

*Stephen B. Karpman, M.D.* “The Loser’s Loop.” Loser refers to a person who wants a lasting intimate relationship but doesn’t get it. The Loser’s Loop is a statement about intimacy-blocking in relationships. The primary Loser’s Loop describes a person who wards off intimacy with behavior that is *Condescending, Abrupt, Secretive, and Evasive (CASE)*. By these behaviors, the loser closes him/herself off to others. The loops are drawn in a circle to show how they close off other people (as shown in figure 4).

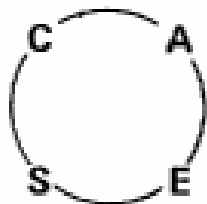


Figure 4. The Loser’s Loop.

The Sweatshirt of the intimacy-loser reads (front) “Special Person,” and (back) “I Will Not Change My Whole Way of Life for Anybody.” To get out of this Loser’s Loop, the prescription is to “Go Over Half Way,” or to turn someone’s straw into gold (rather than the other way around).

In a singles’ group Karpman described, people listed their Parental “Non-Negotiable Demands” (what the ideal other person must be like), along with the Child’s “Minimum Daily Requirements,” and one or two items for the Adult. “Total up the list,” said Karpman, “and figure on an extra year of looking for each item on the list.”

Recommended aids for the TA-

oriented person in search of a mate are the following: first, do an overlapping egogram on prospective mates to check out complementary ego states. Second, do a Capers’ “Stroke Gradient” (check out the other person’s eyes and face to see what kinds of strokes they are getting, if any). And third, do a relationship diagram, numbering the open channels in the order of appearance.

Though the *CASE* Loser’s Loop is the primary intimacy-blocking loop, there are others (secondary loops) which describe how a person keeps another from getting through. The Pushy Person Loser’s Loop, *ERA*, is Eager-Relentless-Annoying. The Alcoholic Loser’s Loop is *TTM*: Tempermental-Thickheaded-Maudlin. The intellectualizer is a *POW* in his or her own head, the loop being *AFOW*: Abstracting-Philosophizing-Observing-Waiting. Such a person is often suffering from “analysis paralysis.” The loop of the sexual loser is, *SDD* Scaring (me)-Disgusting (me)-Depriving (me). The loop of the hysteric is, narcissistically, *III*: Intolerant-Irrational-Insatiable.

Tertiary loops are more informal, coming from the Little Professor to describe what the Child intuitively about another person, such as: Amiable-Assinine-Adapted; Dull-Dumpy-Dowdy; Distant-Derogatory-Depressed; and Selfish-Snotty-Spiteful.

The loops are called Loser’s Loops for clinical purposes, but there can be winner’s loops as well: Quaint-Quizzical-Quixotic; Wise-Warm-Witty; Pleasant-Poised-Peaceful. (*A.D.*)