annually:** some type of extended getaway alone.

Divert Daily

- Purpose – short time of connection to learn about happenings and how they affected your spouse
- Ideas:
 - Share Highs and Lows
 - Daily Temperature Reading
 - Appreciation - Express appreciation for something your partner has done.
 - New Information - Share new information.
 - Puzzles – Take turns asking each other something you don’t understand but your partner can explain.
 - Complaint with Request – Without being judgmental, mention a behavior that bothers you and state the behavior you are asking for instead.
 - Hopes – Share your hopes from the mundane to the grandiose

Parrott, Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts Workbook

Divert Daily Cont’d

- Tips:
 - Choose the time wisely – Immediately after work might not give time to decompress. Dinner hour can be hectic. Right before bed can stir up too much emotion. Right after dinner works well for many couples.
 - Communicate proactively to the children that you don’t want to be disturbed.
 - Go to another room if possible.
 - Keep it brief. Ten to Twenty minutes is reasonable.

Withdraw Weekly

- Purpose – Get a big picture perspective together/Enjoy some time together
- Ideas:
 - Use as a Working Date so that your fun date night can remain fun
 - Look at plans for the next week or weeks
 - Coordinate schedules
 - Do planning (including date nights/family nights)
 - Combine your conversation with something enjoyable to get away from the usual routine. (i.e. Take a long walk, go to a coffee shop, etc.)

Withdraw Weekly

- Tips
 - Planning and scheduling is not always fun but it is necessary and can avoid un-necessary misunderstandings and uninformed expectations.
 - If you can tie it to something enjoyable, it can be more tolerable. “After we’re done with the working date, we’ll do some fun activity together.”
 - Use this as a time to have difficult conversations that you haven’t had time to have in the usual busyness of the week.

Maintain Monthly

- Purpose – Enjoy tension free time together to create shared experiences/memories
- Ideas:
 - Date Night Cards
 - Each partner individually fills out seven 3 X 5 cards. Each card needs to contain a different date night activity that they would like to try.
 - Come together with your partner to review the cards. Allow each other to rule out some of the activities that either one of you would find very difficult to enjoy.
 - Decide the night of the week and frequency as well as any other details. Once every week or once every two weeks is a good rule of thumb.
 - Several days before the date, one spouse will look through the date night cards and select three that he/she would be willing to do for their next date.
 - The other spouse will choose from the three what he/she would like to do.
 - Go on the date and enjoy one another!
 - Reverse the card selection process for the next scheduled date

Maintain Monthly (Cont'd)

- Tips
 - Guard your date night time. If something does prevent it from happening, reschedule instead of cancelling.
 - Rotate baby sitters with other couples
 - Guard your date night from conflict. Mutually agree that you will not discuss things that bring on negative emotions in either one of you and that you will give each other permission to postpone difficult conversations to another agreed upon time.
 - Be creative and don't spend a lot of money.
 - Use a tool for meaningful conversation starters. Consider the book Love Talk by Les and Leslie Parrott.

Couples exercises

- Couples exercise - come up with 3 date night cards a piece.
- Couples exercise - sample a playful and purposeful conversation starter.

Conversation Starter Samples

- Playful Conversation Starter Examples:
 - If you two could go out to eat with any couple from history, who would you pick? Why?
 - What is your idea of a perfect wedding-anniversary celebration?
- Purposeful Conversation Starter Examples:
 - What are your top 3 highlights as a couple of your last year together? Why?
 - Describe a typical dinner conversation from the home you grew up in. What was the conversation like?

Abandon Annually

- Purpose – Enjoy extended time away from your normal routines to decompress and create shared experiences and memories
- Ideas:
 - A one or two night stay at another location to just decompress and have very few plans
 - An extended stay at an interesting location where you can share a mutual interest
 - A stay-cation where you stay at home and do things in your local area that you seldom take the time to do.

Abandon Annually Cont'd

- Tips:
 - Doesn't have to be expensive.
 - Do some planning together and set expectations together.

UNDERSTANDING ATTACHMENT STYLES

What is Attachment?

Relationship rules based on prior experiences

"...a curiously strict set of relationship rules. These rules sprout from our relationship experiences with parents, caregivers, and those closest to us as we grow, and in their entirety the rules shape how we view ourselves and our own worth and whether or not we see relationships as being safe. ...This style is strongly formed as we're nurtured, or not nurtured, by your caregivers and shaped by our relationships over the course of our lifetimes."

Tim Clinton, Gary Sibcy *Attachments* 2002

Attachment Styles and Beliefs

- Secure
 - "It is relatively easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me."
- Anxious–preoccupied
 - "I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them."

Bartholomew and Horowitz, "Attachment Styles among young adults: a test of a four-category model", J Personal Soc Psychol, 1991; 61 no.2, p226-244

Attachment Styles and Beliefs

- Dismissive–avoidant attachment
 - "I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me."
- Fearful–avoidant attachment
 - "I am somewhat uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I sometimes worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others."

Bartholomew K. Horowitz, "Attachment Styles among young adults: a test of a four-category model", J Personal Soc Psychol, 59, 270-280.

ABC's and Attachment

Activating Event => Belief => Consequences
(feelings that lead to behaviors)

Enhancing Connection by Understanding Attachment

1. Be the first to change
2. Pack away your "suspicious" radar system
3. "I Grace You."
4. Accept offers of connection from your spouse
5. Pray Together

Adapted from Tim Clinton, Gary Sibcy *Attachments* 2002

TEMPERAMENT AND PERSONALITY

Temperament

- Temperament is God-given, enduring, and results from a combination of heredity, neural, and hormonal factors.
- Temperament can be defined as the “*biologically-based individual differences in emotion, motor reactivity, and self-regulation that demonstrate consistency across situations and over time.*”
- These factors then affect how an individual responds to the environment.

Rothbart & Derryberry, *Development of Individual Differences in Temperament* 1981

Some Aspects of Temperament

- The following are commonly identified in childhood that are found to endure into adulthood.
- **Activity level:** The degree of activity a person inherently possesses; how active or passive he or she is.
- **Predictability:** The degree to which someone's lifestyle is characterized by regular routines and functions versus being more irregular and unpredictable.

Chess & Thomas, *Temperament* 1996

Some Aspects of Temperament Cont'd

- **Threshold of responsiveness:** The intensity level of a stimulus required to get a response from someone. Some people are very “touchy” while others require significant “prodding” to get them to respond.
- **Distractibility:** How the person responds to the effects of distractions and interruptions. Some people are highly focused, while others' minds wander easily from topic to topic. Also, some people don't mind interruptions while others are greatly bothered when something or someone disrupts them.

Chess & Thomas, *Temperament* 1996

Some Aspects of Temperament Cont'd

- **Persistence:** The length of time an activity is pursued by an individual; especially, how long a person can continue working on an activity in the face of obstacles.
- **Approach or withdrawal:** The nature of a person's response to new things and experiences in life (e.g., trying new things, meeting people, etc.).
- **Adaptability:** The speed and ease with which a person can “shift-gears” in response to a change in the environment or circumstances.

Chess & Thomas, *Temperament* 1996

Some Aspects of Temperament Cont'd

- **Intensity of reaction:** The amount of energy used in the expression of moods. How intensely someone expresses his emotions.
- **Quality of mood:** Positive mood (pleasant, joyful, friendly) versus negative mood (unpleasant, blue, critical).
- ❖ *Within limits*, temperament can be *moderated* by environmental factors, the responses of others, and personal choices.

Chess & Thomas, *Temperament* 1996

What is Personality?

- “Personality refers to a distinctive set of traits, behavior styles, and patterns that make up our character or individuality. How we perceive the world, our attitudes, thoughts, and feelings are all part of our personality.”
- “Personality is relatively consistent and enduring over time. It is a result of both predispositions that individuals are born with (i.e., temperament) and more flexible characteristics.”

Mental Health America, 2007

Do Personalities Change?

- **Enduring:** Each one of us has personality characteristics that are generally established early in life, are long-lasting, and are difficult to change.
- **Some Flexibility:** Other personality characteristics are shaped by life experiences and may change with time.
- **Wanting to “Fix:”** It is not unusual to want to change some aspects of another person’s personality or to think that it is in your power to do so.

Do Personalities Change? Cont’d

- **Acceptance vs. Change:** However, generally speaking, personality is not something that you can change about another person. Rather, it is something you learn to live with and accept.
- **Acceptance vs. Rejection:** Because each one’s personality is such a fundamental aspect of the self, striving to change someone’s personality or requesting that type of change can be interpreted as rejection.

Do Personalities Change? Cont’d

- **God’s Vessel:** Each person’s unique personality is an avenue through which God demonstrates His power and ability to bring glory to Himself.
- **Submission to God:** Each one of us will need to grow in our ability to relate or respond to others in a more Christ-like manner.

Examples of Acceptance and Change

- **Intentional Shifting is Possible:**
 - Example: If you are someone who normally keeps your thoughts and feelings to yourself, then you may need to work on growing in your ability to share your thoughts and feelings with your spouse.
- **Trying to Force Change Doesn’t Work:**
 - Example: Trying to force an introvert to become an extrovert is not a realistic expectation.

PERSONALITY PROFILES

Using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator

Personality in Four Dimensions

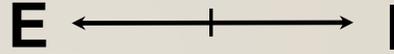
- How we interact with the world and where we direct our energy (E-I)
- The kind of information we naturally notice (S-N)
- How we make decisions (T-F)
- Whether we prefer to live in a more structured way or a more spontaneous way (J-P)

• **Let's Look for Examples of People we Know!!**



E-I Preferences: Source of Energy

Extraversion Interest Orientation Introversion



Outer world:

"Like to focus on the outer world of people and activity. They direct their energy and attention outward and receive energy from interacting with people and from taking action."

Inner world:

"Like to focus on their own inner world of ideas and experiences. They direct their energy and attention inward and receive energy from reflecting on their thoughts, memories, and feelings."

Briggs-Myers, 1998

Extraverts are More Likely to:

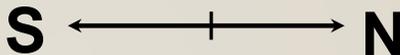
- Prefer action over reflection
- Talk things over in order to understand them
- Prefer spoken communication
- Share their thoughts freely
- Act and respond quickly
- Extend themselves into the environment
- Enjoy working in groups
- Put themselves in the foreground

Introverts are More Likely to:

- Prefer reflection over action
- Think things through in order to understand them
- Prefer written communication
- Guard their thoughts until they are (almost) perfect
- Consider and think deeply
- Defend themselves against external demands and intrusions
- Enjoy working alone or with one or two others
- Stay in the background

S-N Preferences: Taking in Information

Sensing Perception iNtuition



Concrete Data:

"Like to take in information that is real and tangible—what is actually happening. They are observant about the specifics of what is going on around them and are especially attuned to practical realities."

Big Picture:

"Like to take in information by seeing the big picture, focusing on the relationships and connections between facts. They want to grasp patterns and are especially attuned to seeing new possibilities."

Briggs-Myers, 1998

Sensing Types are More Likely to:

- Like hearing facts and details first
- Prefer the tried and true
- Emphasize the pragmatic
- Desire predictability
- See problems as needing specific solutions based on past experience
- Focus on the practical applications of a situation
- Want to know *what is*
- Value realism

iNtuitive Types are More Likely to:

- Like hearing general concepts first
- Prefer the new and untried
- Emphasize the theoretical
- Desire change
- See problems as opportunities to innovate based on inspiration
- Focus on the future possibilities of a situation
- Want to know *what could be*
- Value imagination

T–F Preferences: Decision Making

Thinking ← Priorities when Coming to a Conclusion → Feeling

T

F

Logic:

"Like to look at the logical consequences of a choice or action. They want to mentally remove themselves from the situation to examine the pros and cons objectively. They are energized by critiquing and analyzing to identify what's wrong with something so they can solve the problem. Their goal is to find a standard or principle that will apply in similar situations."

Relationships:

"Like to consider what is important to them and to others involved. They mentally place themselves into the situation to identify with everyone so they can make a decision based on their values about honoring people. They are energized by appreciating and supporting others and look for qualities to praise. Their goal is to create harmony and treat each person as a unique individual."

Briggs-Myers, 1998

Thinking Types are More Likely to:

- Seek logical clarity
- Question first
- Have an interest in data
- Know when logic is required
- Prefer things to be objective
- Remain detached when making a decision, weighing the pros and cons
- Search for the flaws in an argument
- Strive to be fair

Feeling Types are More Likely to:

- Seek emotional clarity
- Accept first
- Have an interest in people
- Know when support is required
- Prefer things to be personal
- Remain personally involved when making a decision, weighing values
- Search for points of agreement in an argument
- Strive to be compassionate

J–P Preferences: Lifestyle

Judgment ← Need for Order → Perception

J

P

Clear Order:

"Like to live in a planned, orderly way, seeking to regulate and manage their lives. They want to make decisions, come to closure, and move on. Their lives tend to be structured and organized, and they like to have things settled. Sticking to a plan and schedule is very important to them, and they are energized by getting things done."

Flexibility:

"Like to live in a flexible, spontaneous way, seeking to experience and understand life, rather than control it. Detailed plans and final decisions feel confining to them; they prefer to stay open to new information and last-minute options. They are energized by their resourcefulness in adapting to the demands of the moment."

Briggs-Myers, 1998

Judging Types are More Likely to:

- Want things to be settled and structured
- Finish tasks *before* the deadline
- Like goals and results
- Try to limit surprises
- Draw conclusions
- Quickly commit to plans and decisions
- See routines as effective
- Prefer to trust the plan

Perceiving Types are More Likely to:

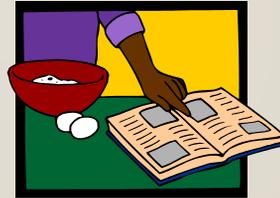
- Want things to be flexible and open
- Finish tasks *at* the deadline
- Like to see what turns up
- Enjoy surprises
- Stay tentative
- Reserve the right to change plans or decisions
- See routines as limiting
- Prefer to trust the process

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| Extraversion E | V | M | S | M | V | I | Introversion |
| | E | O | L | O | E | | |
| Sensing S | R | D | I | D | R | N | Intuition |
| | Y | E | G | E | C | | |
| Thinking T | C | A | H | H | C | F | Feeling |
| | L | R | T | T | L | | |
| Judging J | E | A | | E | A | P | Perceiving |
| | A | T | | R | R | | |

Distribution of Preferences in the U.S. National Representative Sample

| Preference | Percentage | Preference | Percentage |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| E | 49% | I | 51% |
| S | 73% | N | 27% |
| T Overall | 40% | F Overall | 60% |
| Males | 56.5% | Males | 43.5% |
| Females | 24.5% | Females | 75.5% |
| J | 54% | P | 46% |

SPIRITUAL CONNECTION



Spiritual Connection

- How? What? When? Why? Where?
- **The Spiritual Connection Recipe:** There is room for flexibility and customization in the way you combine the ingredients to connect with God in a meaningful way that is effective in the unique marriage God has given you.
- The goal for each couple is to find what works for them!!

Potential Obstacles to Spiritual Connection

- Distorted images of God
- Time management & Prioritization
- Perfectionism – All or nothing thinking that keeps you from starting somewhere
- Lack of modeling
- Husband's feelings of inadequacy
- Procrastination
- Comparison
- Difficulty with communication on spiritual topics
- Difficulties with differing individual spiritual maturity levels

Spiritual Connection Ingredients

- **The Two Great Commandments:** Most of us would agree that the following ingredients are important for successful spiritual connection in our marriages.
 - Love the Lord God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength
 - Reading the Word
 - Praying together
 - Love your neighbor as yourself
 - Experiencing fellowship in the church
 - Serving others together

Research Study on Marriage and Prayer

These statistics show the difference between people who "pray a lot" with their spouses and those that pray "sometimes."

- 78% vs. 60% say "their marriage is happy."
- 91% vs. 74% say "My spouse is my best friend."
- 75% vs. 64% say they agree on how children should be raised.
- 69% vs. 58% say agreement on finances is "very good."
- 72% vs. 52% say "quantity and quality of love-making is very good."

Thought Starters: Reading God's Word

- Read together at bed time.
- Do a Bible study together regularly (daily, weekly).
- Go through a devotional book (your elder may have suggestions).
- Pick a topic to study separately, study it, and then come together to discuss what you learned.
- Read with your spouse and your family after meals.
- Memorize Scripture verses together.

Thought Starters: Praying Together

- Pray aloud together at bed time.
- Together, set a day of the week to pray for certain topics.
- Share prayer requests with each other about what things are on your heart or issues you are facing in the upcoming week.
- Agree to pray for some of the same things in your private prayer.
- Schedule family prayer time (daily, weekly, monthly).

Thought Starters: Fellowship

- Share what you learned from a sermon or lesson.
- Initiate the forming of a potluck group.
- Participate in a rotating potluck.
- Make a list of people in your church that you don't know well and then, one-by-one (or couple by couple) invite them over to get to know them better.
- Commit to visiting other Apostolic Christian churches.
- Establish specific personal or couple friendships for sharing and accountability.

Thought Starters: Serving

- Bring meals to people who are going through a stressful time.
- Serve on a committee at church together.
- Identify and then use your unique gifts and skills to help others.
- Tithe regularly and commit together to support the Lord's work.
- Visit the elderly, widows/widowers, orphans, help single parents.

DEVELOPING EMPATHY (TRADING PLACES)

FROM:
Les & Leslie Parrot
Trading Places 2008

Empathy

- Empathy definition
 - "The identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings, and motives."
- Sympathy vs. Empathy?
- Empathy is risky. It will change you.

Les & Leslie Parrot Trading Places 2008

Caring

"Ask people what matter's most in marriage and care won't make the list. But when you put this quality on a list of traits and ask people to rate its importance to marriage, you'll see it quickly rise.

Why? Because without care, marriage is impossible. Three little words – "I don't care" – are like a deadly bullet in the heart of marriage."

Potential Benefits of Empathizing

- Reduce critical comments
- Eliminate nagging
- Short-circuit conflict
- Become better friends
- Build deeper commitment
- Give and get grace more freely
- Live longer and healthier lives
- Help each other realize your dreams.

Developing Empathy

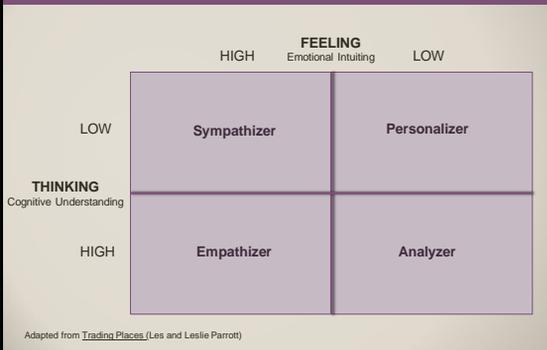
A definition of pain widely employed in nursing, emphasizing its subjective nature and the importance of believing patient reports, was introduced by Margo McCaffery in 1968:

"Pain is whatever the experiencing person says it is, existing whenever he says it does".

Two Primary Components of Empathy

- Cognitive understanding – Head
- Emotional Intuiting - Heart

The Four Social Styles



The Four Social Styles Cont'd

- The Sympathizer
 - More feeling than thinking
 - May tend to react too quickly based on feelings
 - Project's one's own experience on to the other in identifying with feelings

The Four Social Styles Cont'd

- The Personalizer
 - Short on both feeling and thinking
 - Struggles with fear
 - Tends to suffer from people rather than with people

Mark Twain once said:
 "If a cat sits on a hot stove, that cat will never sit on a hot stove again."
 He continued, "That cat will never sit on a cold stove either."

The Four Social Styles Cont'd

- The Analyzer
 - Presumes to "know" what's going on
 - "Psychologizes" instead of showing understanding
 - Dismisses the spouse's problems by analyzing its supposed causes and cures

The Four Social Styles Cont'd

- The Empathizer
 - Puts yourself in the other's shoes with both your head and your heart
 - Requires deep emotional "tuning in" that is informed by the ability to think through what the other person is experiencing without "knowing all the answers"
 - Requires the head and heart to moderate each other.

Couples Exercise

- Share with your spouse:
 - Among the choices of Sympathizer, Personalizer, and Analyzer, which do you feel that most often describes your own social style.
 - What are some examples of where you notice those characteristics coming out in yourself?
- There may be some good follow-up opportunities to this discussion.

The Path to Greater Empathy

1. Set aside your own agenda (Temporarily)
2. Turn on Your Emotional Radar
3. Demonstrate Your Care and Concern

#1 : I Notice You

1. Know your own agenda
 - Am I honest with myself about my wants/desires?
2. Practice Priming
 - Am I proactively giving a moment's thought to my spouse and what's going on with them before connecting?
3. Offer an "Agendaless" presence
 - Am I emptied of my compulsive need to change my spouse's behavior?
4. Move from "It" to "You"
 - Am I tuning in to a person and inviting expression of opinions/judgments or am I treating my spouse as a means to an end?
5. Listen with the Third ear
 - Am I caring enough to read between the lines?

#2: I Feel With You

- How is your emotional radar? (Have you ever been mushroom hunting?)
- 90% of emotional communication is non-verbal.
- We are hard-wired for empathy. In 1992 researchers discovered "mirror neurons" that light up in interpersonal exchanges. They light up whenever someone mimics the action of another or has the impulse to do so. We are hard-wired for empathy.
- If we are hard-wired for empathy, why doesn't it happen more often?
- Lack of Attention

#2: I Feel With You Cont'd

- Tips for Sympathizers
 - Remember: "What is good for me is not necessarily good for you."
 - Platinum Rule
 - Don't wear yourself out from "assumed" needs
- Tips for Personalizers
 - Admit your deficit
 - Understand and beware of your defenses
 - Plug into open and caring relationships with healthy folks (or a professional counselor ☺)
 - Find compassionate but honest feedback
 - Risk being vulnerable
- Tips for Analyzers
 - Try smarter with emotional connection and not harder with logic

#3: I Act to Help You

- "To feel with, stirs us to act for."
- Margaret Mead, the famous anthropologist, was once asked by a student what artifact she looked for as evidence of one of the first signs of civilization. What do you think it was?
 - A healed femur
- There were no healed femurs in a civilization where the law of the jungle and survival of the fittest reigned. A healed femur meant that someone had to do the injured person's hunting and gathering until the leg healed. This was evidence of compassion.

REVIEW

Growing in Love: The Three C's of Marriage

- Leaving and **C**leaving
- Transforming **C**onflict into Closeness
- **C**onnecting Well

APPENDIX A

Distinguishing Between Healthy and Unhealthy Family Relationships

Types of Dysfunctional Families

1. Isolated Islands
 - Family members share an address, but that's about all.
2. Generational Splits
 - Parents not connected to their children. The parents' parents (grandparents) may not be connected to their children. The children may connect to their grandparents. Common for this pattern to skip generations.
3. Gender Splits
 - The men in the family connect with the men and the women in the family connect with the other women; very little cross gender emotional connection.

From Stoop and Masteller

Types of Dysfunctional Families Cont'd

4. Fused Pair
 - Two people in a family become so bonded (may revolve around a problem) that they exclude others; the family may continue to revolve around the fused individuals.
5. Queen of the Hill/King of the Hill
 - When the family is dominated by one person (mother or father)
6. Quiet Dictator
 - When one family member quietly controls the family with guilt or manipulation.
7. Scapegoat
 - The family has identified one family member who is considered to be "the problem" and who receives the blame for the family's issues.

From Stoop and Masteller

Characteristics of a Healthy Family

1. It can adapt to change.
2. Problems are handled on a family basis, not just an individual basis.
3. There are solid cross-generational connections.
4. Clear boundaries are maintained between individuals.
5. People deal with each other directly.
6. Thoughts and feelings of others are accepted.
7. Differences are accepted and encouraged.
8. Individuals know what they can give to, and receive from, others.
9. Maintaining a positive emotional climate is a high priority.
10. Each family member values the family as "a good place to live."
11. Each learns from the others and encourages feedback.
12. Individuals are allowed to experience their own emptiness.

From Stoop and Masteller

Unhealthy Family Rules (may be unspoken)

- We don't talk about certain topics.
- Don't feel or deny what you are feeling.
- Keep family secrets no matter what.
- We deny what is going on.
- Don't show weakness.
- Don't ask for help.
- You must handle things on your own.
- You can't trust anyone or you can't rely on anyone.
- You must feel ashamed of your past.
- If people really knew you, they would reject you.

Adapted from Stoop and Masteller

Healthy Family Rules

- At the appropriate time, we discuss whatever topics need to be addressed.
- We encourage family members to share what they are feeling; their feelings are acknowledged.
- Each member of the family is valued and honored.
- We will face the reality of what we are dealing with, even when it is difficult to do.
- We respect each family member's privacy and space.
- We willingly seek counsel from outside the family.
- Unhealthy / unholy behavior will be directly challenged.