

## What does your sleep position say about your relationship?

For more information on Body Language Contact [Patti@PattiWood.net](mailto:Patti@PattiWood.net)

How do sleep positions offer a view into what is going on in the relationship? The majority of body language comes from the more primitive part of the brain called the limbic brain rather than the "Let me think how I want to look" cognitive brain. So body language reveals our true feelings. In sleep, we are our most honest, vulnerable selves and our sleep positions may therefore reveal secrets we do not show with our mates up front during the daytime. Heck, you might not feel great about your sweetie when he/she is awake!

I love understanding sleep positions, because we are at our most vulnerable in sleep and our bodies are the most honest. Women, you can fake a lot with a man but you can't fake your sleep position. That means how your body moves and joins with your partner in sleep can offer insights into your trust and connection for each other.

When looking at sleep positions you always want to take into consideration health issues like snoring and menopause. Such unrelated factors may not only make you want to move away from your partner in bed, they might make you want to hit him with a pillow and leave the room! It's also important to realize there are no right ways or wrong ways to sleep with your sweetie. You are not being graded on your sleep positions. You don't have to say, "Hey Honey, I watched Patti on Regis and Kelly today, let's work on an **A Plus** tonight." Unless you are on a reality television show, we are not watching you sleep. So tonight, check for cameras.

About half of men and women sleep in the fetal position. The fetal position is sleeping on your side with head and shoulders curled in and knees pulled up. This position shows your innocence and trust. Symbolically curled positions in sleep mean, "I want to trust others and feel safe." Bodies stretched out in sleep mean "I want to take charge and experience adventure." Hands curled in mean I want to cuddle and connect; even hands wrapped around a pillow can indicate a cuddly nature. If hands and/or hands and arms are held or pressed tightly at straight down at the sides mean I want to be alone.

In the **Traditional Spoons Position**, couples sleep side-by-side each curled up with each other in the fetal position. One partner is fully cupped around the back of the body of the other. Everything touches. Well, maybe not everything, but a lot of the front of one partner and lot of the back of the other. (Smile) Traditional spooning is the most common position adopted by couples during the first few years of their relationship or marriage. If the

spooning is comfortable, is received with no tension in the limbs and seems balanced, it shows both a strong sexuality and feeling of security in the relationship. One partner is saying with their body, "I can turn my back on you and know I am safe—you have my back." The other is saying, "I want to surround you and take you in." This Spoon position has been shown to increase intimacy in couples and reduce the stress of both partners. So everybody try spooning tonight!

In spooning if the man is around the woman it shows that he is comfortable being the protector in the relationship. If he is curled around the opposite way, it means something totally different. If the woman is around the man with the man facing the edge of the bed it can mean she depends on him. That's not a bad thing, but if he tries to get out of the bed and you're still holding on as he crosses the room perhaps you're a little too dependent. (Smile)

**Loose Spoons** occur when there is a little gap between the bodies. Loose spoons tend to come later in the relationship after a few years—typically 5 to 6. If the couple is still close they may touch hands, feet, or knees to stay connected. (Note my comments on what feet touching means below)

**The Royal Hug**- In this position it is typically the man lying on his back facing up. The woman head is cradled in the man chest or shoulder. Symbolically the person on his back in sleep is facing life. A face up position indicates confidence and self-assurance. If the man's arms are wrapped around the woman, it shows a wonderful protectiveness. If the man has his hands on top of his head like a crown and/or his elbows are out to the side like a royal cape, he is showing his confidence and that he wants to be in charge, the king of the castle. He is enthusiastic and perhaps likes to tell his partner what to do. (The on-the-back cape and crown position is an expansive position and these people are often workaholics and entrepreneurs.

If the woman is facing her partner in a fetal position she is showing she depends on him and lets him be in charge. This is a common position for women to take when their husbands are much older. (I know you are thinking of several celebrity couples right now.) If she rests her head on his chest but stretches out her body she is showing that she depends on him but she wants to make decisions herself as well.

If you (as a woman) sleep on your back with your partner, you're showing your power and strength in the relationship.

**V hug** occurs when couples are on their sides, faced away from each other so only their rear ends touch. The facing away shows trust and the ability and desire to be independent but the gushier touch shows that they want to stay sexually connected. They are already a confident couple, they just need space. This is a sleep position that can form when a couple has small children that cling to them during the day so in sleep they want to touch their partner intimately but don't want to hang on or have someone hang on them.

**The Honeymoon Hug** occurs when couples just cannot get enough of each other they want to face each other, seemingly gaze into each others' eyes, even in sleep. Honeymoon huggers face each other and touch all or some of the front of their bodies. That means they may touch each other with their feet, their legs, their knees, torso and chests. One partner may even cradle the other partner's face in their hands. This is a common position after couples first begin to make love. In addition, is also seen frequently in couples who are not married. Guys, this doesn't mean you can say, "Hey Hon, we can't get married or we will stop Honeymoon hugging." Here is a gentle warning for you: If your partner hasn't been facing you as they go to sleep and they start facing you, it indicates their need to connect, and be more intimate.

**The Leg or Feet Hug-** This is a position where just the legs or feet of the couple touch. This position may be assumed after years of marriage when the couple wants space but still wants to connect. Alternatively, it's a position couples take after a fight when they would normally have slept closer but since they're angry they don't go to the old position. Instead they signal "I will still love each you in the morning" by touching the feet or legs. The feet are the most honest portion of the body, under the least conscious control; they are the body part farthest from the brain. I love that your mind is mad but your body says, "I still love you and I won't kick you out of the bed."

Sleeping on your stomach temporarily typically shows you are anxious or feel things are out of control and need to protect the vulnerable front of your body. So notice if you or your partner suddenly starts sleeping on the stomach. Be aware that a partner who suddenly starts to turn away from their mate to sleep on their stomach can also be communicating a lack of sexual trust in their partner.

The research on solitary sleep positions shows that someone who always sleeps on his stomach but with his arms bent and hands up around the head in a crown position is showing he is persistent, goal oriented, compulsive and stubborn.

**The Cliffhanger** positions it when both partners are on opposite sides of the bed facing away from one another with no physical contact. This could be because each person is climbing mountains all day and just needs a good night's sleep or because something like snoring or menopausal night sweats make being close feel like you are in an inferno. Know that **Cliff hanging** shows independence. It says, "I want adventure." If your partner suddenly goes from close sleep to a cliffhanger, you might want to talk about it. If your position changes from a hug-like sleep to the cliff hanger it can indicate a desire to be more independent or separate, or a desire to buy a king size bed. (Smile)

**Pretzel** -There are couples that are so interconnected with one another that in sleep they wrap themselves around each other completely with legs and arms that seem almost melded into one entity. My sister and brother-in-law have always slept like a pretzel. They married a week after they graduated from college and have been together 40 years, so pretzels can work wonders.

Always notice changes in sleep positions. If a partner is close for years and suddenly separates and there is not a physical reason, you can reach out a hand or foot across the bed and see if they respond in kind. Or you might want to bring it up in conversation. "I loved it when you slept with your arms around me and I noticed you haven't been doing that. What can we do to feel closer?" I recommend cuddling or holding hands before you go to sleep. Hands are what we use to give and take in life. Holding hands shows deep caring. I have friends that as couples go to bed and hold hands and then they say, "sleep now" and roll away to get to a good night's sleep

Unless there is a health issue, sleep patterns can be a passive aggressive way of communicating to your spouse. Your sleep position can say, "I cannot depend on you", "I don't trust you", "I want to leave space to be unfaithful to you" or "I don't feel that close to you."

**Separate Rooms**-What does it mean when couples don't sleep in the same room? Again, unless there is a physical reason it shows the need to be separate. I advise couples to go to bed together in one room at the same time and cuddle. If there are physical issues I recommend that they go to bed together for a little bit, cuddle and then go to separate rooms. Try to share the same bed a few mornings too. Time spent side-by-side in an intimate space with one another is important. That situation creates a perfect place for self-disclosure and bonding that couples don't want to miss.

Men are more likely to self disclose when positioned side-by-side with someone. When men sit face-to-face across a table they can be defensive or closed but get them lying side-by-side with you and men open up, and if you're lucky, pearls come out. Women choose the booth at the restaurant and want to talk over the dinner table. They want to face a man to speak with him and watch his body language. Men want the front of their bodies—the part that I call the heart window—protected so they can feel safe to share their intimate thoughts and feelings. Think about when women drive and turn to speak to their passengers. Men who are driving always look forward. Remember, men open up when you are side-by-side with them, so to get a man to share go on a long car trip, or if you are married to him, go to bed. I love all the movie scenes when couples have these incredible intimate self-disclosures as couples when they get into bed. They may be with each other all day and suddenly the truth comes out as soon as heads hit the pillow.

Research indicates longevity of the marriage is enhanced when couples fall asleep and wake up at the same time. The studies also show that couples who go to sleep together and get up at the same time are content in their relationship, while thirty percent of those with dissimilar sleep times complained of an unhappy union.

There are so many things you can learn reading body language. Every life and every relationship has ups and downs. Now you know how to study the hugs, and hands and feet. What does it mean when they're touching? Is it a bad sign if they're not? Sleep positions offer invaluable insight into the intimate feelings in your relationship.