



“THERE IS A PAIR LIKE NUMBERS — ONE CANNOT DO WITHOUT THE OTHER.”

By Sara Freed, Marriage Coach

This is a line from a poem I referenced last week: *“There is a pair like numbers — one cannot do without the other.”*

That sentence isn’t sentimental so much as sensible. Numbers become powerful when they combine; two digits together can-do work that one digit alone cannot. Marriage, in my experience, is often less romance and more arithmetic — two different capacities lined up, so life gets done.

Take
 ple

Rivka and Ben, a couple
 I worked with recently.

Neighbors see their warm Shabbat table and giggling kids and assume everything’s easy. But the truth was quieter: small resentments had been piling up. Rivka is the planner — color-coded calendars, budgets that breathe order, and a habit of scheduling even breathing space for the kids. Ben is the connector — the neighbor who shows up with soup, the one who says yes to a last-minute mitzvah, the man who’ll reorganize a community yard sale at a moment’s notice. Rivka read Ben’s spontaneity as chaos; Ben read Rivka’s lists as control. After a sharp argument about a missed school meeting, they both said the same thing: “We just want the other to be more like us.”

That instinct — to remake your partner in your own image — is universal. It also misunderstands what makes a partnership work. The poem’s metaphor invites a kinder view: instead of trying to clone one another, what if couples learned to pair different strengths so they multiply? Rivka and Ben weren’t incompatible; they were complementary digits who hadn’t learned to add.

Here are practical, down-to-earth steps they used that any couple could try this week.

1) Notice the practical outcome of each behavior.

When Rivka complained, “He never plans,” we listed what Ben’s spontaneity produced: unexpected joy,



stronger neighborhood ties, help when someone needed it most. When Ben said, "She plans everything," we listed what Rivka's planning produced: bills paid on time, calmer mornings, less daily chaos. Seeing each behavior as producing useful outcomes makes it possible to shift from blame to strategy: Which outcomes do we need? Which person is best positioned to produce them?

2) Make clear who leads what — and why.

In numbers, placement matters. Treat household domains the same way. Identify three areas — finances, guests/hospitality, and calendar/logistics — and assign primary responsibility for each. Rivka took lead on finances and scheduling; Ben took lead on guests and community coordination. Simple clarity reduces friction: when you know who's steering a domain, you can stop arguing about the wheel.

3) Build small check-ins with practical purpose.

You don't need grand rituals, but small predictable moments that solve real problems. A weekly five- to ten-minute check-in to review the coming week's calendar, one shared list for money matters, and a brief code word that means "pause and check" for spontaneous asks are tiny moves that avert big fights. These moments are not sentimental; they're operational. They create predictable seams where bumps in life get smoothed before they become damage.

4) Ask the gratitude test before you criticize.

When something triggers irritation, try asking: "If my partner stopped doing this, what would disappear from our life?" Often the answer is a humble list of things you rely on. You'll find gratitude where blame used to live. That pause can transform a harsh response into a request: "I need help with X" instead of "You never do X."

5) Name each other's coping mode.

People handle stress differently. Labeling modes — "I'm in planning mode," "I'm in people-mode" — removes mystery and makes response intentional. If Ben is "people-mode," Rivka can offer practical assistance ("Tell me who you need me to contact") rather than snapping. If Rivka is "planning-mode," Ben can step in with an act of service rather than push against structure. Language makes behavior legible and manageable.

If you want a simple experiment this week: pick one area of household life and decide to-

gether who leads and who supports. Make a five-minute meeting to line up the week. No accusations, no lectures — just practical pairing. You may be surprised at how much peace three sentences, and a shared list can buy.

Marriage is often practical magic: two different capacities that, when aligned, create outcomes neither could produce alone. So, the next time you find yourself wishing your partner were "more like you," pause. Maybe they're the missing digit that turns your solitary "2" into something richer and more useful — a number that solves problems, builds warmth, and lasts.

Sara Freed is a professional relationship and marriage coach based in Monsey, New York, with over a decade of experience helping couples strengthen their relationships. Combining the timeless wisdom of Judaism with her life experience and advanced training in evidence-based coaching modalities, Sara empowers couples to move from conflict to connection. Her compassionate, practical approach equips clients with the tools and skills to transform struggling relationships into thriving partnerships. Sara is passionate about helping couples foster more profound understanding, rebuild trust, and create lasting harmony in their marriages. Website: www.sarafreed.com



Revive Your Marriage!

Is your relationship struggling?
Don't let frustration stand in the way of your connection!

I specialize in helping couples overcome:

- **Communication barriers** that prevent open dialogue
- **Emotional disconnection** and ongoing misunderstandings
- **Frustrations** that create distance between you

Visit www.sarafreed.com for valuable resources to reignite your relationship.
917-355-8630

Schedule your free consultation call today!
Your happier marriage starts now!