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**Celebrating Differences—Part III**  
**Intuitives and Sensors**  
**By Kenneth A. Sprang**

*Find the person who will love you because of your differences  
and not in spite of them and you have found a lover for life.*

--Leo Buscaglia

Recently we have been examining how our personality type, as measured by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) impacts our relationships. One of the most fascinating areas, I think, is the contrast between Sensors and Intuitives. Sometimes it seems like Sensors and Intuitives speak different languages.

Our intuitive or sensing function tells us how we gather information. Consider the dating process, in which we are engaged in an adventure of discovery. Whether we are deciding whether to go out with someone again or whether we are evaluating that person as a possible life partner, we are asking questions and seeking to understand our partner (or prospective partner) more fully. In general, Intuitives gather information through seeing a big picture, a range of possibilities, or a “sixth sense,” while Sensors gather information in a more concrete fashion through their five senses. Each approaches dating quite differently.

Sensors tend to be quite realistic about dates. They are focused clearly on the present and they are not terribly concerned with possibilities or potential—they want to evaluate the one across the table as he or she is *now*. On the other hand, for an Intuitive, much of the date takes place in his or her imagination. In fact, the vibrant pictures created in the mind of the Intuitive may well be more exciting than the actual events of the evening. Sensors may fantasize about the date, too. However, they do so *after* the date, using the concrete information they have gathered during the time together.

Sensors and Intuitives even prepare for a date differently. For a Sensor, the date begins when the couple gets together, whereas for an Intuitive the date begins in his imagination as soon as the plans are made. Even on a second date, the Sensor bases expectations on the facts gathered on the first date, while the Intuitive begins imagining the second date long before it occurs. We Intuitives need to be cautious because reality will rarely live up to our fantasies. It is all too easy to anticipate an extraordinary evening in our imagination, only to be disappointed when no bells ring and the earth does not tremble.

Remember that on the first date in particular, you’ll engage in a lot of conversation. Each of you is gathering information and making some assessments. Sensors will be more comfortable talking about concrete things—what they do, where they have been, what their preferences are. Intuitives, on the other hand, are excited by conversations that involve their dreams, visions, ideas, and beliefs.

While dating Carol I was often reminded of a story from a vacation with my children Todd and Heidi and their mother. We were in Stowe, Vermont, at Mt. Mansfield. At the top of the mountain is the “nose.” We arrived at the top of the mountain and Heidi scampered up the nose to get as high as possible and see as far as she could see. I followed as far as I could until my discomfort with heights stopped me. Her mother was aghast. “Why would you do that,” she asked. “Because it’s there, Mom,” Heidi responded. I knew exactly what she meant, but her mother, a strong Sensor, was puzzled. I soon realized with Carol, as I said often to friends, that given the same circumstances I would have to work hard to keep up with Carol, who would likely

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be first to climb the nose, just because “it’s there.”

I remember Carol’s and my first date. We are both strong Intuitives. We met for dinner at 6:00, and at 1:00 we were still talking with no idea where the evening had gone. I remember little of what we discussed, except that we wandered into an eclectic bookstore on South Street in Philadelphia (the “Greenwich Village” of that city), filled with books on religion, personal growth, philosophy, metaphysical themes, and similar subjects. Carol was more familiar with the authors represented than I. I was fascinated by this woman who shared my love for the ethereal, the world of ideas and imagination, including imagining things beyond our understanding. Wow! The energy came from frolicking in the playground of ideas, not from any particular book or idea.

Are you an Intuitive who climbs the mountain because “it’s there,” or are you a more “grounded” Sensor. How has type affected your relationships? If you have not taken the MBTI, consider doing so. There are now many low cost or even free online versions available. Knowing your type and understanding more about other types is a priceless tool for discovering, nurturing, and sustaining successful relationships. Write and tell me about your experience.

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