

POLARIZATION – WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU SEEM “INCOMPATIBLE”

By Marlene and Bob Neufeld

Many couples come to us saying, “I’ve been starting to think we’re not compatible”. Compatibility is an interesting concept. On the one hand, we want partners who hold the same values, are interested in the same activities and feel passion for the same beliefs. On the other hand, we often shudder at the thought of being with someone who is exactly like us. Couples polarize over many issues: one wants more sex while the other wants more emotional closeness, one is very responsible while the other is easy going, one wants to be close while the other values independence and separateness. We have written about the pursue-withdraw dance in *The Dance of Relationship* (see articles on our website www.marleneandbob.com). We would like to share with you a story written by one of our favourite teachers, Dr. Kathlyn Hendricks.

The Tale of the Glomer and the Splitter

A Relationship Issues Story

By Dr. Kathlyn Hendricks

Once upon a time a person who Really, Really liked to get close to other people met and fell in love with a person who seemed to always shrink away when she got near. She wondered at first if there was something wrong with her. Then she thought SURELY there is something wrong with a person who spends hours and hours and hours entirely alone and seems to be perfectly happy about it. Neither of those responses seemed to produce much happiness, so after a while she started wondering about the deeper meaning of getting close and getting separate.

In the mysterious World of Relationships she noticed around her, people seemed to see themselves as Glommers, the Ones Who Get Close, or Splitters, the Ones Who Like Their Space. She puzzled as to why, over and over, these two kinds of people seemed to choose each other as mates and then try to change each other. It was very strange and seemed to involve a lot of controlling and criticizing, not the most evolved human traits.

One day when she was watching a couple walking and talking about their Glommer-ness and Splitter-ness, she noticed that they almost danced as they moved closer and then further from contact with each other. Could it be, she thought, that Glommers and Splitters NEED each other to learn to create a dance of wholeness? After all, the tides come in and out, we breathe in and out, not just in. Nyah, she thought, too simple. If it were this easy, people would long ago have learned this key to enjoying harmonious relating.

Nevertheless, she decided to learn from her Splitter so she could experience being a whole person. She got really curious about what the Splitter was doing with alone time (something she didn’t give herself very much) and gradually learned to spend minutes, then hours by herself enjoying her thoughts and creative impulses. The world looked brighter after these times alone, and her perceptions were keener. She felt sufficient in her own being. Ahh, she thought, that’s what the Splitter is up to, being present and getting nourishment directly from the Universe. Cool.

While she was intent upon learning, the Splitter also appeared to be shifting, actually enjoying more touch, sharing feelings, kind of, well, glomming more! They were actually doing the Relationship Dance of come close and go explore. After a time, she looked in the mirror one day and saw that she had become a Glitter.

For more about Dr. Hendricks, please see www.hendricks.com.

So here's our challenge to you: if you think there are areas where you are just not compatible with your partner, or areas where you've polarized, see if you can learn something from your partner. Get curious and wonder what you could possibly appreciate about your partner's style. Without making yourself wrong, open up to the possibility that you could be a whole person if you took on some of your partner's values and beliefs or participated in some of the activities they love. Secure partners are those who believe that they are OK, that they are full, whole, healthy human beings while also believing that their partners are OK, fully, whole, healthy human beings.

Marlene & Bob Neufeld practice body-centered Coaching and Psychotherapy. They are a couple who help couples change the dance they are doing, learn life-changing skills and create closer, more loving relationships with one another. For more information call 613-594-9248 or see www.marleneandbob.com.