

Understanding Your Partner

I. Introduction

- A. Sources of conflict/misunderstanding:
 - 1. Male/Female differences (Gen 1:27), Fix problem (Analyze), empathize.
 - 2. Different personalities: Disc, direct, confrontational, indirect, compromising
 - 3. Different families of origin/cultures: rigid, enmeshed, chaotic, disconnected
 - 4. Different personal histories: Pain, rejection, stability, godly, ungodly
 - 5. Different traditions/family rules: Birthday celebrations, Saturday workday
- B. Love, trust, respect and understanding
- C. Understanding takes the longest
 - 1. I Peter 3:7 Husbands live with your wives in an understanding way
 - 2. Proverbs 4:7 Whatever else you get, get understanding
 - 3. Proverbs 16:22 Understanding is a fountain of life to those who have it...
 - 4. A fool finds no pleasure in understanding
 - 5. Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him...Spirit of understanding
- D. I Corinthians 12:12-26 Diversity-unity
- E. II Corinthians 10:12 Measuring ourselves by ourselves (Different is not wrong)

II. Areas of Diversity

- A. Approach and response to life
 - 1. Emotional feeler, speaks what they feel, hearing-an emotional experience
 - 2. Factual thinker, says what they think, hears only information
- B. Decision making process
 - 1. Intuitive, subjective, holistic, circular reasoning
 - 2. Logical, objective, focused, linear reasoning

Examples:

 - a. Discerning issues-children, Zion Harbor, sees beyond the obvious
 - b. Rearranging furniture
- C. Ability and ease to personalize issues
 - 1. Takes things personal
 - Attracts guilt, accepts blame (What have I done?)
 - 2. Impersonal, projects blame, resentful (Why did you do it?)
 - 3. Use of humor

Examples:

 - a. Response to conviction
 - b. Fixing faucet at Daystar
- D. Interest in and awareness of details
 - 1. Interested, enjoys, appreciation for specifics
 - 2. Disinterested, bored, irritated by, thinks in generalities

Examples:

 - a. How was your day? Fine! At 6:05 the baby woke up.
 - b. Report about a retreat
 - c. Packing for a trip
- E. Processing issues and resolving hurts
 - 1. Computer, tape recorder, clear, specific recall (25 years ago)

- 2. File cabinet, limited recall (Quickly forgets, moves to the next issue)
- F. The need for roots and stability
 - 1. Nesting instinct, security, immediate focus
 - 2. Nomadic, adventuresome, visionary, external perspective
 - Examples: Why fix it? It's going up in smoke. 4,000 Omega Zones
 - a. Leaky faucet, unfinished projects, image to public-I'm messy
 - b. Bringing more of home along
- G. Mood fluctuation
 - 1. Always changing, coming into or going out of something.
 - 2. Steady, level, even, undetectable movement
 - a. I love you-I hate you! Which one?
 - b. Do you feel? Do you think?
 - c. Lack of emotional support-Need reassurance
 - d. Told you 25 years ago I love you-no change
- H. Communication
 - 1. Open, responsive, identifies and shares feelings and attitudes
 - Vi-clear connection with feelings
 - 2. Closed, guarded, difficulty identifying and sharing feelings, aloof, matter of fact, shares about things, events, activities, impersonal
 - Wish List-Assertive/Active Listening. (Dana and Tracy, Practical/Relational)
- I. Ease of involvement
 - 1. Quickly, easily, impulsively. (Vi's pressure to purchase a car) Decisive
 - 2. Cautious, evaluates, stands back, thoughtful (Rabbits) Indecisive
- J. Response to communication
 - 1. Needs to have a response. (Will follow you to the next room)
 - 2. Needs a listening ear
 - Examples:
 - a. "Blink your eyes"
 - b. "I stopped talking 5 minutes ago"
 - c. Full attention, acknowledge understanding, active listening
- K. Sexual responses
 - 1. Sensitive to overall closeness and harmony/Anytime, anywhere
 - Responds to setting, tenderness, touch and voice
 - 2. Spontaneous, visual, (Slow verses rapid build up)
 - 3. Microwave ovens and Crock pots
 - 4. Easily distracted, mood fluctuations. Caterpillar
- L. Time Management
 - 1. Punctual, orderly, predictable verses spontaneous, flexible, unpredictable (Stop watch/calendar)
 - 2. I Corinthians 14:40-Properly and in order; John 3:8 Wind blows where it wills...do not know
- M. Idealism
 - 1. Romantic, idealistic, fantasy, extravagant
 - 2. Practical, pragmatic, cost effective, conservative
 - Examples:
 - a. Quaint restaurant, dark, small portions, expensive

- b. Flowers, new iron
- c. Phone calls, weekend away (Calling Vi from Switzerland)
- d. Walk along the beach-fishing pole

N. Shopping

- 1. Recreation, outing from the house, ideas, casual, unhurried, enjoyable
- 2. Unpleasant, hurried, specific, focused, organized,
- 3. Shopiiiiing vrs Hunting, “Oh! What’s This?” We are on a mission!

O. Goals

- 1. Understand each other-not to agree or to change
- 2. Accept one another-unconditionally. Different not wrong.
- 3. Receive each other-As God’s gift. Compliment.
- 4. Recommit to one another-Covenant loyalty
- 5. Celebrate your differences. The joy of marriage. Wonderfully made.
- 6. Compliment and balance one another (Become a team)

P. Response

- 1. You are God’s gift to me!
- 2. We are wonderfully different from each other!
- 3. We compliment each other and make a great team!
- 4. Couple Interaction Project.

Couple Interaction Project: “Understanding Your Partner”.

1. Review the areas of diversity and rate their level of significance in your relationship.

Area	Insignificant	Significant	Highly Significant
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- A. Approach
- B. Decision Making
- C. Personalizing Issues
- D. Details
- E. Past Issues
- F. Roots and Stability
- G. Mood Fluctuation
- H. Communication
- I. Involvement
- J. Response
- K. Sexual Responses
- L. Time Management
- M. Idealism
- N. Shopping

2. Discuss how misunderstandings have developed in the past because of these differences.
3. Discuss how these differences can be viewed as strengths in your relationship.
4. Verbalize your acceptance of one another and commit yourselves to celebrating your differences.