



# ARE YOUR LIVES COMPATIBLE?

## The 6 Building Blocks of Character

*By Ted Wentworth*

So you think you found Ms.-Right-For-You! The sex is great and you can't stand to be apart! It's intense! But do you share enough in common to enrich the intimacy of the sweet hours you share between those few minutes of great sex? Sex is the icing on the cake, but remember the cake—the foundation for the icing—is no less important.



For a relationship to have the right stuff, not only do you have to have great chemistry but you need to share a lot in common to make the rest of your time together fulfilling. You'll want your separate lives to grow together as they unfold. No matter how great the sex, lives that grow apart bury a relationship in all the wrong stuff. Feeling exhausted and exasperated with your relationship as the importance of sex dwindles are feelings that signal the end is in sight. Remember we live separate lives—for a relationship to flourish our lives must grow together and not apart.

You can appreciate how amazing it would be to be physically, spiritually, emotionally, financially, intellectually and sexually matched. For a relationship to have the right stuff it should have at least three of those qualities and four would be even better. All six is nearly impossible.

We've discussed her physical and emotional resumes in past articles. Let's turn now to how we can discern her spiritual resume. First, don't let the word spiritual put you off. Consider it synonymous with "inner nature" or "character." It encompasses: religion, occupation, accomplishments, addictions/vices, sense of humor and trust.

### **RELIGION.**

Religious feelings and values may be a source of agreement and shared satisfaction, or they may present an obstacle you, as a couple, must successfully maneuver in order to go on. Most of us formed our basic values as we grew up, and we are either set or yielding with regard to them. Such values are very personal, so if you can't reconcile your differences your relationship already needs a crutch.

### **OCCUPATION.**

This can be a deal breaker. If one of you is on the road for weeks at a time, and that's not comfortable for the partner who is left behind, you have a prescription for disaster. Ditto

for long commutes. If one career requires a lot of socializing and the other partner is reclusive, can compromise be found for the long haul? Can you marry a cop? If you are in medicine, can you marry a malpractice lawyer? Will your professional passions create unavoidable difficulty in your personal life together? If it's a hard but not impossible match, you might agree not to talk about what each of you do for a living, recognizing that your jobs are only one facet of yourselves.

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### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS.**

Here, in her spiritual resume, we're talking about personal accomplishments: is she a good friend? A good mother? Does she care for and help others? Is she loyal? Can she be discreet? Does she maintain a decent credit rating (a character/responsibility issue)?

### **ADDICTIONS/VICES.**

Most people are aware of the problems that accompany excessive drinking or use of "recreational" drugs. Addiction comes from trying to numb a spiritual emptiness rather than heal it. Don't volunteer to support her addictions, vices or compulsions. That's what you'll do if you "overlook" her drinking, drugging, overspending, or gambling because she's "so much fun" or "great in bed." She will soon require you to *enable*—to be her encouraging partner in—her addictions. Should you detect that she is ruled by something other than her good judgment, *leave!* It's a trap and you know it.

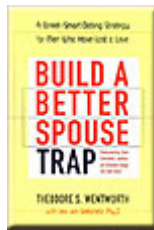
### **SENSE OF HUMOR.**

This is a spiritual aspect of every person. We all think we have good taste and a good sense of humor. But, if you're observant, it's quite obvious people's self-perceptions are often inaccurate. Each of you must enjoy—or at least appreciate—the other's sense of humor. Only you can decide to spend the rest of your life with someone whose sense of humor is incompatible with yours. If she always wants to be "sincere" when you want to banter and "take it lightly, you'll need to decide if she has enough other good qualities for a trade-off in this area. Proceed with caution.

### **TRUST.**

Trust is found in the presence of truth and integrity. Integrity means you are who you say you are. Both are essential components of being "real." What you do reflects your character—what you *do* is who you *are*. Over time, can you see that she is who she says she is, regardless of the circumstances? Does she, for example, keep her commitments to you and others? And if she can't, is she willing to renegotiate them? If so, she is probably trustworthy.

Among the many things that will certainly destroy a relationship, distrust is at the top of the list. If either partner subverts the other's trust, the bloom falls off the rose, perhaps never to bloom again. The relationship deteriorates into a sexual maintenance partnership that leaves the partners feeling sick and disappointed. Trust and character go hand-in-hand. Character, for our purposes, is more than "ethical"—it's an innate, uncontrived ability to make good things happen—the ability and willingness to create. Character *is* destiny.



(Parts of this column have been excerpted from *Build a Better Spouse Trap*. M. Evans, Publisher.

*Build a Better Spouse Trap* is available through all major booksellers including Amazon.com.)

