



Relationships

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Two people trying to work together form a relationship; it might be loose and casual or it could become tighter. As a relationship forms solidly, it also becomes more pleasurable; yet so often that closer proximity seems to create its own problems. As a person heavily involved in managing business relationships, and the four personality traits, “PAVF”, I was recently asked to offer my thoughts on the most extreme relationship of all, the intimate one. Here is an objective take, hopefully, on a very subjective topic.

- If two people have similar PAVF's the relationship will be a little easier – but that alone is not the answer.
- Irrespective of the PAVFs, the relationship will work if each person accepts the other's PAVF profile; that is the person ceases to be judgmental and makes no attempt to change the other. Many people continually hope that their partner will 'reform', or that they can change the mate – a big mistake – for people, generally, don't change.
- Women must have their primordial need for security satisfied by the man: security of the heart, and material security (and physical security – that is, for example, a taller, more robust man is more attractive to a woman than a short, skinny man, all things being equal).
- Men must have their primordial need for feminineness (call it beauty if you want) satisfied by the woman (and everyone's taste is different). Feminineness could appear as motherliness, a trait some men seek when falling for a woman – or petite-ness or large breasts.
- Narcissism or self-centeredness will destroy any relationship, because the relationship is about two people, not one.
- With 700 trillion synapse connections in each brain's computer, a couple may have hundreds of things similar, but they will have millions of things different. They must accept these differences as normal. And if they are lucky and both open to variety, these differences will enhance their relationship.
- On a more cynical side, I opine that each person enters a relationship with one very disturbing feature (to the partner). The marriage survives if the other partner is willing to live with that disturbing feature. (For example, my friend had a very lazy husband which she complained about to me unendingly, but she was willing to put up with it, so the marriage endured.) This brings up the point that, before entering a relationship, one has to be very clear of one's top values in life. If those top priorities are respected, one can make compromises on other fronts.
- Age difference is not chronological; it is about attitude and physical health. For



example a female friend at 49 years of age is not adventurous or curious and has terrible osteoporosis. Her husband, at 65, is adventurous, highly curious and active in athletics. He is younger than she is in my estimation, and will probably outlive her. (This is reinforced by the maxim that most critical male illnesses will tend to show by age 50 and will by-pass him as he ages – even cancer, if it happens, will be at a much slower, and thus more fixable, pace. Women, above the age of 60 are prone to a higher rate of heart attacks than men.)

- The inability to communicate will destroy a relationship because all systems, animal or mechanical, need feedback to take corrective action and move forward positively. Communications is the number one form of feedback. The day we learn to communicate on a personal level in a manner that is respectful, loving and edifying we will have less need for marriage counselors.
- In order to have a healthy and long-lasting relationship, both parties have to make a commitment to look after the other's heart. Regardless of material comfort, status, physical attraction – if that element isn't there the relationship will never take itself to the highest plane: the surrender of total trust – i.e. love.

When all is said and done, the mystery regarding finding the right intimate relationship hinges on trying to predict who the new friend is and how well that person will conform to (or understand or believe or buy into) some of the premises above. That becomes the real challenge, because during that challenge we must fight the tendency of emotions to trump logic. That is, as we seek the right characteristics in the new friend, the love emotions lead us to rationalize that the potential partner passes all the criteria, when often they don't.

Let us now focus directly on PAVF:

P: If you are a P, *Producer*, you will want to run the show and probably pair well with someone willing to give in to your clear direction; P personality also means that you would continually seek to have time to yourself and be independent.

A: A, *Analyzer*, is a person who offers and craves stability, predictability and rationality. However the A individual might resist change and not be curious about new directions. Since A abhors risk, the A will have considerable difficulty appreciating a V partner's need to take chances.

V: Being a V, *Visionary*, you would be very flexible and adaptive; but on the negative side, you being very optimistic about the future relationship – might tend to be less discerning about the new person than you otherwise should be. Once sensing difficulties in the relationship, the V, who always seeks improvements, is more likely to become dissatisfied with things not being the way their vision says they should be and seek a change in the relationship.

F: The F, *Friend* while warm and agreeable, often is a person who might come across as very clingy to a P partner (who seeks independence). The F always wants or expects to do things together as a couple. The F would find the A partner to be cold, the V partner to be entertaining and the P partner, frightening.

Finally, despite the planning information for mates shared above, remember the maxim: "No plan survives contact with the enemy."

Good luck

Bill Caswell