

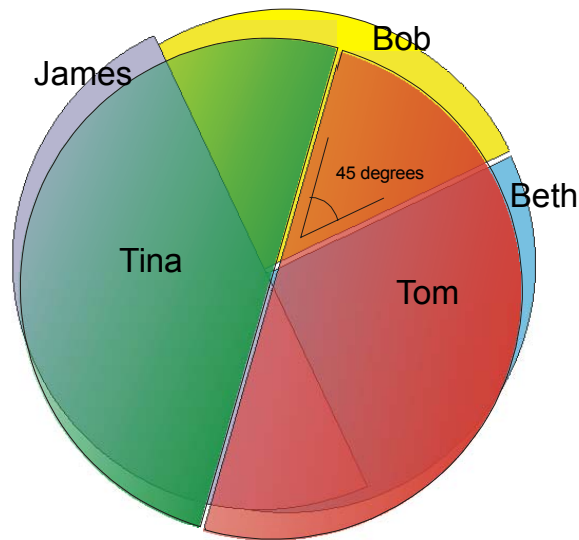
Intercouplar Compatibility Compass

Initial Observations from a New IC Model

By Glen Norris

One compass for all persons

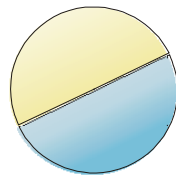
Most couples are composed of two different but complementary personalities, together making a “whole” or “balanced” entity. The unique collection of qualities of any one person may be represented by a semicircle having a discreet orientation with respect to all others. Every one of us is a semicircle, though our unique collection of qualities, or orientation, are never alike. In the case of a couple, the imagined vector of the interface between these complementing semicircles provides an excellent compass needle with which to study relationships between any two individuals, single or coupled, two couples, and even singulo-couplar relationships.



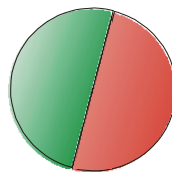
Elementary observations

It is unlikely that the specific combination of qualities which comprise any individual's personality will exactly match those of any other person. Each person is unique, obviating the fact that each couple is also unique.

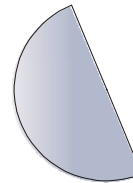
**Each person has a unique orientation.
Each couple has a unique orientation.**



Bob & Beth



Tina & Tom



James

Though never identical, the qualities (or semicircle orientation) of two people might still be found to be somewhat alike. A friendship might occur between two such similar people, but a couple cannot form. A circular “whole” can never be formed by persons too alike.

(Imperfect couples of varying quality are sometimes formed between two people who may not enjoy a perfect complement (anymore than an ideal relationship), but for the purposes of this discussion, we shall only deal with perfect couples- those whose qualities are perfectly complementary.)

Relationships may exist between any two people, but a (perfect) couple may only be formed by two (perfectly) complementary people.

Simple deduction tells us then, that two non-complementing people, never forming a couple between themselves, must (if neither remains single) end up in different couples. A relationship may form between any two such resulting *couples*. *This intercouplular (IC) relationship* (the focus of our discussion) *varies in quality from couple to couple with extreme predictability.*

Definition of quality

When two couples get along well, it is because the individuals that comprise those couples get along well, each with the other three. The best relationships between couples are not those that involve just two who are close, keeping their respective mates within some orbit of an IC relationship by including them in picnics and Christmas cards. The best IC relationships are those that involve all four people equally, each experiencing a meaningful relationship of significant (though not necessarily equal) intensity with each of the other three members.

Elements of predictability

A first important observation is, and we are only dealing with perfect couples, that the quality of the relationship between a member of one couple and a member of the other will always be equal to the quality of the relationship between the remaining two members of the couples. The vector of the relationship between the first two is the inverse of that of the remaining two. It is exactly the same magnitude, but points 180° from the first. This is not to say that one relationship is “the negative” of the first, or that either has a negative connotation in any absolutist framework. The remaining two, being complements of the first two, have an interface vector with points in exactly the opposite direction; but the direction is arbitrary. Remember, these are socio-emotional vectors, there is no up or down, only direction. The important thing to remember is that the magnitude of one is equal to the magnitude of the other.

Or more succinctly:

If $x+y=360^\circ$ and $z+w=360^\circ$, then $x+z = y+w$.

Or more simply:

The semicircle of the *partner* of the first just as closely matches that of the *partner* of the second.

Or more meaningfully:

Referring to our example, Bob and Tina get along exactly as well as Beth and Tom. (Or conversely, Bob and Tom get along exactly as well as Beth and Tina.) This is *not* to say that Bob and Tina get along exactly as well as Bob and Tom. Those interfaces result in vectors of magnitudes unequal.

Looking deeper, what more can be observed of the relationships between couples?

Are orthogonally aligned couples better or worse friends than those aligned more closely?

Most successful relationships between couples are neither orthogonally (90°) nor closely (0°) aligned, but exactly between, at 45° . This is why the people in the best couple-couple relationships are sometimes referred to as “45s”. This is actually misleading since the people are not the “45s”; the relationship itself is. A so-called “45” might have a terrible relationship with members of a different couple (and/or the couple itself).

In our example, Tina, Tom, Bob, and Beth might all be called “45s” because the vectors of their interfaces differ by 45° , but this doesn't mean they will always enjoy the rewards of a superior IC relationship with every couple they meet.

Suppose for a moment that James has met his perfect complement and formed a perfect relationship (without changing himself). The relationship between Tom and James would be very different than the one between Bob and James (an orthogonal relationship). Therefore Bob can't rightly claim to be a “45”. Just ask James! (In this example, it might briefly seem that Tom is indeed a “45” since his orientation is 45° from both the couple, and from James. However, an infinite number of possible angles exist beyond these two points ($+45^\circ$ and -45°), or, most of humanity's living perfect couples have orientations that are (relative to Tom & Tina, and every other perfect couple) *not* 45° , but a discreet measure away from $\pm 45^\circ$). A 45° relationship is a better relationship for each of the people in the two couples than either of the two extremes (orthogonal and aligned) or anything in between. Let's take a look at why this is true.

In an aligned couple-couple relationship each of the four persons has three neighbors

1. their mate,
2. a person very very much like themselves,
3. a person very very much like their mate.

These couples practice wife swapping.

It is a difficult environment to establish and maintain the level of trust necessary for a rewarding relationship, and the statistics agree, that highly aligned relationships do not infrequently develop, but rarely last beyond a three month median.

The angle must be parted at least slightly for a relationship to occur and persist.

In the case of the other extreme, a perfectly orthogonal relationship, we have exactly the opposite problem.

Begin by noting that friendship is sparked and maintained by similarities between parties; familiarity lowers inhibitions and increases trust, both vital for friendship occurrence. In any relationship that is *not* orthogonal, the qualities of each member of the other couple will be (1) appreciably like one member of the first, and (2) appreciably like the mate of the first. This can be called an appreciable amount of familiarity.

In an *orthogonal* relationship however, each of the four persons has these three neighbors:

1. their mate,
2. a person not much like themselves and not much like their mate,
3. another person not much like themselves and not much like their mate.

In these cases there is least familiarity and comfort. Most partners choose to talk to each other rather than with someone from the other couple who seems unlikely to have much in common with them. For any person in an orthogonal relationship, neither member of the other couple has any more in common with him than the other. That person will have a relationship of equal quality with both members, though that level of quality is usually very shallow. In short, each orthogonal couple believes the other to be a boring couple.

Orthogonal couples are least comfortable with each other, therefor meaningful orthogonal relationships rarely develop.

The angle must be parted; it must be greater than zero. The angle must not be ninety. When two couples get along best, their angle with respect to each other is sufficiently “weighted with familiarity” to reach the proper level of trust. We need a large dose of familiarity, but not too evenly distributed between the partners. The optimum large measured dose is exactly between zero and ninety: “45.”

Aligned (approaching 0°): too familiar
Orthogonal (approaching 90°): too unfamiliar
“45” (approaching 45°): superior long-term IC relations

Question “a Trick”

After all, we find that the question asked above is a “trick question.” A more orthogonal relationship will be neither necessarily better nor worse than an aligned relationship. The question is, which of the two is closer to the Ideal Orientation¹ of 45°.

In The Orient, is everyone perfectly equal friends?

Not at all. But each friendship enjoys a significant and meaningful amount of familiarity either with respect to themselves or their own mate.

If the couples are closely aligned does the M/F polarity effect the relationship?

Almost always. If the couples approach alignment, maleA will find himself to be either very very much like maleB (homopolaric) or very very much like femaleB (heteropolaric or “M/F” polarity). To put it another way, he will find femaleB to be either very very much like himself (M/F), or very very much like his mate (homopolaric). The polarity of very closely aligned IC relationships does indeed effect the relationship, but the treatment is beyond the scope of this discussion. The short answer though, as has been discussed, is that although most closely aligned IC relationships fail to come into existence for any meaningful period, the ones that do include examples of both polar configurations. The dominance of one polarity over another seems to correlate significantly with the local culture. (For example, in fundamentalist regions, homopolaric relationships are more common than M/F.)

If one partner gets along better with one of the other couple’s members than the other, will it also always be true that the two remaining partners will also get along better with each other than each with the other?

Yes. We have gone over this. Please refer to the diagram.

Does intercouples infidelity occur more often in some alignments than in others?

IC infidelity can occur in any orientation but there are two orientations where it occurs only slightly more often. One, as would be expected, is in closely aligned homopolarics. However it is also almost exactly as common in near orthogonals with the following important observations. In homopolarics the intensity of the relationship is greater than

¹ The Ideal Orientation is sometimes referred to as "The Orient".

between orthogonals. Between orthogonals, the intensity may be quite weak but the duration is almost always far longer than homopolaric IC infidelity. One further observation is that “45s” are the least likely to engage in IC infidelity. The reasoning is left as an exercise for the reader.

Is it possible for each member of two couples to have relationships of equal quality with each of the other three persons?

Not if both couples are perfect couples. Even in an optimum 45° IC relationship between A&B and C&D, the quality of the AC subrelationship will always be unequal to that of AD. However, the lesser of the two will still be significant because although the qualities that C/D may share with A are far less than the qualities D/C shares with A, the number of qualities C/D shares with B is much greater. A gets along well both with a person sharing many of the same qualities, and a person sharing many of the same qualities as A's mate *as well as* some of A's own. A might get along with C and D differently, but to a significant degree with both.

To discover exactly why not all four subrelationships can be equal, consider first a member of a perfectly aligned IC relationship. One of the remaining three people will be exactly like the member, and the other two will be exactly like the member's mate (including the member's mate). Suppose such a person “enjoyed” identical quality relationships with both their mate and the person exactly like their mate. Surely, the friendship between this person and the one yet unmentioned would be short, having been made unstable by powerful forces: (1) this person would experience a degree of jealousy caused by the thought that their mate was being experienced *as a mate*, by someone else, (2) as well as the knowledge that this other person experiencing their mate was exactly like themselves, (3) this person would quite probably be contributing to the instability themselves by treating as their mate, the mate of the other (recalling the maxim above: the semicircle of the partner of the first just as closely matches that of the partner of the second.).

Consider next a member of a perfectly orthogonal relationship. One of the people will be the member's mate, while the other two are simultaneously as unlike both the member and mate as possible. Any member's relationship with their mate is sure to be better than either of the other two.

It is possible for the quality of all the relationships between each person in the relationship and every other, to be significant and rewarding, but it is impossible for each to be equal.

What is the most common alignment for couples that do not get along?

As has been shown, there are two real-world orientations that are worst: near orthogonal and near alignment. (We say “near” because it is prohibitively unlikely that any two couples will be exactly orthogonal or exactly aligned.)

Is it possible for both members of a couple to be “best friends” with a single person?

Now the power of the intercouples (IC) compass is shown. It is a simple task to look at the example diagram and discover that every non-coupled person will have a different relationship with each member in a couple with the exception of a perfectly orthogonal singulo-couples relationship. (It is vital to note that comparing the vector of a single person with that of a couple is of dubious value. However, it remains evident that any result, meaningful or not, will, by the nature of the topology, be different between the single and one member of the couple than between the single and the other member of the couple.)

And in the unlikely case of a couple's perfectly orthogonal relationship with a single person (the exception to the above), neither subrelationship will have a "best friends" quality, but more like that of an acquaintanceship. Neither member of the couple would have a large degree in common with the single.

Does the alignment of the single person with respect to the couple affect the single's chances of becoming a friend of that couple?

Absolutely, just as the alignment of a couple affects the probability of a friendship with another couple.

What is the most common alignment when couples are good friends with a single person?

It is comforting to be surprised to find that the statistics show this to be a simple and agreeable answer: 60°.

Although a large percentage of the existing (successful) singulo-couplar (SC) relationships are 45s, the most satisfying employ a wider acute angle approaching 60°. This "opening up" of the angle provides an extra measure of familiarity for the couple member who is least like the single, while still providing well over 50% ($120^\circ/180^\circ \approx 66\%$) character overlap between the mate and the single. These relationships are said to have two subrelationships- a primary and a secondary. The primary shares the most character overlap (acute) between one of the couple members and the single. The secondary, usually less strong, relationship (obtuse) is between the single and the remaining partner. The singulo-couplar relationship is almost always initiated by the participants in the acute subrelation.

How will the relationship between a single person and a couple be affected when the single person becomes a couple?

The relationship will indeed be affected, but the effects cannot reliably be predicted. What we know for certain is that the orientation of the single person is almost never the orientation of that person's resulting couple. According to our definitions, this demands that the orientation of the single person somehow changes. That is, the single person somehow changes the composition of their unique set of qualities. How this is initiated or carried out is still a mystery. Nevertheless, a single person rarely carries their original SC orientation into the resulting IC relationship without measurable adjustment. Obviously this adjustment often creates an imbalance in the existing relationship with the couple, frequently resulting in its dissolution.

If the SC relationship persists in the transformation to an IC relationship, can it be predicted which of the couple will get along best with the single's new mate?

The single person's orientation adjustment is measurable and significant, but not often differing by more than 10°. This means that the orientation of the resultant couple (providing the initial SC relation was an optimal 60° orientation), (coincident with that of the new person), would be between 50° and 70°. A result of 50° obviously stands a better chance of being successful, as it is but five degrees from The Orient. Results closer to 70° still often persist into the IC space, but not as often as singles whose resulting couple orientations adjust more acutely.

Should the IC relationship succeed, we can make the following prediction:

Usually, the member of the pre-existing couple who gets along

**better with the single's new mate is the couple member of the
secondary subrelation of the precursing SC relationship.**

[This prediction is no more than that. It relies on many factors. The astute reader is rewarded if he reasons that the two most important of these factors are: (1) the initial SC relation was less than 80° and (2) the single's adjustment to couplespace resulted in a reorientation difference of less than 10° .]

Please address all inquiries to the author at glen@glen.org. Responses requesting glen's one-page "The Rubik's Cube of Mates" will receive same.