

- Team up to overcome weaknesses
- Use their combined strengths to help achieve their goals

While these four activities are easily understood, they require some focus and effort in order to implement them on a regular basis. Working through the four activities below will help you identify strategies that will increase your effectiveness in each area.

Ask for Help

Referring to your preferences in each of the four areas, what would be helpful for your spouse to know about your personality style in order to work more productively with you? For example, a reserved person might prefer to think problems out quietly and alone. Or an urgent person might have a tendency to make too many “snap decisions.”

Task: Write down one or two preferences that you would like your spouse to know about you.

Your Response:

Next, let your spouse know how he/she can assist you. Be open about activities that don't fit with your personality preferences and skills. Also, be open about what activities you would like help with. Discuss how your spouse can assist you, and how you can help him/her. Asking for help in this manner requires openness and trust and leads to greater efficiency and productivity.

Balance

Many people have a tendency to overuse their preferred behaviors when under stress. Regardless of their style, when they are under stress they tend to become more extreme in their behavior. They do more of what they are already good at; however, when this occurs, strengths can become weaknesses. For example, an urgent personality type can

become even more urgent when under stress. Overusing one of your preferences can diminish your value at times. You can balance your most extreme preferences by “flexing” your style. By flexing or adapting your style, you can lower the intensity of the preferences you use most often.

Task: Write down several actions that you can take to balance some of your strongest preferences when they’re working against you.

Your Response:

Team Up

Some of the best teams involve couples with opposite personality styles. These couples team up to overcome weaknesses and learn to work with the strengths of each other. Combining your strengths with those of your spouse can create synergy. Team up with your spouse so that your styles will complement each other, thereby maximizing the traits that aren’t your strong suit.

Task: List several of your spouse’s traits that are opposite of yours.

Your Response:

Task: What tasks might be accomplished more effectively if you teamed up with your spouse and combined your strengths? Make a list of your top three.

Your Response:

Use Your Strengths

Both you and your spouse have unique personality strengths. As a couple, you can be more effective in your marriage and your business if you can identify your combined strengths and know how to use them.

Task: List several projects or roles that would make good use of your strengths.

Your Response:

Got Stress?

Every environment (including business and family) has certain pressures and unique stresses. For husband-and-wife business teams stress is inevitable as they try to blend business, personal, and family life. Fortunately, not all stress leads to crisis. Some stress is healthy; however, too little stress can result in boredom and too much stress can cause burnout.

Learning to identify situations that are stressful to you can help you create strategies for coping with stress more effectively. Situations that prevent you from using your preferred behaviors can cause anxiety. For example, if you are direct and like being in control, you might experience increased anxiety in situations in which you have little authority or control. Or you might feel increased pressure when you are threatened, when you experience change, when you lose control, or when your expectations aren't realized. Keep in mind that your sources of stress may be different than those of your spouse or family members.

Odd Working Hours Cause Family Stress

Working long hours, evenings, nights, or weekends can take its toll on your family and stress family relationships. A correlation exists between nonstandard work schedules and both marital instability and a decline in the quality of marriages, according to Harriet B. Presser.

(Working in a 24/7 Economy: Challenges for American Families, 2003, Russell Sage Foundation)