

Do You Operate In Different Marital Time Zones?

By Susan Vogt, MA, CFLE

1. When I'm behind a slower driver:

- A. I relax. I'm in no hurry
 - B. I feel sympathetic since I assume the driver is elderly, cautious, or lost.
 - C. I feel irritated and pass as quickly as I can, even on the right side.
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2. When leaving for a party:

- A. I'm relaxed but I'm also late. It doesn't bother me. Does it bother others? That's their problem. Life's too short to hurry.
 - B. I'm always ready ahead of time and leave 5-10 minutes early in case there's heavy traffic or bad weather.
 - C. I'm more or less ready when we agreed to leave but in no hurry since parties are not meant to start at a precise time. (Let's assume this is not a surprise party.)
 - D. I have good intentions to leave on time, but generally find myself scurrying around at the last minute while my spouse waits impatiently at the door (or worse, in the car).
 - E. Both of us are frantically racing at the last minute and our friends have taken to telling us parties start an hour before the actual time.
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3. When watching TV or some other mindless activity:

- A. I relax and enjoy the down time.
 - B. I schedule screen time so it doesn't interfere with work or other priorities.
 - C. I make sure I can multitask (fold laundry, nurse a baby, knit, etc.) at the same time.
 - D. I never watch scheduled TV. I tape or TIVO everything so I can skip thru commercials. When I do watch TV, I multitask and check e-mail during the slow parts.
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4. When on a car trip, but not doing the driving:

- A. I chat and enjoy the scenery.
 - B. I nap to prevent being tired later.
 - C. I'm busy taking care of children's needs or navigating for the driver.
 - D. I make cell phone calls, work on my laptop, check traffic reports, or listen to NPR to maximize my time.
 - E. I do almost all of the "D" items at the same time.
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5. When leaving to catch a plane:

- A. I pack the night before, leave plenty of time to get to the airport (accounting for the possibility of an unseasonable blizzard in July), and plan to arrive more than one hour before flight time.
- B. My philosophy is JIT (just in time). I calculate when I need to leave for the airport in order to be there one hour ahead of time. (Glitches hardly ever happen anyway and I don't like to waste time waiting.)
- C. I'm usually hectically gathering my stuff and doing last minute chores until I must leave. Then I search for my car keys, call my cell phone to find out where I last put it (it vibrates in my pocket) and rush to the airport.
- D. I consider being at the airport an hour early a waste of valuable time. Sure, I cut it close and have been known to miss a flight, but life is an adventure. When on the plane, I always have my trusty laptop to catch up on work.

6. When waiting in line (at the supermarket, the bank, a bus stop or metro, etc.)

- A. I'm bored.
 - B. I'm fine. I figure waiting time is praying time.
 - C. I fidget and feel annoyed with people who dally, chit chat, or have more than 10 items in the quick checkout line.
 - D. I try to calculate the fastest line, switch back and forth if necessary or just leave and decide to do my errands at a less busy time.
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SCORING:

A answers = 1 point

B answers = 2 points

C answers = 3 points

D answers = 4 points

E answers = 5 points

6-12 points: You're either very laid back or very cautious. Unless your spouse has a similar style, you may be causing each other stress. Look for compromises.

13-19 points: Your timing may not always be perfect, but at least you're in the sane and practical range.

20-25 points: Whoa! If not headed for a heart attack, you're at least headed to stress your spouse and miss smelling the roses. If your spouse has a significantly lower score, you might also be headed for counseling.