

ENGINEERS as we see them at Group Gerhardt

The architect, the artist and the engineer were discussing whether it was better to spend time with the wife or the mistress.

The architect said he enjoyed time with his wife, building a solid foundation for an enduring relationship.

The artist said he enjoyed time with his mistress, because of the passion and mystery he found there

The engineer said "I like both"

"Both?"

The engineer replied, "Yeah. If you have a wife and a mistress, they will both assume you are spending time with the other woman. Then you can get into the lab and do something really important."

ENGINEERS EXPLAINED

People who work in the fields of science and technology are not like other people. This can be frustrating to the non-technical people who have to deal with them. The secret to coping with technology-oriented people is to understand their motivations. This chapter will teach you everything you need to know. I learned their customs and mannerisms by observing them, much the way Jane Goodall learned about the great apes, but without the hassle of grooming.

Engineering is so trendy these days that everybody wants to be one. The word "engineer" is greatly overused. If there's somebody in your life who you think is trying to pass as an engineer, give them this test to discern the truth.

ENGINEER IDENTIFICATION TEST

You walk into a room and notice that a picture is hanging crooked. You:

- A. Straighten it.
- B. Ignore it
- C. Buy a CAD system and spend the next six months designing a solar-powered, self-adjusting picture frame while often stating aloud your belief that the inventor the nail was a total moron.

The correct answer is "C" but partial credit can be given to anybody who writes "It depends" in the margin of the test or simply blames the whole stupid thing on "Marketing".

SOCIAL SKILLS

Engineers have different objectives when it comes to social interaction.

"Normal" people expect to accomplish several unrealistic things for social interaction:

- Stimulating and thought-provoking conversation
- Important social contacts

- A feeling of connectedness with other humans

In contrast to “normal” people, engineers have rational objectives for social interactions:

- Get it over with as soon as possible.
- Avoid getting invited to something unpleasant.
- Demonstrate mental superiority and mastery of all subjects.

FASCINATION WITH GADGETS

To the engineer, all matter in the universe can be placed into one of two categories:

- 1) things that need to be fixed, and
- 2) things that will need to be fixed after you’ve had a few minutes to play with them.

Engineers like to solve problems. If there are no problems handily available, they will create their own problems. Normal people don’t understand this concept; they believe that if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it. Engineers believe that if it ain’t broke, it doesn’t have enough features yet.

No engineer looks at a television remote control without wondering what it would take to turn it into a stun gun. No engineer can take a shower without wondering if some sort of Teflon coating would make showering unnecessary. The engineer, the work is a toy box full of sub-optimized and feature-poor toys.

FASHION AND APPEARANCE

Clothes are the lowest priority for an engineer, assuming the basic thresholds for temperature and decency have been satisfied. If no appendages are freezing or sticking together, and if no genitalia or mammary glands are swinging around in plain view, then the objective of clothing has been met. Anything else is a waste.

LOVE OF “STAR TREK”

Engineers love all of the “Star Trek” television shows and movies, It’s small wonder, since the engineers on the starship Enterprise are portrayed as heroes, occasionally even having sex with aliens. This is much more glamorous than the real life of an engineer, which consists of hiding from the universe and having sex without the participation of other life forms.

DATING AND SOCIAL LIFE

Dating is never easy for an engineer. A “normal” person will employ various indirect and duplicitous methods to create a false impression of attractiveness. Engineers are incapable of placing appearance above function.

Fortunately, engineers have an ace in the hole. They are widely recognized as superior marriage material: Intelligent, dependable, employed, honest and handy around the house. While it’s true that most normal people would prefer not to date an engineer, many normal people harbor an intense desire to mate with them, thus producing engineer-like children who will have high-paying jobs long before losing their virginity.

Male engineers reach their peak of sexual attractiveness later than normal men, becoming irresistible erotic dynamos in their mid thirties to late forties. Just look at these examples of sexually irresistible men in technical professions:

- Bill Gates
- MacGyver

Female engineers become irresistible at the age of consent and remain that way until about thirty minutes after their death. Longer if it's a warm day.

HONESTY (complete list of engineer lies)

Engineers are always honest in matters of technology and human relationships. That's why it's a good idea to keep engineers away from customers, romantic interests, and other people who can't handle the truth.

Engineers sometimes bend the truth to avoid work. They say things that sound like lies but technically are not because somebody could be expected to believe them. The complete list of engineer lies is listed here:

- “I won't change anything without asking you first.”
- “I'll return your hard-to-find cable tomorrow”
- “I have to have new equipment to do my job.”
- “I'm not jealous of your new computer.”

FRUGALITY

Engineers are notoriously frugal. This is not because of cheapness or mean spirit; it is simply because every spending situation is simply a problem in optimization, that is, “How can I escape this situation while retaining the greatest amount of cash?”

POWERS OF CONCENTRATION

If there is one trait that best defines an engineer it is the ability to concentrate on one subject to the complete exclusion of everything else in the environment. This sometimes causes engineers to be pronounced dead prematurely. Some funeral homes in high-tech areas have started checking resumes before processing the bodies. Anybody with a degree in electrical engineering or experience in computer programming is propped up in the lounge for a few days just to see if he or she snaps out of it.

RISK

Engineers hate risk. They try to eliminate it whenever they can. This is understandable, given that when an engineer makes one little mistake, the media will treat it like it's a big deal or something.

EXAMPLES OF BAD PRESS FOR ENGINEERS

- Hindenburg
- Space Shuttles Challenger and Columbia
- Hubble Space Telescope
- Apollo 13
- AMC Pacer

The risk/reward calculation for engineers looks something like this:

RISK: Public humiliation and the death of thousands of innocent people.

REWARD: A certificate of appreciation in a handsome plastic frame.

Being a practical people, engineers evaluate this balance of risks and rewards and decide that risk is not a good thing. The best way to avoid risk is by advising that any activity is technically impossible for reasons that are far too complicated to explain.

If that approach is not sufficient to halt a project, then the engineer will fall back to a second line of defense: "It's technically possible, but it will cost too much."

EGO

Ego-wise, two things are important to engineers:

- How smart they are.
- How many cool devices they own.

The fastest way to get an engineer to solve a problem is to declare that the problem is unsolvable. No engineer can walk away from an unsolvable problem until it's solved. No illness or distraction is sufficient to get the engineer off the case. These types of challenges quickly become personal.... A battle between the engineer and the laws of nature.

Engineers will go without food and hygiene for days to solve a problem (other times just because they forgot). And when they succeed in solving the problem, they will experience an ego rush that is better than sex—and that includes the kind of sex where other people are involved.

Nothing is more threatening to the engineer than the suggestion that somebody has more technical skill. Normal people sometimes use that knowledge as a lever to extract more work from the engineer. When an engineer says that something can't be done (a code phrase that means it's not fun to do), some clever normal people have learned to glance at the engineer with a look of compassion and pity and say something along these lines: "I'll ask Bob to figure it out. He knows how to solve difficult technical problems."

At that point, it is a good idea for the normal person to not stand between the engineer and the problem. The engineer will set upon the problem like a starved Chihuahua on a pork chop.