

**The Yellow Marriage
Your Readiness to Engage Your Other**

By: Dr. Bob Huizenga

The Yellow Marriage

The Underlying Frustration of the Yellow Marriage

The Yellow Marriage, I would hazard to guess from my clinical experience, comprises around 80% of all marriages or couples.

Common concerns or issues are: I want more!

- I lost that loving feeling.
- I want something from him/her and s/he is not giving it to me.
- S/he holds the key to making my life better.
- I resent him/her for not (fill in the blank.)
- I try to let him/her know what I need and it goes nowhere.
- S/he won't talk.
- S/he won't talk about his/her feelings.
- "I want something, I expect something, and it's not happening.
- S/he (my spouse) is not giving me what I need and want or being whom I expect."



Therefore, usually both experience the brewing frustration; most notably and powerfully the one attempting to get something from the other.

The Yellow Marriage or relationship often simmers with an undercurrent of frustration.

Sometimes the frustration is expressed; usually by the partner who believes that his/her needs are not considered and met in the marriage.

The Yellow Dance

One is gripped in the Yellow Marriage by the pursuer-distancer phenomenon.

One person or spouse pursues, attempting to obtain from the distancing spouse what the pursuer believes s/he needs or wants. Of course, the more s/he pursues, the more the distance moves away; often out of a myriad of fears and thoughts of inadequacies.

The pursuer-distancer "dance" is played over and over again, with the same results. Neither flourishes nor experiences joy in the marriage or relationship.

Fear of moving close and of truly addressing the underlying issues comes to characterize the marriage. Fear maintains the distance and the "dance."

Frequently, the pursuer tires of that role and becomes the distancer. The pursuer eventually says, in essence, "I've had enough. I quit trying to make this work."

The equilibrium of the marriage is upset and, the distancer, upset with the change of the status, frets about losing what was and becomes the pursuer.

The Danger of Talking

It becomes apparent that the spouse who wants to “talk” is usually after something.

“Talking,” when that is the case, does more harm than good.

I especially do not want you to “work on” the marriage if you have this type of marriage.

“Working on” the yellow marriage usually means “talking” which usually means cycling back to the blaming, attacking the other person or labeling the other spouse as the “problem,” i.e. if only s/he would change this marriage would be copasetic!

Instead of focusing on talking, I use the word engagement.

Are You Ready to Engage Your Spouse?

Identify the Problem

Take a couple minutes to reflect on or write out your responses to these questions:

To what degree do you believe you are ready to constructively engage your spouse?

I'm ready					It would be disaster
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

What images or thoughts come to mind when you think of engaging your spouse or partner?

What type of feeling do you get when you think of engaging your spouse or partner?

What does it mean for you that you engage your spouse or partner?

What is your level of comfort when you think of engaging your partner or spouse?

Comfortable					Uncomfortable				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Remember, talking can do more harm than good. Destructive communication not only keeps the old destructive patterns alive, it entrenches them.

As you continue to pile layer upon layer of frustration and failure, you move you further and further away from the possibility of a satisfying and intimate marriage.

Beware of these telltale signs:

- ✓ You find yourselves going over the same territory. You can predict what how s/he will respond to you, how you respond to that response and how s/he will respond to your response of his/her response.
- ✓ You feel as if you move into a trap and there is no escape.
- ✓ Painful and destructive feelings are triggered. (Try measuring your feelings on a scale of 1-10, 10 being as bad as it can be. Monitor that number over a number of negative interactions with your spouse.)
- ✓ You see no other options. You cannot possibly conceive of approaching him/her in different ways.
- ✓ It seems as if you tried everything and nothing work.

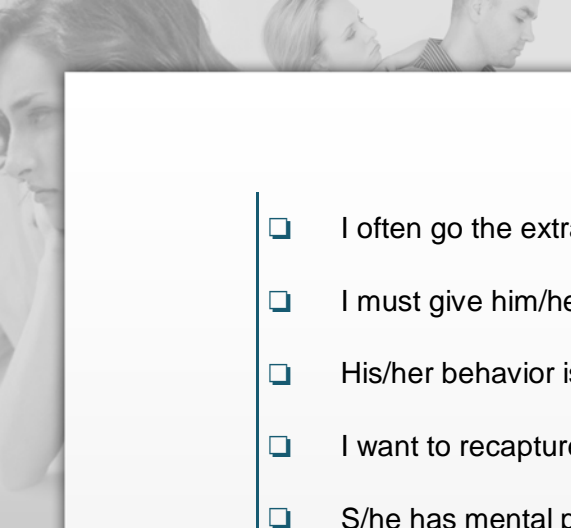
Readiness to Engage Your Spouse or Partner

Instructions:

Check the statements that best apply. Follow further instructions at the end of the quiz.

- ☐ I find it difficult to eat and sleep. All I think about is him/her and our situation.
- ☐ The pain I feel is usually an 8, 9 or 10 on the 1-10 scale, 10 being awful.
- ☐ I know our communication will break down quickly once we start talking.
- ☐ I find it extremely difficult to stop thinking about our problems.
- ☐ I feel like I've blown it. I feel very inadequate in this marriage.

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- ☐ I want the pain to end and our relationship problems solved now.
 - ☐ I find it difficult to think when I start talking to him/her.
 - ☐ I fear our talking will go round and round in the same circle.
 - ☐ Sometimes I have no idea what s/he is talking about.
 - ☐ I believe s/he is totally wrong in his/her position.
 - ☐ What s/he says or does holds the key to making this marriage better.
 - ☐ Our relationship would be much better if only s/he would let me know what s/he is thinking.
 - ☐ I must understand why s/he is being so difficult.
 - ☐ I can't think of anything else to say to him/her.
 - ☐ I feel so much resentment and rage, I want to scream.
 - ☐ I seem to constantly watch him/her and wait for him/her to make a move toward me.
 - ☐ I try to ask questions and find out what's really bothering him/her.
 - ☐ I often find myself biting my lip or fighting the urge to say something.
 - ☐ I have a strong desire to let him/her know that I love him/her and care about him/her.
 - ☐ I know I've done terrible things to cause this marital crisis and pain.
 - ☐ I continually regret and am disgusted with myself as I think about what I did.
 - ☐ I often try to get him/her to do something.
 - ☐ I definitely believe it takes "two to tango" and create this mess.
 - ☐ I have an accurate idea of what s/he often is thinking and feeling.
 - ☐ We could create a great marriage if the two of us worked on it.
 - ☐ I suggested more than once that the two of us get couples counseling.
 - ☐ I've suggested more than once that s/he get individual counseling.
 - ☐ I know what s/he must do to make this marriage better.

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- ☐ I often go the extra mile for him/her, even though I don't feel like it.
 - ☐ I must give him/her an ultimatum.
 - ☐ His/her behavior is hurting me, our children and those we care about.
 - ☐ I want to recapture that loving feeling we once had.
 - ☐ S/he has mental problems.
 - ☐ I think his/her family is too much of an influence for him/her and our marriage.

Total Number of Checkmarks

Further Instructions:

Total the number of checkmarks.

20+: Hold off talking or initiating communication. Your interaction most likely will ignite the cycle of negativity and reactivity. Don't shoot yourself in the foot. Focus on building your personal power.

5-19: Give communication a try, but be aware of those thoughts, feelings and triggers that send you into the bad lands of reactivity and negativity.

0-4: You have the capacity to move ahead full steam. Learn, build, and generate finer distinctions and become exceedingly, and I mean exceedingly, attractive. Who can resist you?

If you scored somewhere between 0-19 ask your partner if s/he is willing to take this quiz and discuss results.