

# The “Listening” Sensitive Man



The Listener

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The Counsellor

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The Diplomat

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The Conciliator

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### Disclaimer

THE MAN MATRIX is an attempt to create a different set of axes on which to evaluate and assess men’s behaviour. It accepts the validity of individual men’s neurological and psychological makeup as something that does not need to be changed. It aims to generate a set of distinctions between men based on personality styles, along with a broader understanding of men’s psychospiritual development process—both for men themselves, and for women seeking to understand men.

The language and pronoun use focuses on cis-heterosexual men and assumes the interest of cis-heterosexual women, for reasons explained elsewhere. It may equally be used by parents, friends or colleagues of those men, and by people of any gender who find it useful and relevant.

The information in this report is intended as a reference, or map, that offers a particular way of assessing the landscape. No statement purports to be the absolute truth. It should be viewed holistically and as a means for supporting individual growth, not as “evidence against” nor as a means to “alter him”. You are invited to treat it in that way and to use it with intelligence and compassion.

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### PERCEPTION

## How people see him

THE ULTIMATE strong, silent type? Perhaps. Although his strength will be less the strength of forceful aggression and more the strength of calm stillness in the face of the former. He’s also less likely to be the target of aggression—who would want to or need to, he’s such a calm guy—than he is to be a witness of it. As a witness, he’ll be tempted, if not likely, to step in and try to sort things out.

His air of calm stillness might lead some people to pay less attention to him. Let’s put it this way, he’s not going to be the life and soul of the party, nor the person who seeks attention. That said, some may find his relative silence intriguing—either to challenge it and shake it up, or to find out what secrets he’s hiding or wisdom he’s holding onto.

If there’s a decision to be made, he’s unlikely to be the one trying to steer it in one direction or another. Instead, he’ll wait and see what the majority want, and he’ll be inclined to go with that—after he’s made sure the minority voices have been heard. Indeed, nobody will be surprised if he steps in as an arbiter if things get heated. This can apply equally to a simple social decision about which club to go to after dinner, the deliberations of a board or committee, or even a whole political movement.

Although he might belong to political party, or favour an ideology, people won’t look to he as the militant who stirs things



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up. However, they will turn to him when they need someone to start a dialogue for peace and seek common ground. The president of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, provides the example here. He was the lead negotiator for the ANC in the talks that brought an end to apartheid. His actual presidency, which came two decades later, has been marked by his ability to maintain a relative balance between competing factions within his party.

On the downside, as Ramaphosa discovered, people might criticise him for not doing enough to press home his own advantage, for example by using his position to support his own faction, or his own agenda. Instead of “going for the kill”, he’ll go for “don’t rock the boat”. That’s a phrase people might hear him say quite often.

In fact, if anyone knows him personally, they’ll know that he tends to “not rock the boat” in all areas of his life. He tends to suppress his own preferences in favour of what his family or friends want. He’ll go where they want to go, and he’ll patiently follow while they go shopping, and hold the bags when they need him to. They’ll see him as reliable and steady in the way that he tends to create a groove for himself through regular habits and familiar things (music by the same band, books by the same author). If it all gets too much, and especially if there is a conflict he has to deal with, they might find him quite literally going to take a nap.

### BOON (OFFERING)

## Why people like him

**The “Listening” Sensitive Man** He’s so easy-going, what’s not to like?! While everybody’s out there making so much noise and being so demanding, he’ll be the one person who gives some relief from all that. He’s the person they can just turn to and offload, or get to play golf or go cycling with them when no-one else will.

As a partner, he can offer a safe haven for his person to just vent without being unnecessarily challenged. He’ll just listen, nod, agree, and show that he understands. And, what’s more, at a crucial time like that, when it really counts, he’ll go along with whatever she needs. He’ll tag along on a shopping expedition or leave her to go on one with her friends. Whatever she says. He’ll join her on a visit to her parents and stay for as long as she needs to. Not to mention that he’ll be most agreeable with them and find ways to engage everybody.

His family home will have an air of peace and tranquillity, at least as far as that has to do with him. His children might consider themselves lucky to have a “chilled dad”. He’ll let them hog the TV more than the other way around, and he’ll let



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them off the hook when they sneak a late night of gaming. He won’t interfere in things he’s not supposed to, and he won’t offend anybody with the way he dresses or the things he says.

He’ll take advice from his wife or partner, whether it’s about dress style, eating habits, or even big purchases or career decisions. In fact, he’ll probably even seek it. To that extent, he’ll be the envy of all her friends, the fact that he listens and is not stubborn, but willing to be influenced. If it’s early days, they’ll say she’s got a real keeper. Which, of course, is true—but only if *she* wants to keep *him*, ha ha.

He’s certainly not going to boss anybody around—not his partner, nor his kids, nor the people who work for him. If anything, erm, he’ll let them do the bossing, and he’ll smile and go along with whatever they decide. Yes, he’ll run a highly democratic workplace in which everybody will feel listened to and empowered to make decisions. People will feel that it’s safe to take risks because they won’t get their heads chopped off if they make mistakes. This can encourage innovation and engagement, and a strong sense of ownership and team spirit.

### DEVELOPMENT

## His journey through the four stages of maturity

**The “Listening” Sensitive Man** The journey to maturity for every man involves the establishment of the ego and its inevitable dark side, or shadow, followed—hopefully—by the integration of that shadow. As described in the Man Matrix introduction, a man’s shadow effectively contains the data belonging to that one element of life that he tries to avoid or escape from, and which he tries to deny in himself. As the “Listening” Sensitive Man, he probably tries to avoid the conflict that he believes will arise if he expresses his own point of view, or his own wants, needs and feelings.

As a child, he probably found himself as the middle child in amongst more aggressive siblings, or at the mercy of a domineering and aggressive parent. Going along with them, adopting their point of view, even arguing their case for them, was a survival strategy.

As an adult, he’ll try to deny the fact that he has any wants, needs, feelings or opinions by suppressing his inner voice, and instead put on a go-with-the-flow attitude while aligning—you could even say fusing—with the wants and needs of another person, or group. This will provide the theme of his rebellion during the red stage, and of his criticism of the world during his white stage. For example, he’ll criticise pushy, aggressive or conflictual behaviour in the world by passively withdrawing,



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becoming overtly silent, and other forms of passive-aggressive behaviour. Any assertive or aggressive behaviour by himself will be disallowed or, if it ever occurs, denied.

As he matures, he’ll subconsciously gather evidence that proves him wrong—yes, wrong. In other words, he’ll accumulate data as a result of contradictory life experiences that the world is different from his childhood universe. At first, he won’t pay too much attention to this data, but eventually it will start to break through. He’ll have some undeniable feedback from life in the form of people or experiences. Something in him will recognise that he no longer needs to defend himself in the way that he did back then.

In other words, it’ll gradually dawn on him that he no longer needs to defend himself by making himself invisible, or suppressing his own wants, needs and opinions. He’ll begin to see that when he expresses his needs, people don’t reject or abandon him. In fact, it helps to improve and deepen his relationships. And, on the odd occasion when they do reject him, he’ll discover that it’s not the end of the world.

If he accepts and integrates this, he’ll reach black as a powerful conciliator who can lead as much as he can follow – and we know what they say about great leaders being the ones who can do that. **MM**

Invite people to support his growth by sharing this information.



“Will he be my unicorn?”

## What “I’ll alter him” shifts you can (and shouldn’t) expect from him

**The “Listening” Sensitive Man** As his partner, colleague, parent or friend, you’ll probably recognise and hopefully appreciate his calm, gentle, easy-going nature and his ability to bring peace, harmony and diplomacy to any situation. Yet, you might sometimes wish that he would somehow miraculously transform into a more active and lively, decisive and assertive, maybe even ambitious and driven, version of himself. These “missing” elements may lead you to compare him negatively with the types of men that do demonstrate those patterns of behaviour.

For example, you might wish that he would be more enthusiastic, lively and engaging in social settings, the way the “Optimistic” Ideas Man might be, instead of always “waiting his turn” and then still passing up the opportunity to speak. Or perhaps you might want him to be more quick, clear and decisive in stating what he wants or taking charge of a situation, something that the “Real” Man has no problem whatsoever in doing. Then you might need him to be a little more motivated to succeed, even if it means elbowing someone out of the way, which is a marked trait of the “Winning” Best Man.

The bottom line is, he’s not going to “change” into any of those types of men. In fact, the more you try to “alter” him, or in other words try to



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get him to “change into” one of those types of men, the more likely he is to dig in his heels and resist.

That said, you might encourage him to take on one or two of those men’s behaviours, at times. Yes, you might suggest that he try being less certain that his diplomacy is the only right answer to every situation, and see that sometimes it’s more appropriate to enter the fray and speak his mind. Nobody will die. Just as nobody will die if he makes decisions and asserts himself from time to time—when the situation really needs that—or if he puts himself forward for a promotion even though it means going up against one of his colleagues.

While there’s some of this he could start doing right now, it will happen naturally as a result of maturity. It’s what the process of integration is all about. After all, maturing and integrating is about becoming less one-sided. It’s about not treating every situation in the same way, based on his own fears, but instead treating each situation on its own merits. So, if you’re supporting a man on that journey, you can drop a few hints along the way, using some of the approaches suggested in the “When will he grow up?” section of this report, and be patient.

## Get the full report!

### Get the full report to learn more about:

1. How he sees the world (his dominant worldview);
2. Why he drives people crazy (his one-sided behaviours and tendencies);
3. His core fear (the underlying driver of much of his behaviour);
4. A full 8-page report on his journey through the four stages of maturity;
5. Two more “handouts” containing information you can use:
  - a. What he looks for in a partner / colleague / friend and what you can do to “win him over”;
  - b. What you can do to support him on his journey to maturity;
6. Plus a set of self-coaching questions to ask yourself and/or him.

## Yes, take me there!



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