



Dr. Helen Fisher,

Member of the The Center for Human Evolutionary Studies at the Rutgers University, is a leading expert on the biology of human personality and a pioneer in examining the neurochemistry of leadership and innovation. She is the chief scientific advisor to Match.com and chemistry.com

Helen Fisher PhD, Senior Research Fellow, The Kinsey Institute talks about human biologically-based personality styles

EURO COSMETICS: *Dr. Fisher, as we have learned, you are a leader in the field of neuroscience and have travelled the world educating people in many fields as to your research in the phenomenology of the brain's behavior. It is also quite surprising that you have concluded that independent of peoples' race, geographic location and multi-cultural diversity, that everyone's brain behaves the same. Could you elaborate on this please?*

Dr. Helen Fisher: I study love in the brain. I and my colleagues have put over 100 men and women into a brain scanner (using fMRI) to see what happens in the brain when you fall madly in love, rejected in love, or are in love long term.

And after years of studying love, I began to wonder whether different people love in different ways. So I decided to see if there were specific biological patterns to personality. There are two basic parts of personality: your character – or everything you grew up to think, do and believe due to your cultural upbringing. And your temperament: all those traits that you inherited. Scientists now believe that some 40–60% of who you are derives from your biology, your inheritance. So I started to study temperament, the biological aspects of your personality.

And, as I researched several decades of biological literature, I came to see that humanity has evolved four broad basic styles of thinking and behaving linked with four basic neurochemical systems: the dopamine, serotonin, testosterone and estrogen/oxytocin systems in the brain.

The Dopamine System:

Those who are particularly expressive of the traits linked with the dopamine system, whom I call **Explorers**. They tend to be spontaneous, energetic, risk-taking, curious, creative, and mentally flexible.

The Serotonin System:

Individuals particularly expressive of the traits linked with the serotonin system, whom I call **Builder**, tend to be traditional, cautious, orderly, process-oriented, and concrete thinkers who follow the rules, make schedules and respect authority.

The Testosterone System:

Those particularly expressive to the traits associated with the testosterone system, whom I call **Directors**, tend to be analytical, direct, decisive, tough minded, skeptical and good at “rule based systems,” such as math, engineering, computers, mechanics or music.

The Estrogen/Oxytocin System:

Men and women who are particularly expressive of the traits hailing from the estrogen/oxytocin system, whom I call **Negotiator**, tend to be imaginative, intuitive, empathetic, emotionally expressive, excelling at verbal and people skill and contextual thinkers.



Each of us is, of course, a unique and complex mesh of all these traits and corresponding brain systems. But each of us expresses some of these traits more than others. And our temperament drives us to communicate, work, lead, innovate **and buy** in specific and predictable ways.

But you asked about cultural differences. I study traits that appear in all cultures. Take curiosity. Some Chinese are more curious than others, as are those in France, the USA and Argentina. I study traits that are universal to all humans.

EURO COSMETICS: *You have created the world's first questionnaire for Match.com that has been answered by fourteen million people around the world and that you have correlated their answers with neurological behavior measured by a brain scanner. Please tell us your incredible result.*

Dr. Helen Fisher: Well, after discovering these four basic personality styles, I created a questionnaire with 56 questions to see to what degree you express the traits associated with each of these four brain systems.

And, working with Match, I put this questionnaire onto various Match.com sites in 40 countries. This is why I was able to get such a big sample. Then I watched, on the America site, to see who was naturally drawn to whom.

As it turns out, Explorers – or curious, creative, high dopamine folks – are drawn to other curious creative people, other Explorers. Likewise, Builders – or those very expressive of the serotonin system who are traditional and rule following – are also drawn to people like themselves: other rule following, traditional Builders. In these two cases, similarity attracts. But in the other two cases, opposites attract. High testosterone Directors are naturally attracted to high estrogen Negotiators, and the reverse.

But I can't predict who will actually fall in love with whom – because there are other factors that will always play a role. People tend to fall in love with those who are around; timing is important.

So is proximity. And we tend to fall in love with those of the same ethnic background, level of intelligence, degree of good looks, with the same values and economic and reproductive goals. Many factors go into mate choice.

So what I hope to do with my research is simply add to our knowledge of personality and the contribution that personality makes in who you love, as well as the role that these four basic biologically based personality styles play in creating the joys and sorrows of a long term partnership.

EURO COSMETICS: *Recently you asked a French Perfumer to prepare four fragrances that he thought would be attractive to each of the four different styles of brain behavior. You went to several countries and had groups of journalists smell them and came out with some surprising results. Please tell us more about this.*

Dr. Helen Fisher: Thanks for this question; the following is why I am so interested in the fragrance industry and its numerous applications and opportunities for increasing sales of cosmetics and personal care products.

Match.com and I went to Paris to open the Match office there, and to introduce my questionnaire and my four personality styles to the French audience. Moreover, we asked a French perfumer to make a perfume that he thought would appeal to each of the four different basic personality styles. In my instructions to the perfumer, I listed the basic traits of each of the four personality styles. He made the four perfumes, each based on my description of each type.

Then, on the designated days, 18 French journalists came to a fancy hotel to interview me about my work with Match and the four personality styles. And as each journalist entered the hotel room, he or she first took my personality questionnaire and sampled all four perfumes; then told us which perfume he/she liked best.

As it turned out, 16 of the 18 journalists chose the perfume that

matched their primary personality style! It was at that moment that I realized that your basic biologically based personality style plays a role in much more than just who you choose to love. It also plays a role in what you like to smell. And I am now convinced that it also plays a role in how you respond to colors, to ads, and to much of life.

EURO COSMETICS: *It sounds like your enlightened understanding of the function of the human brain and its relation to behavior would be of incredible value to the beauty industry since Consumers are inevitably looking for products they are attracted to and Sales and Marketing professionals are always looking for ways to have consumers like their messages and buy their products. Could you tell us some of the opportunities you see for the Beauty Field.*

Dr. Helen Fisher: I just made a speech at the International Advertising Festival in Cannes, France (2016) to introduce my brain science and my understanding of these four basic biologically based personality styles. During that speech I looked at several ads and showed the audience why people of each personality style would be particularly attracted to some ads and not to others. The human brain hasn't changed in the past 200,000 thousand years. So certain kinds of ads will be appealing to certain kinds of people, whether they live in Japan, Spain or the Fiji Islands. **In short: once you come to understand who your customers really are, you can use these data to sell them just about anything.**

EURO COSMETICS: *It sounds like your technology will also be of use to fragrance manufacturers, packaging designers, marketers, technical product developers and certainly business professionals. Please describe your vision.*

Dr. Helen Fisher: Yes, once you know about how the brain works, you can appeal to it in myriad different ways. I wrote a book about these styles of thinking called: WHY HIM? WHY HER? Although it focuses on mate choice, romance, attachment and how to improve a long term relationships by knowing about the brain and these four basic personality styles, the basic ideas in this book can be adapted and used in any field of endeavor. An excellent application is to use these concepts in the cosmetic and personal care industry!

EURO COSMETICS: *As a bottom line summary of your extensive global research you have come up with what you call the "Platinum Rule". What you mean by this?*

Dr. Helen Fisher: I no longer believe in the Golden Rule – to do unto others and you would have done unto yourself. Instead, I believe in the Platinum Rule – do unto others as they would have done unto themselves. This way you will be able to reach into their minds and win. ■

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