

Dr. Larry S. Fong

Eileen Ailon

Dr. Jim Canniff

Hanita Dagan

Terra Taylor

Dr. Susan Clark

Jack Dobbs

FAC NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2009

Relationship Arithmetic

Professor's 15 Minute Test Predicts Chance of Divorce



ISSUE #117

Couples wondering if true love will last could find out if they are match made in heaven by subjecting themselves to a mathematical test.

A professor at Oxford University and his team have perfected a model whereby they can calculate whether the relationship will succeed.

In a study of 700 couples, Professor James Murray, a math expert, predicted the divorce rate with 94 percent accuracy.

His calculations were based on a simple 15 minute conversation between a couple.

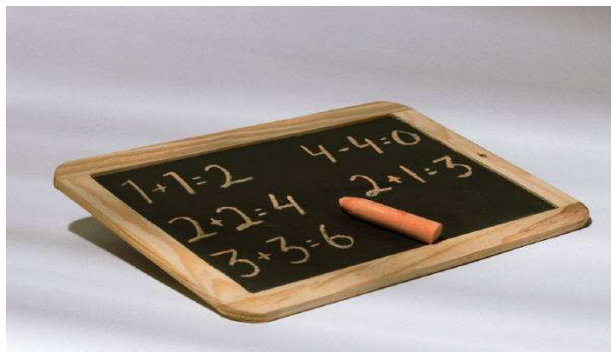
They were asked to sit opposite each other in a room and to talk about a contentious issue, such as money, sex or relations with their in-laws.

Each couple was told to talk about the same topic—one which they had been at loggerheads over for some time—for the whole 15 minutes.

The conversation was recorded and the husband and wife were awarded positive or negative points, depending on what was said.

The partner who showed affection, humor or happiness as they talked was given the maximum points, while those who displayed contempt or belligerence received the minimum.

The scores of the couple were fed into the mathematical model and plotted on a graph. The point at which the two lines met illustrated the marriage's chances of success or failure.



Caroline Gammell. Relationship Arithmetic. *The Telegraph London.*

If either the husband or the wife is consistently negative, then they are going to get a divorce.

Murray said couples could be divided into five groups—two of which were stable, two which were not, with another category in between.

The first identifiable category is the “validating” couple who are calm, intimate, who like to back each other up and share a companionable relationship.

The second group are “avoiders”, who do their best to eschew confrontation and conflict. They only respond positively to their partner.

The “volatile” couple, who are passionate but have heated arguments, are a mix of stable and unstable, but tend to be more unhappy than not.

The “hostile” category is when one partner does not want to talk about an issue and the other agrees, so there is no communication.

The final, “hostile-detached” couple is where one is fiery and wanting to argue, while the other is not interested in discussing the issue.

Here's How it Works:

First decide on a topic of conversation, then lock yourselves away and record the interaction on video. Then watch it and give yourselves the following points every time you demonstrate these responses:

Affection +4	Disgust -3
Humor +4	Belligerence -2
Joy +4	Defensiveness -2
Agreeing +4	Stonewalling -2
Interest +2	Anger -1
Contempt -4	Domineering -1

Chart your score as positive or negative. Repeat periodically and a trend will emerge. A negative trend indicates a worsening relationship, and vice versa.

Murray said the original forecast of who would get divorced in his study of 700 couples, carried out over 12 years, was 100 percent correct.

WHAT'S INSIDE...

HOME ALONE: THE POST-DIVORCE SOCIAL SCENE 2

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE JITTERY—What Everyone Needs to Know About Caffeine..... 5

FONG AILON CANNIFF
115 1st St. SW
Calgary, AB T2P 0B3

www.worldpsych.ca
Phone: (403) 266-2017
Fax: (403)266-4998



FAC NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2009

Home Alone: The Post-Divorce Social Scene

"It's the weekend and once again, I am dreading the feeling of being alone." This sentiment is expressed all too often from many divorcees—be it at the beginning of their separation, or from those that have been divorced for years.

Is it possible to embrace the feeling of aloneness and actually do something positive about it? You bet it is.

At the beginning of their separation or divorce, many people often feel abandoned or sidelined by their married friends. The dynamics of socializing often change upon separation and divorce. While the situation of being the odd man out in a couple's world—a Noah's Ark society—is not uncommon, it can be unnerving. Suddenly single, it's at this time in your life when you need the love and support of your friends like never before. Not every couple excludes the single person, but there are lots who do. There are many reasons why the single person is left out, so don't take it personally. It's easier to fit four or six around a table than three or five. Balanced, even.

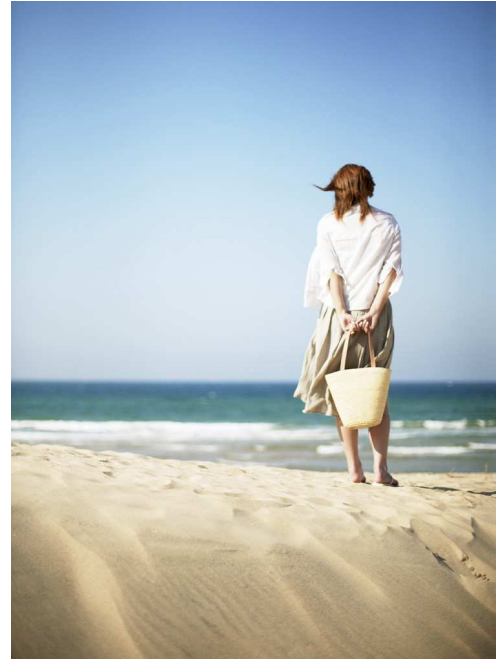
What you need to understand is that this is not about you. It's about the way your friends feel about your situation—or their own. Some people are threatened if they are not in a perfect relationship and seeing you happy might make them feel uncomfortable. Happily married couples don't always mean to overlook their single friends; it's just that they are less likely to think outside the Ark on the weekends.

Here are some tips to overcoming your loneliness while building your new social life:

Pursue your passions and interests—Living your life by doing the things you enjoy will open up a whole new world of people and opportunity. It also provides you with the chance to meet people with similar interests. Join or start your own walking group or book club.

Be adventurous—and move outside your comfort zone. Jumping the hurdles of your uneasiness by doing something you enjoy alone will give you greater confidence, while making you a more interesting person with experiences to share. Enjoy a movie, browse the bookstore, see the latest exhibit at a museum or art gallery.

Follow your dreams—If you've always wanted to study a new language, take a course, join a con-



versational group or do it in style—learn it in France or Spain. There are lots of ways to travel and not feel alone. Sit at the bar of a fabulous restaurant, join a tour for solo travelers, request to share a room if on a tour, ask a friend to join you in your latest adventure.

Make new single friends—Ask your friends if they know of someone single to introduce you to, not for a romantic relationship but for a friendship. Be daring, go to a singles event on your own; after all, that's why people are there—to meet others.

Be happy and honest with your yourself—It is important to admit to loneliness, because sometimes it's that loneliness that will drive you out and sets you on the path to find a partner.

Divorce is rich in opportunities to learn and grow. You may find that over time, you will build a more interesting social network than the one you had while married.

Make the time to learn what really makes you happy and find ways to enjoy your alone time. There are times that you will feel lonely, but that is part of what it means to be divorced, and once you embrace that feeling instead of pretending you're never lonely, it also opens up the joys of solitude and time to reach out to the world to search out that which makes you happy.

FAC NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2009



The Good, The Bad and The Jittery

What Everyone Needs to Know About Caffeine

Kick starting your day with a cup of coffee seems like a logical idea—it's not like you can cram more hours in the day to catch up on sleep. But according to a host of headlines, there's trouble brewing in our love affair with caffeine. Read on to find out the latest about everyone's favourite stimulant.

THE BUZZ ABOUT YOUR BUZZ

What is it about caffeine that gives you that much needed alertness? Caffeine is a mild stimulant found in several plants, including the common coffee plant, the tea bush, cocoa, kola nuts and guarana berries. The jolt you get from your java is thanks to the way caffeine blocks adenosine, a chemical that helps your poor, tired body wind down for sleep.

THE GOOD NEWS

While there's been a lot of talk around coffee klatches about the issue of "cumulative caffeine," don't fret. The only cumulative effect known so far is that you develop a tolerance for it.

More caffeine myth busting: There is no evidence that it causes fibrocystic breast disease. Unless you're guzzling upward of 10 cups of coffee a day, it won't dehydrate you. Nor will it cause osteoporosis, so long as you consume enough calcium and vitamin D. Caffeine even has its upsides—and nowhere near as many downsides as the doom-and-gloomers would have you think:

Cancer concerns Caffeine doesn't cause cancer, in spite of what you've heard in the media. There are compounds in coffee and tea that may actually reduce the risk of certain cancers.

Mood fixer Caffeine does make you more alert and it can boost your mood—so if you feel like a grouch before you get your morning coffee, you have a good reason.

Parkinson's protector Research shows that caffeine may protect against Parkinson's disease. Doctors aren't at the point of suggesting that people start drinking coffee to prevent the disease, but it's an argument against giving up your daily Tim Hortons habit.

THE BAD NEWS

Caffeine does have a dark side, though. Too much can make you jittery and anxious. Plus,

even if you're drinking what Health Canada considers a safe amount, there are some risks:

Insomnia alert Caffeine keeps you awake, so naturally it can cause insomnia. There's no hard and fast rule about when you should cut off your caffeine intake to guarantee a good night's sleep, but there's a pretty good argument for most people to skip that post-dinner coffee. The important factor here is your individual caffeine tolerance.

Nursing concerns While adults can consume caffeine safely, infants have a very low tolerance for the stuff. The risk to infants ranges from increased wakefulness to poor feeding. Nursing moms should limit themselves to two cups a day.

Heart health Consuming caffeine won't increase the risk of a heart attack for most people, but people who metabolize caffeine slowly are at greater risk for heart attacks. What's slowly? A cup of coffee that takes the average person three to ten hours to kick out of their system will stay with a slow metabolizer for 12 to 24 hours. And that is more likely to damage your cardiovascular system. How well your body handles caffeine is partly genetic, but other factors—like use of oral contraceptives, which slow your body's ability to metabolize caffeine—are also in play.

Continued...



FAC NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2009



HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

According to Health Canada, women planning to become pregnant should consume no more than 300 mg of caffeine per day. Other adults can get away with 400 mg.

BREAKING THE HABIT

Perhaps you feel it's time you cut back caffeine or cut it out completely. Take heart: Doing so may be easier than you think. Consuming less

can be as simple as switching beans. Most people have no idea that bold coffee has less caffeine than mild coffee. Some people choose mild because they think it contains less caffeine. While it takes only a week to become dependent on caffeine, it also takes just a week or two to say goodbye to the stimulant. The good news is that there are no long term effects from caffeine consumption, but chances are good that you'll have headaches and feel restless for about a week.

HOW MUCH KICK IS IN YOUR CUP?	
Coffee, Tim Hortons 295 ml (medium)	100 mg caffeine
Coffee, Starbucks 354 ml (tall)	240 mg*
Coffee, instant decaffeinated 237 ml	5 mg
Coffee, espresso 30 ml	30—50 mg
Tea, average blend 237 ml	43 mg
Tea, green 237 ml	30 mg
Cola, diet or regular 355 ml (1 can)	36—50 mg
Red Bull energy drink 250 ml (1 can)	80 mg
Milk chocolate 28 g	7 mg
Sweet chocolate 28 g	19 mg

*Average caffeine content. Bold blends have less caffeine than mild ones.

PREGNANT PAUSE Because no one knows how much caffeine is safe during pregnancy, many doctors urge women to steer clear of it altogether. Health Canada's recommendation of no more than 300 mg of caffeine per day has recently been questioned by a major British study, which found that as little as 200 mg of caffeine per day could result in miscarriage or low birth weight.

Hilary Davidson. The good, the bad and the jittery. *Canadian Today's Parent*. pp. 41—42.

SUGGESTIONS/COMMENTS?

Do you have any suggestions for future articles, or just a comment regarding this newsletter? We welcome your feedback. Please contact Wanda Mueller at 403-266-2017 or wmueller@worldpsych.ca.