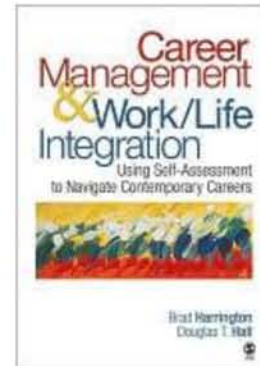


# Couple Style Assessment

Here's the Couple Style Assessment to help you identify how you coordinate work and life with your partner

It's taken from pages 140-141 of "Career Management and Work-Life Integration: Using Self-Assessment to Navigate Contemporary Careers" by Douglas T. Hall and Brad Harrington (2007). Sage Publications.



## What kind of couple are you and what can you do about it?

### 1. Individual Ranking

Using the brief descriptions that follow, think about which description best fits the two of you as a couple. Put a 1 next to that description. Put a 2 next to the description that you feel is the next best description of both of you, a 3 next to the next best description, and a 4 next to the statement that least describes both of you.

### Dual-Career Couple Types

(Hall & Hall, 1980)

	Work Involvement	Home Involvement
Accommodators	Spouse A high Spouse B low	Spouse A low Spouse B high
Adversaries	Both high	Both low (but <i>both</i> value a well-ordered home)
Allies	Both low or Both high	Both high or Both low (and both have low value for a well-ordered home)
Acrobats	Both high	Both high

\_\_\_\_\_ **Accommodators:** One of you is high in career involvement and lower in home involvement, whereas the other is low in career involvement and higher in home involvement. You complement each other in your involvements. One assumes primary responsibility for the home, and the other assumes primary responsibility for being the breadwinner (i.e. for doing career work).

\_\_\_\_\_ **Adversaries:** Both of you are highly involved in your careers, and each of you has minimal involvement in tasks at home. For each of you, your identity is highly defined by your career. Yet having a well-ordered home and a family is important to both of you. You do not want to compromise on the quality of the life that you have at home.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Allies:** Both of you have your primary identities invested in the same sphere of life, either career or home, and the other sphere is less important to you both. You share the same priorities in life. Either you are both highly career-involved and couldn't care less about having a perfect home, or you are both highly involved at home and place far less value on career success. You agree on which aspect of life is most important, and you live your lives accordingly.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Acrobats:** Both of you are highly invested in both home and career roles. Your identities are not defined primarily by a single role; rather, you achieve fulfilment and satisfaction in both areas. You both give equal weight to home and career roles. You want to have it all.

## 2. Coming to agreement.

Now compare your ranking with your spouse's. If you disagree on the type that you ranked as 1, ask each other what the thinking was behind the rankings. Through dialogue and good listening, try to come to agreement about your couple type. (If you cannot come to agreement, talk to good friends who know you both as a couple. Describe the couple types to them, and see what they think.)

## 3. Appreciation of your type.

Together, make a list of all the *good things* associated with being the type of couple that you are. Do this as a brainstorming activity, which means that you should not be critical of what the other says, and write down each point that is made. When you have finished, take a look at your overall list and share your reflections on what you see there and what those points mean to you.

## 4. Understanding the challenges of your type.

As is true with most things in life, each couple type has its upsides and its downsides. Brainstorming together as couple, write a list of the *challenges* or difficulties associated with being the type of couple that you are. Do not get into a long discussion of each point; just write it down. Then, when you have finished your list, stop and reflect together on what you have written.

## 5. Action planning.

Now do some thinking about two questions:

A. How can you leverage the good things associated with your couple-type? What can you do to take greater advantage of your couple type?

B. What steps might you take to deal with the challenges of your type? If you know of other couples who share this type, can you see things that they do to deal with these issues?

## 6. Lessons learned.

Individually, reflect on what you have done in the preceding steps. Write down one insight or lesson learned from this assessment activity. Now share your reflections. Together, what have you both learned from this process? Write down this lesson for future use.