

# Double Date with Mark and Jill

## Are Your Wires Crossed?

[www.NoMorePerfectDateNight.com](http://www.NoMorePerfectDateNight.com)

**Mark Savage:** Hey, welcome to, "Double Date with Mark and Jill." We want to start today with this question: Are your wires crossed?

**Jill Savage:** Good question. God wires us in unique ways. In the Book of Psalms, it says that, "He knit us together in our mother's womb." And so, the knitting stitch that He used to create me is different than the knitting stitch that He used to create Mark.

**MS:** That's a nice way to describe the frustrations that we've felt in the past. [laughter]

**JS:** Absolutely. And we would imagine that we are not the only ones. So, we want to look at some common differences, some places that couples struggle with in their marriage, and see if we can help you to feel normal if you're experiencing any of these places and those differences frustrate you. What we need to do is to move from frustration to fascination. We want to be fascinated by these differences. We want to recognize that God has brought us together to complement each other, to fit together like a puzzle, and to recognize that there is intentionality in this. We actually balance each other out. But if we don't label the differences in some way, shape or form, we will bump into those differences. We will bump into those challenges, and we will be frustrated with them.

**MS:** We won't actually know what we're bumping into, and we'll begin to assign a wrongness or to justify why we're right. And in reality, that's not helpful at all.

**JS:** Some of these differences may be things that you're familiar with, you've heard the language before, you've heard the labels before. Some may be new or maybe if you've had the opportunity, we talked just a little about this in our, *No More Perfect Marriages* seminars. If you've joined us for those, maybe you caught just a little bit of those and you've thought about them. Our hope is to go just a little bit deeper today, digging into these, and to give you some sort of an idea of what it is that you may be frustrated with each other about, but you couldn't put your finger on it. So, the first one is random versus sequential thinking. We never had heard of this at all.

**MS:** No.

**JS:** Not a clue. We wrote our first book together...I don't even know how long ago. Eight, nine years ago?

**MS:** Yeah.

**JS:** No, it's probably 10 years ago, something like that. It was our book, *Living with Less So Your Family Has More*. I want you to know that writing that book together was disastrous for us.

**MS:** It was almost like some people who can't hang wallpaper together or work on projects together. We didn't do so well.

**JS:** Yeah. Looking back, we didn't know why, we couldn't have told you what it was. Certainly, there are some ways that we relate with each other now differently than we did 10 years ago. So, that's a piece of it. But I would say, understanding the difference between random and sequential thinking was huge, particularly in the process of writing a book. Mark has a random mind. I have a sequential mind. What does that mean? Mark tends to organize his thoughts into chunks of information. There's an organizational process about it, but it's a chunk here, a chunk there. And I tend to organize my thoughts into, "This is what happens first. This is what happens next. This is what happens third and fourth." And everything has a sequence. I thought everybody operated that way.

**MS:** No. [laughter] The ADD kicks in, and I'm putting together information. "Squirrel! New information. Squirrel! New information." [chuckle]

**JS:** So true. And so, this was huge. When we began to learn this it was like, "Oh, okay." So literally, his brain is knit together in a different way than mine is. And guess what? We need both. Organizing things in chunks is part of what makes him very creative. And I need his creativity because I can get so stuck on just the list and doing things in the right order that I can miss out on where we need creativity. So, when we wrote, *No More Perfect Marriages*, we did it completely differently.

**JS:** Here's what we did. We took the concepts. So, if we were working on a chapter, let's just say we were working on a chapter on forgiveness. I would say to Mark, "Okay. We got to start working on this chapter on forgiveness." And I would say, "Will you take the next three days, and write anything you can think about forgiveness? Any scriptures that come to mind, any stories about where you had to forgive me or any stories about where you experienced my forgiveness? Any stories of somebody else, like another marriage, where you know forgiveness played a role in any of that? You just do a brain dump." And so, he did. He would take it, and he would just dump, dump, dump, dump, dump. And then he would it back, and it would be this like anywhere from three to six pages; even sometimes 10 pages of thoughts.

**JS:** And guess what? Then my sequential brain got so excited because I got to begin to add my thoughts to it, but to organize all of our thoughts together. We had very little conflict writing *No More Perfect Marriages* because we respected the way each other's brain was, and we understood that much better. So, it's helpful to think through. Do you tend to think in chunks and information but not necessarily that this has to come first, and this has to come second, or are you that list person and things have a proper order to them in your mind? If you can identify that, you'll understand if you have a random or a sequential mind style.

**MS:** Yeah. A second difference is that of introvert or extrovert. I am an extrovert, which means I am refueled by being with people.

**JS:** And I am an introvert, which means I am refueled by being alone.

**MS:** Often the misconceptions in the past have been that an introvert doesn't like to be with people and an extrovert can only be with people, but it really is much more than that. It comes back to,

"How am I refueled? How's my energy replenished or how's it depleted?" And then, to handle ourselves accordingly.

**JS:** I want you to think about it like a gas tank. You have a personal gas tank. And you have to know what your fuel is to fill up that gas tank. If your fuel is being alone and you are refueled by that, then you're an introvert. And if your fuel is being with people and that refuels you and re-energizes you, then you have to recognize you are likely an extrovert. When I look at the spectrum and let's say here's the middle line, I just sit right over the introvert line. So, I am fine being with people, I enjoy being with people, but I also know that at some point in time I have to get alone, or I will just feel like the life is sucked out of me.

**JS:** So, we need to recognize that. It will change the way you approach your evenings. It'll change the way you approach your weekends. And the answer is, oftentimes, A, deferring to what your spouse needs, recognizing, "Gosh, they're a better person to be around when they have some fuel in them," and so whatever that fuel needs to be. And B, sometimes we have to meet in the middle. So, for instance, we might go to a social activity and Mark might long to stay for three hours, but he knows that at about an hour and a half, I'm probably done. At that point, he'll make the suggestion, "Would you like to leave?" So, we're meeting in the middle. Sometimes I would probably have rather not gone to that social setting and would have preferred to stay home and read a book. So, I'm going with him, and he's leaving a little bit earlier than I would. We're meeting in the middle.

**MS:** Yeah. And it's been very powerful for us.

**JS:** So, are you an introvert, or are you an extrovert? Do you understand that about yourself? And do you understand that about your spouse?

**JS:** The next one is an internal processor versus an external processor. Now it doesn't always line up that introverts are internal processors and extroverts are external processors. In fact, we have a daughter and she is a huge introvert. When you think of the spectrum and you have this middle line, she sits way over here on the introvert line, but she is also a huge external processor. So, when she is trying to make a decision, or she is just sharing life, she is way over on the external processing side. She likes to talk things out. She needs to hear those thoughts. So, not necessarily does the introvert and internal processor and extrovert and external processor line up.

**MS:** Yeah.

**JS:** So, you have to know what you need. This was a place that we experienced some conflict. I am an internal processor, a huge internal processor, which means I think about it, I think about it, I think about it, I think about it and I think about it some more. And then, I tell Mark what we've decided.

**MS:** That's true. She does. And I am an external processor, which means I talk about it, I talk about it, I talk about it, I talk about it, and talk about it, and talk about it and talk about it some more. Some of you might be exhausted right now or your stress level might have gone up. But I process verbally and externally. I've had to learn how to adjust my processing because sometimes I don't need to say every thought that comes through my mind.

**JS:** Mm-hmm. And I've really had to learn how to speak up sooner rather than later to let Mark

know when something is brewing in my mind. When I'm thinking about something, I have learned that I need to let him know that a little bit sooner. And I've learned that, quite frankly, sometimes I need some other thoughts in there than my own. There is some real value in that as well. So, are you an internal processor, are you an external processor? What is your spouse? And how are you navigating those differences?

**MS:** Yeah, so another one is a thinker and feeler. I am a feeler, which means I process life experiences and decisions based upon my feelings.

**JS:** And I am a thinker, that means I am a researcher. I am one that is looking for the logical side of things. I am trying to understand and make a wise decision based upon facts, not feeling. And I would say in our early years, I didn't understand that Mark has some real discernment about him, meaning that sometimes he has a gut about something, and he can't necessarily give me the facts as to why he feels that way. It's just a place where maybe the Holy Spirit is pressing on his heart. And I used to demand those facts. I wanted those facts. I've learned to respect the fact that, "Gosh, he comes to decisions, he comes to some thoughts in ways different than I do."

**MS:** Yeah. And again, neither of those are wrong. It's just important to think about how we are different and then to accept those differences and work within them.

**JS:** So, is one of you a thinker? Is one of you a feeler? Is there any way that you need to begin to respect that difference in each other and begin to recognize that, "Gosh, you actually complement each other"? So, another difference that you need to consider is, are you structured or are you spontaneous? In our marriage, I'm the structured one.

**MS:** And I am definitely the spontaneous one.

**JS:** Absolutely. And one of the things that we've actually come to understand is this probably has to do with our mind style that my structured sequential mind style is more likely to think, "This happens, this happens, this happens." I'm more structured. His random mind style really lends itself to spontaneity. Because he hops around in his thoughts. One of the places that we've really come to understand this, though, is as it relates to surprises. At least for me, I won't speak for every structured person out there, but I think this is part of the reason I don't really care for surprises and Mark loves surprises.

**MS:** Mm-hmm. I do love surprises, but I've learned that Jill doesn't like surprises unless I tell her ahead of time...

**JS:** What the surprise is.

**MS:** Yeah, and somehow that just doesn't make sense that it's a surprise.

**JS:** But it is. It's a surprise when he tells me. [laughter]

**MS:** And she says, "Because you thought of it." And I was like, "Oh, okay."

**JS:** Yeah. Exactly. But are you structured? Are you spontaneous? How are your brains working differently in that area? And what do you need to understand about yourself? What do you need to

understand about each other?

**JS:** Next one is innie, outie. And this is how you organize your stuff. Are you an innie who loves to file? Or are you an outie who prefers to pile? That's the question that you need to answer. I am actually an outie. I prefer to pile because if I file things, I don't remember where they are. I need to see things to have them remind me. So, I do a lot with sticky notes because they remind me of things that I need to keep on my radar screen.

**MS:** And I'm an innie who loves to file so that I know where I put it. Everything should have its home and if I don't file it, I can't find it.

**JS:** I'm not an extreme outie. I used to be; I had a lot of clutter. I've learned my clutter was stressing me out. And so, I've learned from Mark how to have some innie habits so that I better function in my outieness. So that my outieness doesn't stress me out. But it can cause conflict in a marriage for a couple. If somebody is an extreme outie, they have a lot of clutter and their spouse is an innie and prefers things to be cleaned up. If we don't understand that God has made us differently and find some sort of middle ground, it can be a place of extreme frustration.

**MS:** Right.

**JS:** And then the last one. This is one that, boy, we did not understand for a long time. And that is: what is your capacity level? Capacity refers to the number of plates you can spin at one time before becoming overwhelmed by them. And so, I tend to have a medium-high capacity level, meaning, I can spin a lot of plates before I ever feel overwhelmed. Mark is more of a medium-low capacity, meaning he can't spin quite as many plates before he ends up in that place.

**MS:** For me, as a low capacity person, I just can't run with Jill. I become more tired. I become frustrated if I try to expand my capacity. I can do it short-term, but for very long, it just exhausts me.

**JS:** In all of these, we can easily say, "You're wrong. There's something wrong with you because you become overwhelmed so easily." No, there's nothing wrong. That is the way that God has wired you. You have to be okay with that. That's the way God has wired your spouse. And so, instead of charging them that they are wrong, you have to embrace the difference. So, what I can tell you is that Mark slows me down and I need that sometimes. He balances me out.

**MS:** Yeah, and Jill speeds me up. And I need that.

**JS:** One of the places that we've really come to understand this is in our travels. We travel quite a bit for speaking. If we can, I try to work an extra day into our travels because Mark needs a day to come down off of the event that we've been at. And so, if we can get home early the next day and have the whole day to kind of recoup and unpack and take a nap or, all of that, then that really helps him. For me, I can come back and hit the road running. It doesn't bother me, but that doesn't make me more right than him. It doesn't make him wrong or even his way more right than mine.

**MS:** Right.

**JS:** So, we need to recognize that. Are you medium-high capacity? Are you medium-low capacity?

Are you understanding what your spouse is? And be careful. I'll speak for a moment to those of you that are medium-high. I used to think, "That's fine. He can run at his 30 miles an hour. I'll run at my 70 miles an hour, and we'll be just fine. Because as long as we stay in our own lanes, no big deal." The truth is, when I run at my 70 miles an hour, he has some places where he has to pick up some extra plates. He has some things that he has to do.

**JS:** Particularly, I think of when our kids were at home. So, if I was doing multiple things outside of the home, then that puts some extra plates on his lap that he had to begin to...maybe, pick up dinner. And he had to make sure that the kids were fed or put the kids to bed. And so, that's adding more to him. So, it's not that, "Fine, you can just work it your way, I can work it my way." Sometimes you have to meet in the middle and figure out what is a way that honors your pace and honors my pace, recognizes we actually balance each other out and meet in the middle.

**MS:** Yeah. And it makes for a better we, in that way.

**JS:** Absolutely. So, I don't know which one of those really made the alarm go off or send up a red flag. But, we want to encourage you to think about the way that God has wired you and resist the places where you might think that your spouse is wrong. Recognize they're just different. And then, learn how to navigate that and allow it to balance out your marriage.

**JS:** Thanks for joining us.