

INFORMATION SHEET to accompany the film 'Talking about Love' **with Psychologists Meredith Fuller & Brian Walsh © meredithfuller.com.au kailashstudios.com**

We talk to people aged from 20 to 70 about love as lived experience; in interview clips and in relation to overviews of psychological research and theories. We explore 3 main areas:

- a. What does love mean to you?
- b. What has been the influence of your family of origin and what do you seek in a partner?
- c. 'Love Assist – Shared Wisdom' for meeting; re-partnering; seeking support for emergent problems

Ideally, research suggests that consummate love has PASSION, INTIMACY, and COMMITMENT; but it isn't possible to retain all three all of the time – while maintaining intimacy and commitment will provide a meaningful relationship, passion may go through different levels and stages of expression over time. Without intimacy and commitment, passion is lust or infatuation that fades quickly or after approx. 2.5 years.

Some Theories

Freud thought that we're drawn to our 'first bond' i.e. to someone who resembles our primary caregiver; the first person we fall in love with. We're unconsciously first drawn to a love attraction in terms of family of origin dynamics eg. that familiar feeling, similar hair and eye colouring or body type, similar interests/values/character. So, research suggests that we're drawn to people who remind us of a parent (our first bonding experience) and in terms of personality type or temperament, physical features, or attitudes and behaviour. It also serves to explain a repetition compulsion.

Jung thought that we are attracted to our shadow – we are not seeking similarity in our mates, but complementarity or contrapletion (completion of ourselves by our opposites). Some of us are drawn to someone '**nothing like family**' and in contrast to ourselves. For example, MBTI Type theory and development where opposites attract.

Personality Type & Temperament

'What does your family of origin stand for and did it suit your personality/wants/needs?'

Of these options, which **predominantly** describes the family you grew up in? Given the temperament percentages in our Australian population, it is more likely that most families are predominantly numbers 1. or 2. (Of course, any or all temperaments can be calm or chaotic, functional or dysfunctional.)

Looking at Temperament theory which best describes the **predominant** environment at home?

1. SJ sensing judging - **TRADITIONAL** reliability, routine, respecting society's tradition, responsibility, structure, community, duty, **practical** 'SKELETAL'
2. SP sensing perceiving- **SPORTY ON-THE-MOVE** action, doing, tinkering, excitement, body, spontaneity, freedom **funloving** 'BODY'
3. NT intuitive thinking – **RATIONAL LOGICAL** sharing ideas, problem solving, debate, intellectual argument, **mind**, 'HEAD'
4. NF intuitive feeling – **EMOTIONAL MEANINGFUL** deep relationship, heart, artistic | creative | unique | special connection, intense values like kindness, **self expressive sensitive** 'HEART'
5. DYSFUNCTIONAL – chaotic, instability, poor or no communication, lack of trust or safety, physical emotional absence, betrayal, financial strain, addictions, abuse, violence

Did this home environment suit your personality/wants/needs?

What do you predominantly seek or need in a partner?

Temperament theory identifies our core driver or desire, and we usually want a partner who is similar (or complementary) to ourselves. You may have a **predominant** preference for:

NFs – a deep and meaningful bonding, enjoying abstract communication: SOULMATE
(eg. Meredith & Brian the filmmakers, Jackie, Sophie)

NTs – a worthy partner for intellectual pursuits: MINDMATE
(eg. Kate & Matt, Gabe)

SPs – entertainment, movement, freedom: PLAYMATE
(eg. James)

SJs – social participation, security, safety: HELPMATE
(eg. Tom & Catherine)

Similar temperaments merge most easily, seeking the same objective. Complementary pairings indicate that NFs & SJs (SOULMATE & HELPMATE) or NTs and SPs (MINDMATE AND PLAYMATE) are more likely to communicate more easily than opposites (that requires more work but can yield much stimulation and stretch).

How did you become a couple? Our personal research has indicated 4 main scenarios, and while most people once met via Propinquity, these days it's via Internet Dating. On-line, you are unlikely to meet your partner after only meeting two or three people; statistics indicate you may need to go on 50 dates to meet your partner. Due diligence about sites, patience and perseverance is advised.

*Propinquity?

Close proximity. Who you regularly bump up against in your everyday life via school, university, work, neighbours, church, friends
Clip: Davida & James

*Arranged marriage?

Relatives or a professional decide on a match
Clip: Panayiota

*You meet The ONE – inexplicable fate, fairytale 'out of the blue across a crowded room'

'Romantic', unexpected, exotic, worldwide

*A conscious search on-line

Internet dating, seeking people at a similar level of emotional maturity with relevant goals, interests, backgrounds, attitudes, honesty/transparency
Clip: Cathy and Tom

What did you learn about Love in your family of origin?

Remember that our parents or caregivers usually try to do the best they can (they don't try to do their second-best) Sole parent families or extended (multi generational), or blended families are common; nuclear families less so.

How was love demonstrated in your family?

What behaviours did you witness between family members that reflected love?

What would you like for the family you create? How might you go about creating it?

clips

'LOVE ASSIST – Shared Wisdom'

Being in a relationship isn't always easy: the greater self-awareness and self-love, and the more tools or resources, the better your relationship. Self-reflection, self-responsibility, therapy and counselling, reading/studying, and support from others enables you to recognise patterns, improve interpersonal communication skills, and become more present in your relationships.

When we join together it is helpful to be aware of what your family of origin stood for; without this self insight we're attempting to journey forward into unexplored territory (living together, being married etc.) whilst simultaneously also slipping back into our forgotten heartland of our family of origin issues. What was swallowed whole in early childhood is regurgitated 25 years later with your partner; you cough up the undigested bundle of actions and feelings. Our goal is to create our own idiosyncratic partnership together; not what our families or society expect of us. With one in two marriages ending in divorce it is likely that you may re-partner, and you may be required to negotiate a blended or stepfamily, or a long distance or a 'live apart together' home arrangement. Individual or couples counselling, or family therapy can enhance your skills, empathy, and understanding. Seek early support.