

## SCOPE PERSONALITY PROFILE

### PERSONALITY DEFINED

- Personality can be thought of as the characteristics of a person that lead to consistent patterns of feeling, thinking and behaving (Pervin and John, 2001). This definition, while simple, generally provides a good framework from which to understand personality.
- Counselors who adequately understand personality are better able to predict how certain individuals will typically respond to others, to conflict and to life in general. Different views of personality allow researchers and counselors to funnel large amounts of information about an individual into smaller, more digestible terminology that offer useful descriptions of behavior and functioning.
- An important aspect of personality is that it tends to be relatively stable over time. A common misperception is you can change personality traits if you don't like them. While one might achieve slight adjustments in personality over time, personality traits are largely stable throughout life.
- For couples, this means a person should not try or expect his/her partner to change their personality traits. Relationship skills can be learned and improved. An individual can learn to communicate or manage finances more effectively. But an extrovert should not be expected to somehow become an introvert. Couples who set out to change one another's personality will embark on a journey of frustration.
- No matter how much a couple has in common, it is impossible two individuals would think, feel, and behave in exactly the same ways. Not only are there gender and background differences, but every personality is unique. Exploring personality similarities and differences can be a fascinating and fun process. There are no "right" or "wrong" combination of personality traits for a successful relationship, but some couples face more challenges as they have very different preferences in their approach to life.

### SCOPE & THE FIVE FACTOR MODEL

The Customized Version of PREPARE/ENRICH includes a personality section based on a simplified expression of the Five Factor Model of Personality, considered the most robust and commonly referenced personality assessment framework in current psychological literature (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1990; Widiger & Trull, 2007).

The "Big Five" refers to the five most documented aspects of personality functioning and commonly remembered using the acronym OCEAN. Unlike other personality approaches, which begin with a theoretical model of how personality is organized and then construct a matching assessment, the Big

Five approach began with no theory in mind. Instead, researchers conducted statistical analysis of every adjective in the English language to see what patterns or “factors” emerged. The resulting five factors have now been replicated in many other languages and cultures.

The SCOPE acronym is used in PREPARE/ENRICH instead of the Big Five OCEAN acronym since the names of the scales were changed to make the language more accessible and memorable. The SCOPE categories are positive and easy to remember: Non-clinical language was purposefully used in naming each category to make the scale more understandable to a general population. Clinicians and academicians can rest assured the SCOPE is based on a wealth of personality research done on the Big Five model.

One aspect of the SCOPE Personality scales that is unique is the possibility for a person to score high on all five scales or low on all five scales. This demonstrates the scales are empirically and practically independent of each other.

### *Advantages of the SCOPE Personality Scales*

- SCOPE is built on years of empirical research
- The acronym SCOPE is easily remembered by counselors and couples alike
- The intentional usage of non-clinical language makes the subscales easily understood
- The scales are geared in a positive direction, allowing couples and facilitators to focus on strengths instead of weaknesses
- The subscales are easily explained to and understood by couples with no previous exposure to personality assessment
- The SCOPE scales correspond closely with the Big Five Model, so researchers and counselors familiar with this terminology can easily switch between models
- SCOPE allows easy comparison between various personality models

Table 1 provides a more detailed operational definition of each of the five scales in SCOPE. For each scale, there is an interpretation for a high and low score on that scale. For example, on the Social scale, a high score indicates an extrovert and a low score indicates an introvert. Some of the primary descriptors for persons scoring high on these scales are also provided.

**Table 1: High Scores Interpretations of SCOPE Scales**

<b>Social</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Organized</b>	<b>Pleasing</b>	<b>Emotionally Steady</b>
<i>Extraverted vs. Introverted</i>	<i>Open to Change vs. Conventional</i>	<i>Conscientiousness vs. Less Organized</i>	<i>Agreeable vs. Forceful</i>	<i>Calm vs. Reactive</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skilled in handling social situations</li> <li>• The life of the party</li> <li>• Comfortable around people</li> <li>• Makes friends easily</li> <li>• Often on the go</li> <li>• Loves large parties</li> <li>• Doesn't mind being center of attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prefers variety to routine</li> <li>• Like to begin new things</li> <li>• Enjoys visiting new places</li> <li>• Values flexibility</li> <li>• Enjoys thinking of new ways to do things</li> <li>• Comfortable with change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always prepared</li> <li>• Makes plans and sticks with them</li> <li>• Carries out plans</li> <li>• Seldom wastes time</li> <li>• Gets chores and tasks done right away</li> <li>• Likes order</li> <li>• Tries to follow the rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respects others</li> <li>• Doesn't like to be pushy</li> <li>• Believes in the good intentions of others</li> <li>• Accepts people as they are</li> <li>• Values cooperation over competition</li> <li>• Loves to help others</li> <li>• Has a good word for everyone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not easily bothered by things</li> <li>• Seldom gets mad</li> <li>• Rarely complains</li> <li>• Seldom feels blue</li> <li>• Comfortable in unfamiliar situations</li> <li>• Feels comfortable with self</li> <li>• Remains calm under pressure</li> </ul>

## INTERPRETATION OF SCOPE PERSONALITY PROFILE

### *Consider all five Scales Together*

- Unlike some personality models that find one or two defining traits used to label a personality type, the SCOPE model is designed to measure and report on all five factors for each individual.
- It is possible for one person to score in the “high” range on each of the five scales. This does not necessarily indicate over-reporting or a distorted self-assessment.
- It is possible for one person to score in the “low” range on each of the five scales.
- Don't just look at one or two high scores for each individual. Consider all five factors, both high and low as you learn about their personality and compare a couple's similarities and differences.

## ***SCOPE Evaluates the Normal Range of Personality***

- The SCOPE Personality Profile is not designed to assess abnormal or pathological levels of personality functioning. It measures the normal range of each of the five traits.
- Listen for Balance: The concept of balance can be applied to personality functioning. An individual may score in the low range on the Social dimension, and while there is nothing wrong with being an introvert, losing all contact with others or slipping into an aloof or alienated existence is out of balance. There is nothing wrong with scoring in the high range on the Organized dimension, but chronically neglecting one's relationships with spouse or children so you can focus on nothing but work or school is out of balance.
- On a basic level, a personality trait is out of balance when it interferes with work, school, or relationships. As facilitators review the facilitator's report and meet with a couple, they may sometimes recognize traits that are extreme or out of balance. In these cases, a referral to a professional counselor may be advised.

## ***SCOPE is Descriptive rather than Judging***

- The SCOPE feedback is not intended to judge a "high" or "low" score on any of the five dimensions as inherently good or bad. The traits are simply descriptive and a high, low, or average score on each of the five dimensions may have pros and cons associated with them.

### **SCOPE RELIABILITY**

- An analysis of 832 couples who completed the SCOPE personality assessment showed the scales have high levels of alpha reliability (See Table 2 below).

**Table 2: SCOPE Reliability**

<b>SCOPE Scale</b>	<b>Number of Items in Scale</b>	<b>Alpha Reliability</b>
Social	7	.84
Change	7	.80
Organized	7	.83
Pleasing	7	.77
Emotionally Steady	7	.84

## COMPARISON OF SCOPE WITH OTHER PERSONALITY SCALES

The following chart and discussion can help those who are accustomed to using a particular instrument of personality assessment to compare it with SCOPE. When an individual box is subdivided, it shows a certain characteristic is best characterized as a combination of two or more SCOPE subscales.

SCOPE	Social			Change	Organized		Pleasing	Emotionally Steady
“Big Five” OCEAN	Extraversion (E)			Openness (O)	Conscientiousness (C)		Agreeableness (A)	Neuroticism (N)
Four Humors	Choleric				Phlegmatic		Sanguine	Melancholic
				Melancholic				
LOBG	Otter			Lion	Beaver		Golden Retriever	
							Lion	
DISC	Influence				Conscientiousness		Steadiness	
	Dominant			Dominant				
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator	Introvert-Extrovert			Sensing- iNtuition	Judging-Perceiving		Feeling-Thinking	
Taylor- Johnson Temperament Analysis	Light- hearted	Active- social	Expressive- responsive		Composed	Objective	Sympathetic	
	Dominant			Dominant				

### *Ocean*

- The Big Five Model categorizes personality as existing of five major components. The area of “Openness to Experience” is defined by an individual’s tendency to enjoy novelty, variety, and change. Highly “open” people also tend to be aware of their feelings and to enjoy thinking abstractly and to have a wide range of interests.
- Individuals who are high in “Conscientiousness” are often seen as reliable, hard-working, and able to control their impulses. These individuals can easily focus on tasks at hand, set clear goals, and pursue them with determination. Prudence is a hallmark of high conscientiousness. When individuals are not highly conscientious, they may be viewed as careless, disorganized, and living only for the moment.

- “Extraversion” is a trait that measures one’s engagement with the external world. Extraverts enjoy interpersonal contact, are often enthusiastic, action-oriented, and verbal. They prefer to be around other people and draw energy from social activities. Those who score low on Extraversion may be seen as aloof or as loners, though this is not necessarily true; these individuals simply need less social interaction and stimulus.
- When individuals are high in “Agreeableness,” they value getting along with others and are considerate, friendly, helpful, and willing to cooperate with others. They are generally well-liked by their peers. Lastly, Agreeableness can measure sympathy, interest in others, and maintaining strong interest in others.
- Lastly, “Neuroticism” is a measure of emotional reaction to internal and external stressors. Those high in Neuroticism may be prone to experiencing stress, anxiety, and depression in higher levels than others. Negative emotional reactions often are pervasive, and as such these individuals can be viewed as overly moody, sour, and unstable. Emotional reactivity and oversensitivity are hallmarks of individuals high in Neuroticism.

### ***Four Humors***

While the Big Five Model is likely considered the most understood and researched typology today, it is by no means the first way to understand the makeup and breakdown of an individual’s personality. In fact, many consider Hippocrates to be the first one to categorize personality into several distinct realms of functioning. Around 400 B.C., this Greek father of medicine categorized personality function into four areas corresponding with the four basic elements of nature – air, earth, fire, and water. Hippocrates believed four fluids, or humors, flowed throughout the body and determined certain emotions, behaviors, and attitudes. His approach was therefore called “Humorism.” Around 200 A.D., these classifications were increasingly popularized by the Greek physician Galen, who used the terms sanguine (air), melancholic (earth), choleric (fire), and phlegmatic (water).

The sanguine personality type is described as optimistic, confident, fun-loving, and even-tempered. The melancholic is generally described as thoughtful, kind, considerate, and as moving between states of high creativity and brooding. The choleric individual is charismatic, moved to achievement and action, though also prone to bouts of anger and fitfulness. Lastly, the phlegmatic is seen as consistent, relaxed, observant, and generally self-content (Keirse, 1998).

### ***Lion, Otter, Beaver, and Golden Retriever (LOBG)***

A more recent iteration of the ages-old categorization of the Four Humors can be found in the common classification of personality into the Lion, Otter, Beaver, and Golden Retriever (LOBG). This classification system has been popularized, especially in religious circles, by Gary Smalley and Dr. John Trent. Lions are generally strong, assertive individuals who tend to take charge. They often make quick decisions based on facts at hand and then are able to act quickly. Otters are talkative, creative, fun-loving, and thrive on change. Beavers are detail oriented, highly organized, and do not thrive on change. Lastly, Golden Retrievers are typically compassionate and value loyalty in

relationships. They are tender-hearted, understanding, and work well on teams (Smalley & Trent, 1999). While the Four Humors and the LOBG typologies have been used with much success in certain populations, they are not as widely researched and subjected to the rigors of academic testing as other systems of categorization. As mentioned earlier, the Big Five Model has been highly researched and is often considered the standard against which other formulations are measured.

Previous to the Big Five, however, were two classification systems that have stood the test of time and academic review. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the DISC Profile are two such instruments. Another instrument created contemporaneously with the Big Five is the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis (TJTA), which is generally used in professional and clinical settings.

### *DISC (Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, Conscientiousness) Profile*

Today the DISC Profile is utilized in clinical and organizational settings, and has been around since the pioneering work in the late 1920's of author and psychologist William Moulton Marston. The DISC Profile highlights an individual's tendencies within the four categories from which the assessment derives its name—Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness (DISC Classic Personal Profile System 2800, 2001).

Those who are high in Dominance are often self-assured, inquisitive, adventuresome, daring, and competitive. They are motivated by prestige and challenge, by the desire for accomplishment and action, and they enjoy new challenging activities. They are good at making quick decisions, taking authority, and in solving problems. Those high in Dominance place emphasis on shaping their environments by overcoming challenges to achieve measurable results.

Individuals high in Influence place emphasis on shaping their environment by persuading or otherwise influencing others. They tend to be impulsive, friendly, enthusiastic, trusting, sociable, and generous. They like to participate in groups, enjoy making favorable social impressions, and they are good at creating a motivating environment. Those who are high in Influence are themselves often motivated by freedom from control and detail, by freedom of expression, and by social recognition. They also enjoy coaching, counseling, and working with others.

Steadiness is defined as predictable, relaxed, loyal, and patient. Those who are high in Steadiness are also generally seen as serene and enjoy predictable routines. They do not enjoy conflict and place emphasis on cooperating within current arrangements to complete their goals and activities. They are often good listeners and are motivated by sincere appreciation for the work they do.

Lastly, Conscientiousness characterizes those who are diplomatic, who concentrate on key details, and who are restrained and analytical. Individuals who are high in Conscientiousness are cautious, often understated, and use subtle and indirect channels of communication when dealing with conflict. They are systematic and are motivated by clearly defined expectations. They also thrive in a controlled environment free from significant amounts of extraneous interference. Individuals high in Conscientiousness place emphasis on working with their given circumstances to ensure accuracy, quality, and high standards.

## *Myers-Briggs Type Indicator*

The MBTI was created in the 1940's by the mother-daughter team of Katharine Briggs and Isabel Briggs-Myers. The MBTI categorizes individuals into one of 16 types, based on unique combinations of four primary dichotomous variables (Williams & Tappan, 1995). It is based on the theoretical work of the famous psychologist Carl Jung.

The terms Introvert and Extravert are used to describe attitudes and how people generally interpret their world around them. Introverts prefer to focus on their internal world and feel more comfortable with concepts and ideas. Extraverts, on the other hand, feel more comfortable dealing with people and objects; they are primarily oriented toward the outside world.

The Sensing – iNtuition index helps individuals understand how they perceive information coming to them from various sources. The highly Sensing person prefers data coming through one or more of the five senses. The iNtuitive person relies less on the physical senses and perceives and interprets data by intuiting relationships between objects. This process may be mediated subconsciously and operate out of the conscious awareness of the highly iNtuitive person.

Judgment is measured by individuals' ratings on the Thinking – Feeling scale. Those who rely primarily on Thinking tend to look at the world very rationally and utilize “true-false” and “if X, then Y” reasoning. Feeling refers to the tendency to make decisions based on personal or social values. Those who are high in Feeling may utilize a “more or less” and “better or worse” rubric when making decisions.

Lastly, the Judging – Perceiving variable measures a person's attitudes toward the outside world. Those who are high in Judging prefer a step by step approach to solving problems and a deductive way of coming to conclusions. Thus, this person goes from parts to the whole when figuring out items of difficulty. A person high in Perceiving, on the other hand, moves from the whole to parts, and may not come to firm conclusions as quickly as a high Judging individual.

It is important to note each of the 16 types is seen as functional and healthy. There is no “better” way to be or to function. Individuals become most effective when they are aware of their own tendencies in functioning and are able to utilize those tendencies. Throughout the lifespan, people learn from their less dominant traits, with the goal of being able to consciously choose which style to use, given a certain situation.

## *Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis (TJTA)*

The TJTA was created by Robert Taylor and Lucile Morrison and is the newest of the assessments discussed thus far (Wright, 1996). It was originally copyrighted in 1984. The assessment is used to help individuals develop awareness of several personality features will influence their interactions with others. A unique feature of the profile is its ability to use a “criss-cross” analysis, whereby one is able to compare self-perception to how a partner perceives the same characteristics. The instrument measures nine areas of functioning, all of which are measured on a continuum, and they are described as:

- **Nervous vs. Composed:** tense, high-strung, apprehensive vs. calm, relaxed, tranquil
- **Depressive vs. Light-Hearted:** pessimistic, discouraged, dejected vs. happy, cheerful, optimistic
- **Active-Social vs. Quiet:** energetic, enthusiastic, socially involved vs. socially inactive, lethargic, withdrawn
- **Expressive-Responsive vs. Inhibited:** spontaneous, affectionate, demonstrative vs. restrained, unresponsive, repressed
- **Sympathetic vs. Indifferent:** kind, understanding, compassionate vs. unsympathetic, insensitive, unfeeling
- **Subjective vs. Objective:** emotional, illogical, self-absorbed vs. fair-minded, reasonable, logical
- **Dominant vs. Submissive:** confident, assertive, competitive vs. passive, compliant, dependent
- **Hostile vs. Tolerant:** critical, argumentative, punitive vs. accepting, patient, humane
- **Self-Disciplined vs. Impulsive:** controlled, methodical, persevering vs. uncontrolled, disorganized, changeable

## HIGH AND LOW INTERPRETATIONS OF SCOPE

### **SOCIAL**

*The social trait evaluates how introverted or extroverted a person is in social situations.*

**High Social Scores:** Those who score high on this scale are more extroverted. They enjoy being with people, and are often full of energy. Such individuals tend to be enthusiastic and action-oriented. In groups, they like to talk, assert themselves, and may often be the center of attention. When out of balance, they can appear to be attention seeking or shallow. Others may even see high extroversion as an inability to take life seriously.

If both partners score high on the Social scale, they are likely a very outgoing and energetic couple, poised for lots of fun. People are likely drawn to them because of their fun-loving mindset and ability to make friends easily. Potential drawbacks include becoming overly busy and too involved in outside activities. They may neglect placing enough priority on their couple relationship due to a busy social calendar. When out of balance, this leaves less time for their couple relationship. They may benefit from scheduling time alone to reconnect with each other.

***Average Social Scores:*** Those who score in the average range may find social settings enjoyable, but will value privacy as well. Their preference for being in groups or alone may change based on their mood or external circumstances. Couples who both score in this range generally enjoy having a balance between alone time and social activity.

***Low Social Scores:*** Those who score low on the social scale tend to be reserved or introverted. Social introverts often lack the exuberance and activity levels of extroverts. They tend to be low-key, deliberate, and less connected socially. They often prefer to be alone or with just a few close friends. They will feel more energized after spending time alone or in small, intimate settings, as opposed to large groups or parties. When out of balance, they appear reclusive or cut off from others. Some people may even misinterpret the need for personal time as aloofness.

Couples who both score low on the Social trait will be more reserved and private, enjoying quiet and relaxing time alone. Often, they do not enjoy going to large social gatherings. These events may cause more stress than enjoyment. A potential drawback is becoming isolated and cut off from others. When out of balance, two social introverts can even feel isolated from one another. They may need to find ways of connecting with one another while still allowing each other the chance to recharge alone or apart.

***Dealing with Couple Differences:*** When one partner is highly social and the other is not, the couple will need to communicate openly with one another about attending social events and getting together with others. One of them gets energy from socializing with others, while the other prefers more privacy and alone time. Unnecessary conflict can be avoided in these relationships by checking it out with the other partner before saying “yes” or “no” to participating in a social function.

## ***CHANGE***

***This trait reflects an individual's openness to change, flexibility, and interest in new experiences.***

***High Change Scores:*** Those who score in the high range will tend to be more flexible, unconventional, and very open to new experiences. They are open to change, and often have a broad range of interests. Such individuals thrive on coming up with new and creative solutions to problems, even when a tried and true method might work just as well. When out of balance, they may appear to be overly interested in new ideas and adventures, forgetting more practical realities.

Couples who both score high on this dimension are likely to enjoy change in their lives. They sometimes need to be careful not to create too much change leading to unnecessary stress in their lives. Remember the practical or conventional approach is sometimes valuable.

***Average Change Scores:*** Those in the average range often strike a good balance between new, abstract, or creative ideas and more traditional or down to earth approaches to life. Based on the situations they encounter, they may fluctuate between being flexible or taking a business as usual approach.

***Low Change Scores:*** Individuals with low change scores are more down to earth, practical in nature, and less interested in new ideas and experiences. Change may be difficult for them and increase their

stress level. They prefer the familiar and approaches they already understand and are accustomed to. Attitudes are likely to be more conventional or traditional. When out of balance, these individuals can appear rigid or closed off to new experiences.

Couples who both score low in Change will present themselves as practical and more conventional in their attitudes. Neither person will rock the boat or create unnecessary stress by embracing anything new or different. These couples may need to guard against letting their lives and relationship become too routine or boring.

***Dealing with Couple Differences:*** One partner scoring higher than the other in the Change trait may represent a case of being attracted to one's opposite. The more practical person is often attracted to their partner's free thinking and open attitudes. Conversely, the more open partner may recognize the value of their partner's steady approach to life. There will be times when the partner's attitudes, preferences, or behavior will be challenging and may lead to frustration. They will need to remember to work with their differences rather than attempting to change or criticize the other person. It is helpful to look for the positives, even in very diverse approaches to the same issue.

## **ORGANIZED**

***This trait reflects how organized and determined a person is in their daily life and work. It also reflects persistence in pursuing goals.***

***High Organized Scores:*** Those who score high on the Organized trait are typically methodical and well-organized. They tend to be persistent and reliable, placing a great deal of emphasis on this type of behavior in most areas of their life. Often quite goal-oriented, they may have well thought-out plans as they strive to achieve their goals. When out of balance, these individuals can be perceived as perfectionists, controlling or overly driven.

Couples who both score high in organization may be very detailed and goal-oriented. They will likely have the discipline to accomplish a lot of long-term goals as a couple. They value consistency and orderliness in many aspects of their life together. Potential drawbacks for couples who both score high on this dimension include becoming overly driven to achieve their goals and putting tasks before relationships. At times, their desire for consistency and planning will be challenged by unplanned stressful situations or life changes which are beyond their control.

***Average Organized Scores:*** Those in the average range are generally organized. They are likely dependable and goal-oriented, but can also be flexible, setting aside work and agendas when necessary. They know how to get organized, but it is not always a high priority. While their home and workspace may be somewhat cluttered, they will still know where things are located.

Having this in common can be a positive for couples as they balance tasks, goals, and relationships. They will need to communicate with one another about areas in their life where they need to get more organized, and what roles they will each fulfill to maximize their effectiveness as a couple.

***Low Organized Scores:*** Those who score low on organization tend to resist a great deal of structure and are more spontaneous. They may also be less careful, less focused, and more likely to be distracted from tasks. Often easy-going and preferring not to make strict plans, they enjoy settings in which they are not required to conform to strict benchmarks. When out of balance, they can appear careless or disorganized.

Couples who both score low in organization will be very relaxed about plans, and neither person will place much emphasis on details. They are comfortable with a certain level of disorganization, and may wonder why some people expend so much energy focusing on minor details. Potential drawbacks for couples who both score low include getting behind on routine tasks such as balancing the checking account, or losing track of things such as the car keys. They need to remember that setting some goals as a couple is important, and they can find ways to compensate for less organization by strategizing in key areas of their life.

***Dealing with Couple Difference:*** Couples with different levels of organization will need to communicate openly with one another about their goals, roles, and expectations. The differences that were once endearing can become annoying, distracting, or even maddening when stressful events come their way. They need to find ways to balance one another out and avoid the extremes of perfectionism versus sloppiness. Potential challenges include different expectations for housekeeping, relationship roles, and long-term goals. Focusing on strengths and allowing the more organized individual to handle necessary details can be helpful, but these couples will need to guard against allowing the highly organized individual to function more like a “parent” and less like a “partner.”

## ***PLEASING***

***This trait reflect how considerate and cooperative a person is in their daily interactions with others.***

***High Pleasing Scores:*** High scores suggest a person is trusting, friendly, and cooperative. They value getting along with others, are considerate, and helpful. Optimistic about people, they view others as basically honest, decent, and trustworthy. When out of balance, these individuals may sacrifice their own needs and opinions to please others. In their relationships, these people may find it difficult to ask for what they need.

Couples who both score high on this dimension will likely treat one another with a great deal of respect and consideration. They value cooperation over competition, and heated conflicts may be few and far between. They are at risk, however, of not sharing their true feelings, especially negative emotions. Stuffing opinions and feelings can rob these relationships of deep emotional intimacy. These couples will need to learn to cultivate their assertiveness, realizing their relationship often moves forward after sharing honestly and resolving conflict.

***Average Pleasing Scores:*** Those with average Pleasing scores can be warm and cooperative, but occasionally somewhat competitive or assertive. When they feel their rights are violated, these individuals are able to respond and stand up for themselves. They generally know how to get along well with others and are well liked. Couples who both score in this range typically know how to balance consideration for one another with assertiveness and straightforward talk.

***Low Pleasing Scores:*** These individuals tend to be very confident, assertive, and less cooperative. They can often express their anger directly, and are sometimes seen as competitive and unfriendly. They are less likely to be taken advantage of and can assert themselves. When out of balance, they can appear skeptical, proud, or aggressive. Others can be intimidated by these individuals and find it difficult to develop a close relationship with them. These individuals may experience higher levels of conflict in their partner relationship unless they have learned how to balance their assertiveness.

Couples who both score low on the Pleasing trait will tend to be more competitive than cooperative. They have the capacity to be assertive and straight forward with one another. Potential drawbacks include conflict, debates, and the tendency to voice opinions rather than actively listen to and support one another. Their communication may be interpreted by their partner as harsh and unforgiving, rather than simply assertive. These individuals often need to work on their active listening and conflict resolution skills, as listening is often the more difficult part of communicating for them.

***Dealing with Couple Differences:*** Couples with one partner scoring higher than the other on this dimension may need to practice their communication and conflict resolution skills. The partner scoring higher on this dimension may need to develop their ability to honestly express both positive and negative opinions and feelings. In so doing, they can allow the more assertive partner the opportunity to truly understand their feelings. The partner scoring lower on this dimension will benefit from working to be a good active listener.

## ***EMOTIONALLY STEADY***

***This trait reflects the tendency to stay calm and positive, even when faced with stress.***

***High Emotionally Steady Scores:*** Those with a high score on the Emotionally Steady trait tend to be more relaxed, calm, and less prone to distress. They are likely to be calm and emotionally stable even when confronted with stressful situations. In the extreme, they may appear unfeeling or unflappable.

Couples where both partners are Emotionally Steady remain calm and collected as they cope with the challenges life presents. They are not prone to much distress as individuals, and often handle conflict well as a couple since they are slow to become angry, anxious, or depressed.

***Average Emotionally Steady Scores:*** Average scorers are generally calm and able to cope with stress. Others likely see them as capable of handling the everyday stressors. When under high levels of stress, they can experience negative feelings of anxiety, depression, or anger, but are generally emotionally steady and in control of their lives. Couples who both score in this range are able to use their communication skills, good problem solving and flexibility to help them navigate stressful times.

Focusing on what is within one's ability to influence is much more helpful than being overwhelmed by what one cannot control.

***Low Emotionally Steady Scores:*** Those in this range are typically more emotionally sensitive and prone to becoming upset. They often have difficulty handling stress in their lives. When faced with challenges, they are prone to experience upsetting feelings such as anxiety, anger, or depression. When out of balance, they become emotionally fragile or overly sensitive. Some acquaintances may see their emotional reactions as difficult to handle and pull away from the relationship. This often leaves these individuals feeling even more isolated.

Couples who both score in this range know what it feels like to be stressed and in a bad mood. They should be able to understand and empathize when their partner is feeling anxious, down, or angry. Their individual moods, however, can sometimes take priority over the couple relationship as well. They need to be mindful of how much anxiety, change, and stress they can each handle. Being good listeners and supportive partners during times of stress will maximize their ability to weather life's challenges together. They should each work to develop positive coping skills for managing stress in their lives.

***Dealing with Couple Differences:*** Couples with one partner scoring higher than the other may experience occasional challenges. In times of stress, the more emotionally calm partner may need to take control and help the other person feel less frustrated. The one experiencing anxiety, anger, or sadness might wonder why their partner doesn't feel the same way. It is helpful for these couples to remember to work with one another's differences rather than attempting to change or criticize their partner.



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