

Ned: This is Episode number 161 for Stay Happily Married: Dating Advice That Will Save Your Marriage.

Announcer: Welcome to Stay Happily Married, your source for weekly updates on the latest tips and advice to build a happy and healthy marriage.

Today's episode of Stay Happily Married is brought to you by the Rosen Law Firm, For more information, visit us at rosen.com.

Ned: I'm Ned Daze, and I'm your host today. Welcome to the show. I'm really excited about today's show. I'm here with Kiai Kim, a dating and relationship expert from New York. She's the author of the book, "Alpha Dog: A Man's Guide to Dating, By a Woman." You might know Kiai by her alias, Wing Girl Kim. She writes for numerous online publications, a men's magazine called "The Rugged", and several blogs where she shares her unique approach to relationships based on leadership and personality types.

I'm really excited about this today. I think this is going to be kind of unique in that we can apply lessons from the dating world to marriages. When Kiai is not sharing her experience in dating and relationships, she likes to relax by riding and repairing motorcycles. Right now, she has a 1975 Honda that she's very fond of. Welcome to the show, Kiai. I'm so glad you could join us.

Kiai: Thank you. It's good to be here.

Ned: I'm real excited about this. I think this is going to be an interesting spin on what we normally do on the show. The book you've got, "Alpha Dog", I think is a really interesting approach to the whole dating and relationship issue because you come at it from this, almost animalistic leadership type of way. Then you also pull in this personality type idea that we're going to get to in just a little bit. I'm wondering what caused you to take this real unique approach at writing this book. This isn't really something I've seen a whole lot of people tackle on love and relationship books.

Kiai: I actually have a spiritual background, and one of the things that I noticed, in relationships around people who had a spiritual upbringing, were leadership qualities that were very similar to the way successful businesses have CEOs who are very strong in their leadership capabilities. I put the two together and saw how a lot of relationships were lacking in this leadership and decided to come up with an approach, come up with a way to help people understand how leadership is necessary in their relationships.

Then I started to realize that one of the things that cause people to not understand how to use leadership is that they don't understand their own thought tendencies. You'll find that a lot of natural leaders have a certain way of thinking, a way of looking at the world. If we can learn to see from that perspective and learn to

understand those thought tendencies, we can apply those same kinds of thought tendencies in our own lives and practice leadership skills in that way.

Ned: Right. A lot of what we're going to be talking about today is the compatibility issue in marriage. I wonder, do you find this leadership role allows people to deal with these compatibility issues better or head them off at the pass?

Kiai: I'm sorry, say that question again.

Ned: Some of what we're going to be talking about is compatibility in marriage, and I'm wondering if this leadership focused idea of taking on a relationship helps address those issues better than a lot of other ways people look at resolving conflicts in a marriage.

Kiai: Absolutely. One of the things that I use in my book is an archetype about dogs, wild dogs, which is why I call it "Alpha Dog" because every wild dog pack has two alpha dogs, a male and a female. They lead an entire pack. In their leadership for the pack, they're not just telling dogs what to do. They're not the intimidating ones. They are actually psychological leaders. They're actually teaching the beta dogs how to hunt. They're taking care of the sick dogs and old dogs. They're also altruistic.

If we learn to have an approach in that sense, every challenge that couples will face along their marriage, they'll be able to have some wherewithal with leadership skills. It's not just about, I'm right in this situation and I'm going to do it my way. It's how can we make this work? How can we get through this challenge together?

Ned: Right. I want to take a step back and look at it from the dating angle. I'm wondering, when you're helping people in the dating scene, when you're trying to help people assess compatibility with other people before they're married, what are some of these things that you're looking for or that you're telling other people to look for?

Kiai: The most obvious thing is the way that you see the world or the way you take in information. There's basically two different ways that we take in information. You can see things from a very minute level on a detailed level. Say, for example, we see a problem. We look at our car. Our car's broken down. We might open the hood and start looking at all the little parts of our car looking for the problem. Or we can look at it from a holistic perspective and assess the problem overall.

We might look at what happened when I was driving the car. Okay, it made this noise and then this happened and this happened all at the same time. So let me try to figure out from that angle. We can look at situations from these two different angles, and what happens with compatibility is people will tend to understand each other's perspective easier. If a person is more detail oriented and their talking

with someone who's also detailed oriented, they'll be able to understand each other's perspective better. For an example . . .

Ned: Right.

Kiai: There is also the possibility that one person's more detailed oriented than the other person but as long as one person is flexible or both are flexible, then they're able to see from each other's angle.

Ned: Okay.

Kiai: That would be the easiest way to see compatibility. The other side is how a person makes decisions. We either make decisions using our emotions, or we use logic when we make decisions. Some people tend to use or actually we really all tend to use one more than the other. There are a very, very small percentage who use the same amount of emotion or logic.

Most people tend to use either logic or emotions more when they make decisions. Similar to "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus" except that the thing that book does not account for is the fact that there are women who are logical decision makers and there are men who are emotional decision makers.

Ned: Right.

Kiai: This is another place where compatibility can be a problem in dating. If you're dating somebody and you're used to saying, I want to go to this restaurant because it's affordable, because the chef is good, as opposed to an emotional person saying, oh, I had a bad experience last time I don't want to go to that restaurant.

If you know the kind of person that you are and the kind of decisions that you make, you can look out for these things in a person that you're dating. You don't want to go out with somebody who's an extreme from yourself. Somebody that you might struggle with down the line when you're used to each other and dealing with your day-to-day.

Ned: Right.

Kiai: These are also the tendencies that I talk about. They're not just things that come from life experience, they're really things that are ingrained in our DNA. We're all born with tendencies to think one way or the other. This is where it's important, if you're in a marriage to make sure that you understand how a person is naturally. You cannot change that in a person.

Ned: Right.

Kiai: In dating, it's something to look out for. What is this person's natural tendencies? What's this thing that I cannot change in this person? Can I live with it?

Ned: Right. Now I want to go to the other end and say, right now that you're stuck with this person, what do we do? Before we jump into that, I want to touch a little bit, some of these Jungian personality types and I'm going to hopefully not sound like an idiot here. I'm guessing this is Carl Jung, if I maybe remember something from college. OK. I got it right. Could you explain that just a little bit and go over what those are and how those figure into the way people relate to one another?

Kiai: Sure. It takes hours to go through all 16 personality types.

Ned: Right.

Kiai: In the Jungian personality type theory there is mother/daughter team, Myers-Briggs that came up with, I guess you can all it a platform for determining different thought functions and the way people use their different thought functions together. They came up with 16 different types.

The first aspect is where one draws inspiration. Do you draw inspiration from objects and people, or do you draw inspiration from your own thoughts? The second set of thought functions is how you take in information. Are you detailed oriented or sensory or are you more holistic or intuitive in the way you take in information?

The third is the emotion and logic decision making. Do you tend to make decisions with your feelings or with your logic? The fourth is the way you deal with your outer world. Are you more structured in the way you deal with your world? Do you want to know how things turn out ahead of time, or are you kind of like fly by the seat of your pants, it's easier to take things as they come? Are you happier to take things as they come versus knowing what's going to happen in advance?

Ned: Okay.

Kiai: It's kind of a mouth full. Does that make sense?

Ned: Yeah. That covers all the bases there. When we look at a marriage, I'm guessing if we got a couple who, what's the common thing where you see couples having issues? Is it this kind of issue where there's a bit of clash between these personality types? Neither one, they're comfortable in their relationship. They don't want to leave, but they're having these issues over these things that they might not realize they don't have a whole lot of control over, that they can't change in their spouse.

Kiai: Yeah. I'll give you an example actually of a friend of mine who is married to her exact opposite. In spite of being married to her exact opposite,, they actually get along well together because they compliment each other. This is actually very rare. Most couples who are opposite each other don't really compliment each other.

The way they work it out is, she is actually an introverted, intuitive, emotional yet strict, we call it judging, Myers-Briggs calls it judging type. Basically what that means is she is an artistic, creative thinker who likes to have things done a certain way.

Ned: All right.

Kiai: Her husband is very energetic about going out and being with his friends. He's very methodical and practical. Also logical so he can be harsh and maybe insensitive to her, but he's also very forgiving. He's very flexible, is very fine with doing things last minute. His flexibility makes it easy to handle her creativity, but yet he can get a little frustrated by the fact that she likes to do things a certain way. Then she, because his way of doing things might seem emotional because he's a little bit more spontaneous, a little bit more free flowing with his schedule, will change things last minute, and it bothers her that he'll change something last minute and say, we're going out to dinner tonight. Because she's artistic and creative, she kind of sees things from a bigger picture and tries to find reasons to be okay with his last minute going out.

Ned: All right.

Kiai: That's just one example. There are examples of people who might have, actually I think one of the biggest struggles with couples that I see, is the fact that one person is more introverted than the other and the other one is very extroverted. One person wants to go out all the time and the other doesn't.

Ned: Right.

Kiai: This is actually the struggle with my friend and her husband. Again, because she's intuitive she's able to take a step back and see a good reason why it's good to go out. Whereas, someone who's introverted and more detail oriented might have a harder time to rationalize why she should go out or he should go out. That struggle with what are we doing tonight can lead into a lot of tension if one has a tendency to get tired from being out late or being out around people.

Ned: Right.

Kiai: I think in that type of situation there is a lot of compromise necessary. There's a lot of compromise necessary in that if an introverted person needs to have time

alone, let that person have time alone. The other one needs to go out, and they need to be able to trust each other.

Ned: Right.

Kiai: I think trust will be a huge factor in making a marriage work, where two people are very different in where they get their energy.

Ned: Okay. I'm wondering how long into the relationship does it really take for this to become a factor. I'm guessing early on it's not really a big deal, it almost seems to compliment each other more than anything, but do you notice people, is there a point in time where they start realizing we really are different in this aspect, this might be a problem?

Kiai: Yeah. Particularly with couples who start out in their 30s or even late 20s, they usually can see that within six to nine months. The first six months can be difficult because everything, you're still in love, it's fresh, the relationship is new. I think if people are able to overlook that elation and see the relationship on a more practical level, it would be easier to see how those differences can be a struggle.

Ned: Right.

Kiai: Especially if they spend time on a daily basis. I think couple who only see each other once or twice a week, it will take them longer to recognize that. A couple who can do more activities together and see each other in different lights will have an easier time seeing those issues.

Ned: Okay. Let's say, we've got a couple, they've been married, we'll call it, six or seven years. They're starting to deal with this either introvert or extrovert or some other kind of personality clash. They don't really know what to do about it. They aren't able to get to the point right now where they're as accepting of the other spouse's way of living or just their personality trait. What do you see them doing instead? Instead of trying to fix it, do they avoid the issue altogether or do they yell at their spouse? What are they doing on a daily basis?

Kiai: If a couple does not understand their thinking tendencies, of course it's very easy to get into fights and slowly separate from each other with time and emotion distance. The more people understand what their thinking tendencies are, the more they can establish, for example, a schedule.

Say, Monday, Wednesday, Friday I'm going to go out and do my thing, or Tuesday and Thursday I'm going to go do my thing. And Monday, Wednesday, Friday let's have dinner together, let's do our favorite activities together, those things we share in common.

Just by understanding that simple thing, okay I'm an introvert, I really need my time alone. Okay so these days, why don't you spend your time alone and I'm going to go out and do my extrovert thing. Another thing would be if people see life in a different way, if they can agree on something, if they can find one thing to agree on together, they should let that one thing be something they spend a little extra time on together to strengthen their relationship and communication.

The most important factor is understanding those differences and understanding where they come from. That it's an unchangeable thing and that if you're willing to make that compromise to find the commonalities and make those commonalities work together and let the differences just be the differences, I think it will help alleviate a lot of those arguing problems and those different schedules, those kinds of problems.

Ned: Right. I was going to ask what are some of the ways that couples can basically reconcile these differences, and I guess you're saying you need to sit down at the kitchen table and say, here's a compromise we can come up with of what we do to make this work.

Kiai: Yes. Exactly. It needs to be very up front. It needs to be in trust. I think one of the biggest problems also with couples that can't figure out what's wrong in the relationship is that they think that there is a lack of trust there. They think the other person's doing something behind their back. I think if two people can be completely up front with each other and really honest and say, okay this is what I need, they can address those tendencies. I think this way. I can't help but be emotional. I can't help, but I try to use logic but I can't help but have these feelings of doubts or feelings of jealousy.

Then, okay, just be up front and honest about what's going on and if emotions are an issue, then let's put it out on the table and figure out how to make it easier to deal with, make it easier to live with. Let's try to work some logic into here. I know you're not trusting me. I know you're being emotional about this. I think this is why you're being emotional. I think you don't trust me because of my past girlfriend. Or I don't think you trust me because you don't like the secretary at work.

Let's lay this out and say, you know what, yeah, that secretary is pretty attractive but I love you. I married you. I didn't marry her, that kind of discussion. It can be really difficult. It can be one of those things that is almost a make or break point in the relationship, but it's very important to keep those trust lines open.

Ned: Right. I'm thinking of people, I know I'm super conflict avoidance so I know something like this comes up I just like to ignore the problem and hope that it goes away when in fact I'm sure it just festers and gets worse. Do you have any suggestions for people who are sitting there and don't want to rock the boat? Do

they really have to get the cojones together and sit down and say, all right here's the issue we need to solve it right now?

Kiai: For me personally, I'm actually not very good at being vocal. Actually I don't mind conflict, but when I approach conflict I can be very insensitive. What I do is I write down the issue. I write down the conflict in an email or a letter, and as I'm writing it down I'm able to voice all of my concerns and then also edit myself to make sure I don't offend the other person. I'm as gentle as possible. I think if a person is afraid of conflict, writing a letter is a good way of addressing it without being completely in your face about it.

Ned: Go ahead.

Kiai: Another thing also, I think it's very important also to reflect on one's own personality. Reflect on one's own thinking tendencies and to really come up with the root of the issue before approaching the conflict. You don't want to go into a conflict with no way out of it. You want to be able to have some sort of understanding when you try to do problem solving. Does that make sense?

Ned: Yeah. I'm wondering to kind of tie this back into the leadership aspect we talked about earlier, once couples work through this and get this working, how does it look in a relationship or a marriage where you've got the alpha male and alpha female perspective going on?

Kiai: The ideal leader is an extroverted, intuitive, thinking, judging type. Some psychologists call it the field marshal, the general, the head, whatever. If we learn to use our minds in that way, we become outwardly focused, the extrovert. We look beyond our own thoughts and try to look for things outside ourselves. Look for other examples. Look at the other person and try to understand the other person.

The intuitive part is taking a step back and seeing the bigger picture. Is this argument that we're in really worth all of my frustration? Is this frustration worth the amount of energy and the amount of yelling or the amount of tears that I'm crying for it? Can I take a step back and see does it really matter. How does this person in my life affect my entire life? Try to look for all the positive things about the relationship rather than focus on just the problem.

The logical side, we touched on it by understanding. Let's find the root of the problem. How do I understand my own personality type? How do I understand my own thought functions? How do I understand the other person's thought functions? By understanding the thought functions and the differences, then you can pinpoint the root of the argument. You can understand, oh that's why we've got into this argument because of this misunderstanding because you see it this way and I see it this way. The logic side is getting to the root of the problem and also trying to see things objectively and not subjectively.

The last part, the judging part, is planning ahead and being able to foresee things before problems arise. Before your voice rises out of frustration, can you try to plan ahead and write that letter actually. Letter writing is a good way of practicing that judging tendency. Gather your thoughts and make your thoughts, how do you say it, communicate your thoughts in a way that's not offensive and not insensitive.

Ned: Right. I do really like the letter writing idea because you can go back and revise a letter, you can't really revise what you've said to somebody, it's always a little dangerous. Right. Was there anything else, anything else we need to know today, anything we haven't covered?

Kiai: No. Well, I'm trying to think here. The topic can go into so many other areas.

Ned: It kind of applies to work relationships, relationships not just with your spouse but your friends, really kind of everything.

Kiai: Exactly. We've covered a lot.

Ned: Terrific. Kiai, thank you so much for talking with us today and being on the show, I really appreciate it.

Kiai: Absolutely. Thank you.

Ned: Absolutely. You can find out a lot more about Kiai by visiting alphadogthebook.com or datingthoughts.com, and again you may also know her by Wing Girl Kim is her handle as well in a lot of her other writings.

Of course, thanks to all of you today for joining us and listening to the show. I hope you'll join us again next week. We always love to hear from you to comment on this or any episode. You can call our listener comment line at 919-256-3083 or email us at comments@stayhappilymarried.com. I'm Ned Daze. Until next time, stay happily married.

Announcer: Thank you for joining us today on Stay Happily Married. If you'd like more information, please visit us on the web at stayhappilymarried.com. We would love to hear your feedback or comments. Please email us at comments@stayhappilymarried.com or call us at 919-256-3083. Until next time, best wishes.