



MARRIAGE PREPARATION WORK BOOK II

Love Map Questionnaire

- (1) By giving honest answer to the following questions, you will get a sense of the quality of your current love maps. For the most accurate reading of how your marriage is doing on the first principle, both of you should complete the following.
1. I can name my partner's best friend. T or F
 2. I can tell you what stresses my partner is currently facing. T or F
 3. I know the names of some of the people who have been irritating my partner lately. T or F
 4. I can tell you some of my partner's life dreams. T or F
 5. I am very familiar with my partner's religious beliefs and ideas. T or F
 6. I can tell you about my partner's basic philosophy of life. T or F
 7. I can list the relatives my partner likes the least. T or F
 8. I know my partner's favorite music. T or F
 9. I can list my partner's three favorite movies. T or F
 10. My spouse is familiar with my current stresses. T or F
 11. I know the three most special times in my partner's life. T or F
 12. I can tell you the most stressful thing that happened to my partner as a child. T or F
 13. I can list my partner's major aspiration and hopes in life. T or F
 14. I know my partner's major current worries. T or F
 15. My partner knows who my friends are. T or F
 16. I know what my partner would do if he or she suddenly won the lottery. T or F
 17. I can tell you in detail my first impressions of my partner. T or F

18. I feel that my partner knows me pretty well. T or F
20. My partner is familiar with my hopes and aspirations. T or F

(2) Scoring: Give yourself one point for each “true” answer. 10 & above consider this a strength. 10 and below consider it a weakness. Either you do not have a love map or it needs to be updated.

Gottman, John and Nan Silver: **The Seven Principles For Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide From the Country’s Foremost Relationship Expert** (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999).

Love Map 20 Question Game

- (1) Play this game together in the spirit of laughter and gentle fun. The more you play, the more you’ll learn about the love maps concept and how to apply it to your own relationship.
 - (2) Each of you should take a piece of paper and pen. Together, randomly decide on twenty numbers between 1 and 60. Write the numbers down in a column on the left-hand side of your paper.
 - (3) Below is a list of numbered questions. Beginning with the top of your column, match the numbers you chose with the corresponding questions. Each of you should ask your partner this question. If your partner answers correctly (you be the judge), he or she receives the number of points indicated for that question, and you receive one point. If your partner answers incorrectly, neither of you receive any points. The same rules apply when you answer. The winner is the person with the higher score after you’ve both answered all twenty questions.
1. Name my two closest friends. (2)
 2. What is my favorite musical group, composer, or instrument? (2)
 3. What was I wearing when we first met? (2)
 4. Name one of my hobbies. (3)
 5. Where was I born? (1)
 6. What stresses am I facing right now? (4)
 7. Describe in detail what I did today, or yesterday. (4)
 8. When is my birthday? (1)
 9. What is the date of our anniversary (or engagement)? (1)
 10. Who is my favorite relative? (2)
 11. What is my fondest unrealized dream? (5)
 12. What is my favorite flower? (2)
 13. What is one of my greatest fears or disaster scenarios? (3)
 14. What is my favorite time of day? (3)
 15. What makes me feel most complete? (4)
 16. What turns me on? (3)
 17. What is my favorite meal? (2)
 18. What is my favorite way to spend the evening? (2)
 19. What is my favorite color? (1)
 20. What personal improvements do I want to make in my life? (4)
 21. What kind of present would I like best? (2)
 22. What was one of my best childhood experiences? (2)
 23. What was my favorite vacation? (2)

24. What is one of my favorite ways to be soothed? (4)
25. Who is my greatest source of support (other than you)? (3)
26. What is my favorite sport? (2)
27. What do I most like to do with time off? (2)
28. What is one of my favorite weekend activities? (2)
29. What is my favorite getaway place? (3)
30. What is my favorite movie? (2)

31. What are some of the important events coming up in my life? How do I feel about them? (4)
32. What are some of my favorite ways to work out? (2)
33. Who was my best friend in childhood? (3)
34. What is one of my favorite magazines? (2)
35. Name one of my major rivals or “enemies”. (3)
36. What would I consider my dream job? (4)
37. What do I fear the most? (4)
38. Who is my least favorite relative? (3)
39. What is my favorite holiday? (2)
40. What kinds of books do I most like to read? (3)

41. What is my favorite TV show? (2)
42. Am I right handed or left-handed? (2)
43. What am I most sad about? (4)
44. Name one of my concerns or worries. (4)
45. What medical problems do I worry about? (2)
46. What was my most embarrassing moment? (3)
47. What was my worst childhood experience? (3)
48. Name two of the people I admire most (4)
49. Name my major rival or enemy. (3)
50. Of all the people we both know, who do I like the least? (3)

51. What is one of my favorite deserts? (2)
52. What is my social security number? (2)
53. Name one of my favorite novels? (2)
54. What is my favorite restaurant? (2)
55. What are two of my aspirations, hopes, wishes? (4)
56. Do I have a secret ambition? What is it? (4)
57. What foods do I hate? (2)
58. What is my favorite animal? (2)
59. What is my favorite song? (2)
60. Which sports team is my favorite? (2)

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Making Your Own Love Map

- (1) Even though “your love map” is all in your head, it helps to write down some of the basics.
- (2) Use the following form to interview each other as if you were reporters.
- (3) It is best to answer these on a separate sheet of paper (or better a notebook.)

The Cast of Characters in my partner’s life:

1. Friends:
2. Potential Friends:
3. Rivals, competitors, “enemies”:

Recent Important Events In My Partner’s Life

1. Upcoming Events (What is he or she looking forward to? Or dreading?):
2. My Partner’s Current Stresses:
3. My Partner’s Current Worries:
4. My Partner’s Hopes and Aspirations (For Self? For Others?):

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Who Am I?

- (1) The questions in this exercise are powerful. Please make sure you have enough time and privacy to answer them. It may be necessary for you to do this questionnaire by breaking it up into smaller parts.
- (2) Answer these questions as candidly as you can. You do not have to answer each question. Just respond to those that are relevant to your life.
- (3) After both of you have completed this exercise come together to discuss your answers.

My Triumphs and Strivings.

1. What has happened in your life that you are particularly proud of? Write about your physiological triumphs, times when things went even better than you expected, periods when you came through trials and tribulations even better off. Include periods of stress and duress that you survived and mastered, small events that may still be of great importance to you, events from your childhood or the recent past, self-created challenges you met, periods when you felt powerful, glories and victories, wonderful friendships you maintained and so on.
2. How have these successes shaped your life? How have they affected the way you think of yourself and your capabilities? How have they affected your goals and the things you strive for?
3. What role has pride (that is, feeling proud, being praised, expressing praise for others) played in your life? Did your parents show you that they were proud of you when you were a child? How? How have other people responded to your accomplishments?
4. Did your parents show you that they loved you? How? Was affection readily expressed in your family? If not, what are the effects and implications of this for your marriage?
5. What role does pride in your accomplishments play in your marriage? What role do your own strivings have in your marriage? What do you want your partner to know and understand about these aspects of your self, your past, present, and plans for the future? How do you show pride in one another?

My Injuries and Healings.

1. What difficult event or periods have you gone through? Write about any significant psychological insults and injuries you have sustained, your losses, disappointments, trials, and tribulations. Including periods of stress and duress, as well as any quieter periods of despair, hopelessness, and loneliness. Also include any deep traumas you have undergone as a child or adult. For example, harmful relationships, humiliating events, even molestation, rape, or torture.
2. How have you survived these traumas? What are their lasting effects on you?
3. How did you strengthen and heal yourself? How did you redress your grievances? How did you revive and restore yourself?
4. How did you guard and protect yourself against this ever happening again?
5. How do these injuries and the ways you protect and heal yourself affect your marriage today? What do you want your partner to know and understand about these aspects of your self?

My Emotional World

1. How did your family express the following when you were a child:
a) Anger b) sadness c) fear d) affection e) interest in one another
2. During your childhood did your family have to cope with a particular emotional problem, such as aggression between parents, a depressed parent, or a parent who was somewhat emotionally wounded? What implications does this have for your marriage and your other close relationships (friendships, relationships with your parents, your siblings, your children)?

3. What is your own philosophy about expressing feelings, particularly sadness, anger, fear, pride, and love? Are any of these difficult for you to express or to see expressed by your partner? What is the basis of your perspective of this?
4. What differences exist between you and your partner in the area of expressing emotions? What is behind these differences? What are the implications of these differences for you?

My Mission and Legacy

1. Imagine that you are standing in a graveyard looking at your own tombstone. Now write the epitaph you would like to see there. Begin with the words: "Here lies..."
2. Write your own obituary. (It does not have to be brief.) How do you want people to think of your life, to remember you?
3. Now you're ready to write a mission statement for your own life. What is the purpose of your life? What is its meaning? What are you trying to accomplish? What is your larger struggle?
4. What legacy would you like to leave when you die?
5. What significant goals have you yet to realize? This can be creating something, or having a particular experience. Minor examples are learning to play the banjo, climbing a mountain, and so on.

Who I Want to Become

Take a moment to reflect on what you have just written. We are all involved in becoming the person we most want to be. In that struggle we all have demons to fight and overcome.

1. Describe the person you want to become.
2. How can you best help yourself become that person?
3. What struggles have you already faced in trying to become that person?
4. What demons in yourself have you had to fight? Or still have to fight?
5. What would you most like to change about yourself?
6. What dreams have you denied yourself or failed to develop?
7. What do you want your life to be like in five years?
8. What is the story of the kind of person you would like to be?

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Fondness and Admiration Questionnaire

(1) Answer the following true false questions.

1. I can easily list the three things I most admire about my partner. T or F
2. When we are apart, I often think fondly of my partner. T or F
3. I will often find some way to tell my partner "I love you." T or F
4. I often touch or kiss my partner affectionately. T or F
5. My partner really respects me. T or F
6. I feel loved and cared for in this relationship T or F
7. I feel accepted and like by my partner. T or F
8. My partner finds me sexy and attractive. T or F
9. My partner turns me on sexually. T or F
10. There is a fire and passion in this relationship. T or F
11. Romance is definitely still a part of our relationship. T or F
12. I am really proud of my partner. T or F
13. My partner really enjoys my achievements and accomplishments. T or F
14. I can easily tell you why I want to marry my partner. T or F
15. If I had it all to do over again, I would. T or F
16. We rarely part from each other without showing some sign of love and affection. T or F
17. When I come into a room, my partner is glad to see me. T or F
18. My partner appreciates the things I do in this relationship. T or F
19. My spouse generally likes my personality. T or F
20. Our life is generally satisfying. T or F

(2) Scoring: 10 and above is good while 10 and below shows room for improvements.

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“I Appreciate...”

(1) Circle three items that you think are characteristics of your partner. Circle just three. (You can do the exercise over again with a different three if you want to).

- | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Loving | 2. Sensitive | 3. Brave | 4. Intelligent |
| 5. Thoughtful | 6. Generous | 7. Loyal | 8. Truthful |
| 9. Strong | 10. Energetic | 11. Sexy | 12. Decisive |
| 13. Creative | 14. Imaginative | 15. Fun | 16. Attractive |
| 17. Interesting | 18. Supportive | 19. Funny | 20. Considerate |
| 21. Affectionate | 22. Organized | 23. Resourceful | 24. Athletic |
| 25. Cheerful | 26. Coordinated | 27. Graceful | 28. Elegant |
| 29. Gracious | 30. Playful | 31. Caring | 32. A Great Friend |
| 33. Exciting | 34. Thrifty | 35. Full Of Plans | 36. Shy |
| 37. Vulnerable | 38. Committed | 39. Involved | 40. Expressive |
| 41. Active | 42. Careful | 43. Reserved | 44. Adventurous |
| 45. Receptive | 46. Reliable | 47. Responsible | 48. Dependable |
| 49. Nurturing | 50. Warm | 51. Virile | 52. Kind |
| 53. Gentle | 54. Practical | 55. Healthy | 56. Witty |
| 57. Relaxed | 58. Beautiful | 59. Handsome | 60. Rich |
| 61. Calm | 62. A Great Partner | 63. Lively | 64. A Great Parent |
| 65. Assertive | 66. Protective | 67. Sweet | 68. Tender |
| 69. Powerful | 70. Understanding | 71. Flexible | 72. Totally Silly |
| 73. Prayerful | 74. Holy | 75. Loving | 76. Humble |
| 77. Forgiving | 78. Thinker | 79. Patient | 80. Hopeful |

(2) For each item you checked please briefly think of an actual incident that illustrates this characteristic of your partner.

1. Characteristic: _____
Incident: _____
 2. Characteristic: _____
Incident: _____
 3. Characteristic: _____
Incident: _____
- (3) Now share your list with your partner. Let him or her know what it is about these traits that you value so highly.

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The History and Philosophy of Your Marriage

- (1) For this exercise you can either ask a third person to act as your interviewer or you can interview yourself as a couple. Please note that I use this form both Marriage Preparation and Marriage Counseling. If you are in marriage preparation just answer the standard type questions and not the italicized. If you are here for Marriage Counseling please answer both the standard type and the italicized.

Part One: The History of Your Relationship.

1. Discuss how the two of you met and got together. Was there anything about your partner that made him or her stand out? What were your first impressions?
2. What do you remember most about the time you were first dating? What stands out? How long did you know each other before you got engaged (married). What do you remember about this period? What were some of the highlights? Some of the tensions? What type of things did you do together?
3. Talk about how you decided to get married. Of all the people in the world, what led you to decide that this was the person you wanted to marry? Was it an easy decision? Was it a difficult decision? Were you in love? Talk about this time.
4. Do you remember your engagement (*wedding*)? Talk to each other about your memories.
5. *What do you remember about the first year you were married? Were there any adjustments you needed to make?*
6. *What about the transition to becoming parents? Talk to each other about this period of your marriage. What was it like for the two of you?*
7. *Looking back over the years, what moments stand out as the really happy times in your marriage? What is a good time for you as a couple? Has this changed over the years?*
8. *Many relationships go through periods of ups and downs. Would you say that this is true of your marriage? Can you describe some of these periods?*
9. *Looking back over the years, what moments stand out as the really hard times in your marriage? Why do you think you stayed together? How did you get through these difficult times?*
10. *Have you stopped doing things together that once gave you pleasure? Explore these with one another.*

Part Two: Your Philosophy of Marriage

11. Talk to each other about why you think some marriages work while others don't. Decide together who among the couples you know have particularly good marriages and who have particularly bad marriages. What is the different about these two marriages? How would you compare your relationship to each of these couples?
12. Talk to each other about your parents' marriages. Would you say they were very similar to or different from your thoughts on what a marriage should be?
13. Make a chart of the history of your relationship, its major turning points, ups and downs. What were the happiest times for you? For your partner? How has your marriage changed over the years?

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A Seven-Week Course In Fondness And Admiration

(1) For each day below there is a positive statement or thought followed by at task

Week I

Monday

Thought: I am genuinely fond of my partner
Task: List one characteristic you find endearing or lovable.

Tuesday

Thought: I can easily speak of the good times in our marriage
Task: Pick one good time and write a sentence about it.

Wednesday

Thought: I can easily remember romantic, special times in our relationship.
Task: Pick one such time and think about it.

Thursday

Thought: I am physically attracted to my partner.
Task: Think of one physical attribute you like

Friday

Thought: My partner has specific qualities that make me proud
Task: Write down one characteristic that makes you proud.

Week II

Monday

Thought: I feel a genuine sense of “we” as opposed to “I” in this relationship
Task: Think of one thing that you both have in common.

Tuesday

Thought: We have the same general beliefs and values.
Task: Describe one belief you share.

Wednesday

Thought: We have common goals
Task: List one such goal.

Thursday

Thought: My partner is my best friend.
Task: What secret about you does your spouse know?

Friday

Thought: I get lots of support in this relationship
Task: Think of a time when your spouse was very supportive of you.

Week III

Monday

Thought: My partner helps me to reduce stress.
Task: List one time when your spouse helped you reduce stress.

Tuesday

Thought: I can easily recall the first we met.
Task: Write a sentence describing what you remember.

Wednesday

Thought: I remember many details about deciding to get married
Task: Write a sentence describing what you remember.

Thursday

Thought: I can recall our engagement

Task: Write a sentence about what you remember
Friday
Thought: We divide up tasks in a fair way.
Task: Describe one way you do this on a regular basis. (If you do not do your share decide on a task to take on.)

Week IV

Monday
Thought: We are able to plan well and have a sense of control over our lives together.
Task: Describe one thing that you both planned together.

Tuesday
Thought: I am proud of this relationship.
Task: List two things about this marriage that you are proud of.

Wednesday
Thought: I am proud of my future spouse.
Task: Recall a specific time you felt this pride.

Thursday
Thought: I don't like things about my partner, but I can live with them.
Task: What is one of these minor faults you have adapted to?

Friday
Thought: This relationship is a lot better than most I have seen.
Task: Think of a marriage you know that's awful.

Week V

Monday
Thought: I was really lucky to meet my partner
Task: List one benefit that being in relationship with your partner offers.

Tuesday
Thought: Marriage is sometimes a struggle but it's worth it.
Task: Think of one difficulty thing that you have weathered together so far.

Wednesday
Thought: There is a lot of affection between us.
Task: Plan a surprise gift for your partner for tonight.

Thursday
Thought: We are genuinely interested in one another.
Task: Think of something to do or talk about that would be interesting.

Friday
Thought: We find one another to be good companions
Task: Plan an outing together.

Week VI

Monday
Thought: There is a lot of healthy living in my relationship
Task: Think of a special trip you took together.

Tuesday
Thought: My partner is an interesting person.
Task: Plan something to ask your partner about that interests the both of you.

Wednesday
Thought: We respond well to each other.
Task: Write a letter to your partner and mail it.

Thursday

Thought: If I had to do it all over again. I would still plan to marry the same person.

Task: Plan an engagement anniversary outing.

Friday

Thought: There is a lot of mutual respect in my relationship.

Task: Consider taking a class together (ballroom dancing, horseback riding, etc) Or tell your partner about a time when you recently admired something he or she did.

Week VII

Monday

Thought: Our time together is usually quite satisfying.

Task: Plan a romantic evening together.

Tuesday

Thought: We have come a long way together.

Task: Think of all you have accomplished as a team.

Wednesday

Thought: I think we can weather any storm together.

Task: Reminisce about having made it through a hard time.

Thursday

Thought: We enjoy each other's sense of humor.

Task: Rent a comedy video or dvd and watch together.

Friday

Thought: My partner is very beautiful/handsome

Task: Get dressed up for an elegant evening together. Or plan another kind of evening out.

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Is Your Marriage Primed For Romance

- (1) Answer the following true false questions.
1. We enjoy doing small things together, like folding laundry or watching TV. T or F
 2. I look forward to spending my free time with my partner. T or F
 3. At the end of the day my partner is glad to see me. T or F
 4. My partner is usually interested in hearing my views. T or F
 5. I really enjoy discussing things with my partner. T or F
 6. My partner is one of my best friends. T or F
 7. I think my partner would consider me a very close friend. T or F
 8. We just love talking to each other. T or F
 9. When we go out together, the time goes very quickly. T or F
 10. We always have a lot to say to each other. T or F
 11. We have a lot of fun together. T or F
 12. We are spiritually very compatible. T or F
 13. We tend to share the same basic values. T or F
 14. We like to spend time together in similar ways T or F
 15. We really have a lot of common interests. T or F
 16. We have many of the same dreams and goals. T or F
 17. We like to do a lot of the same things. T or F
 18. Even though our interests are somewhat different, I enjoy my partner's interests. T or F
 19. Whatever we do together, we usually tend to have a good time. T or F
 20. My partner tells me when he or she has had a bad day. T or F
- (2) 10 and above is good. 10 and below shows improvement is needed.

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The Emotional Bank Account

- (1) Keeping an account in your head of how much you're connecting with your spouse emotionally in little ways can greatly benefit your marriage. But for some couples it sometimes helps them get started by keeping track on paper. Be careful not to turn this into a competition or a quid pro quo. The focus is to see how you can improve your relationship not what your partner is not doing.
- (2) Below is a list of things that couples can do together. Circle three things that you wish your partner would do with you.
 1. Reunite at the end of the day and talk about how it went.
 2. Shop for groceries.
 3. Cook dinner/bake.
 4. Clean house/do laundry
 5. Shop together for gifts or clothes.
 6. Go out for brunch or dinner.
 7. Read the morning paper
 8. Help each other with a self-improvement plan (i.e. exercise)
 9. Plan and host a dinner party
 10. Call and/or think about each other during the workday.
 11. Pray together
 12. Eat breakfast together during the workweek.
 13. Go to a church
 14. Do yard work, shovel the walk, do home repairs, car maintenance, and washing.
 15. Perform committee work in the community (volunteering).
 16. Exercise together
 17. Go on a weekend outing.
 18. Alone time together.
 19. Go to the museum, zoo, etc.
 20. Attend a class together.
 21. Stay in touch with/spend time with kin (parents, siblings, etc.)
 22. Entertain out of town guests.
 23. Travel together.
 24. Watch TV or a video
 25. Order take out
 26. Double-date with friends.
 27. Attend a sporting event
 28. Engage in a favorite activity (bowling, amusement park, bicycle, hike, jog, horse back riding, etc.)
 29. Talk or read together by an open fire.
 30. Listen to music
 31. Go dancing or attend a concert, nightclub, jazz club, or theater.
 32. Host a birthday party
 33. Take up a new hobby together

34. Attend a play or recital together
35. Pay bills
36. Write letters or cards.
37. Deal with medical records
38. Volunteer together
39. Go to a community event

40. Go to a party
41. Drive to and from work together
42. Celebrate each other family's milestones
43. Celebrate each other's life milestones.
44. Play computer games together
45. Watch a niece or a nephew together.
46. Plan a vacation together
47. Plan your future together.
48. Walk the dog
49. Read out loud together.

50. Play a board game together
51. Put on a play or a skit together.
52. Do errands together
53. Engage in hobbies together
54. Talk stuff over drinks (alcohol or coffee or tea)
55. Find time to just talk without interruptions.
56. Philosophize
57. Discuss the other people in your lives
58. Attend a funeral
59. Help out other people

60. Hunt for a new house or apartment.
61. Test-drive new cars.
62. Other_____

(3) Now share your top three choices with each other. Remember that this exercise is designed to flatter your partner by making him or her feel wanted.

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Stress-Reducing Conversation

- (1) One of the biggest things you can do in your relationship is ask your partner how their day was. The following are some guidelines for having such a conversation.
 1. Invite your partner to tell you about his or her day. Remember you are not the target of any hostile words that come from him or her releasing the built up pressure. A good suggestion is to allow each partner 15 minutes to vent.
 2. Don't give unsolicited advice. By quickly suggesting a solution to your partner's problem you send a message that his or her problems are trivial. Understanding must always precede advice. Often times your partner does not want a solution only a person whom he or she knows is listening.
 3. Show genuine interest. Do not let your mind or eyes wander. Make sure to focus on your partner and make eye contact.
 4. Communicate your understanding. Let your partner know that you understand what he or she has just said.
 5. Take your partner side. Be supportive even if you think his or her perspective is unreasonable. Do not side with the opposition. The point here is not to be dishonest but rather this is a time to be emotionally supportive of you partner.
 6. Express a "we against others" attitude. Make sure you express to your partner that he or she is not alone. You are with them.
 7. Express affection. Show some kind of affection. Holding hands often works best.
 8. Validate emotions. Let your partner know that his or her feelings make sense to you.

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 3. Show genuine interest. Do not let your mind or eyes wander. Make sure to focus on your partner and make eye contact.
 4. Communicate your understanding. Let your partner know that you understand what he or she has just said.
 5. Take your partner side. Be supportive even if you think his or her perspective is unreasonable. Do not side with the opposition. The point here is not to be dishonest but rather this is a time to be emotionally supportive of you partner.
 6. Express a "we against others" attitude. Make sure you express to your partner that he or she is not alone. You are with them.
 7. Express affection. Show some kind of affection. Holding hands often works best.
 8. Validate emotions. Let your partner know that his or her feelings make sense to you.

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Accepting Influence Questionnaire

(1) Answer each true/false statement.

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| 1. | I m really interested in my partner’s opinion on our basic issues. | True or False |
| 2. | I usually learn a lot from my partner’s opinion on our basic issues. | True or False |
| 3. | I want my partner to feel that what he or she says really counts with me. | True or False |
| 4. | I generally want to my partner to feel influential in our relationship. | True or False |
| 5. | I can listen to my partner, but only up to a point. | True or False |
| 6. | My partner has a lot of basic common sense. | True or False |
| 7. | I try to communicate respect even during our disagreements. | True or False |
| 8. | If I keep trying to convince my partner, I will eventually win out. | True or False |
| 9. | I don’t reject my partner’s opinions out of hand. | True or False |
| 10. | My partner is not rational enough to take seriously when we discuss our issues. | True or False |
| 11. | I believe in lots of give and take in our discussion. | True or False |
| 12. | I am very persuasive and usually can win arguments with my partner. | True or False |
| 13. | I feel I have an important say when we make decisions. | True or False |
| 14. | My partner usually has good ideas. | True or False |
| 15. | My partner is basically a great help as a problem solver. | True or False |
| 16. | I try to listen respectfully, even when I disagree. | True or False |
| 17. | My ideas for solutions are usually much better than my partners. | True or False |
| 18. | I can usually find something to agree with in my partner’s position. | True or False |
| 19. | My partner is usually too emotional | True or False |
| 20. | I am the one who needs to make the major decisions in this relationship. | True or False |

(2) Scoring.

- Give yourself 1 point for each “true” answer except for questions 5,8,10,12,17,19,20
- subtract 1 point for each “true” answer to questions 5,8,10,12,17,19,20
- 6 and above is considered good. 6 and below this is an area for improvement.

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YIELD TO WIN

- (1) Below is a series of common situations faced by couples today. Try to visualize these scenes with each playing a role and then flip so that each person has the opportunity to see each scenario fully.
 - (2) No matter how negative your partner in the scenario sounds try to see it not as an attack on you but rather that the negativity shows how important the issue is to your partner.
1. You and your wife have not been getting along lately. Part of the problem is that you think she spends way too much money. Now she's insisting that you undergo expensive marital counseling. You point out that there is simply no money to pay for that until expenses are cut somewhere else. Your wife says, "I disagree. We can't afford not to get counseling. It's like borrowing for a needed vacation. We've got to do it!"

Reasonable part of wife's request:

You Say:

2. Since your wife is not working, you've asked that she clean the house and have dinner on the table by the time you come home. Tonight you walk into find that the laundry isn't folded and dinner isn't made. You complain, and she says, "You never notice how much I have done during the day. You just don't appreciate how much work it takes to keep the house going."

Reasonable part of wife's request:

You Say:

3. You've gone down to the local bar with a few friends to have a couple of beers. You and your wife have argued frequently about your going out drinking too often. Tonight she keeps calling you at the bar to say that if you don't come home right now, she's going to come get you. When you finally walk in the door, she is crying, "Instead of spending all your free time with your buddies at the bar, why don't you ever take me dancing?"

Reasonable part of wife's request:

You Say:

4. It's Saturday afternoon, and your wife has been cleaning and telling you about some repairs the house needs. You feel that she is not willing to make the financial sacrifices in other areas so that you can afford these repairs. She says, "You just don't think that what I want is important. You'll find money for things if you want them."

Reasonable part of wife's request:

You Say:

5. When you come home from work, the first thing you like to do is to get comfortable, have a drink, read the paper, and take off your shoes and socks. Some times you make a big mess in the living room, but you usually clean it up after dinner when you have more energy. One night, when you haven't clean up you wife says, "It really makes me mad the way you leave your stuff around. I'm tired too, and I wish I didn't have to pick up after you. Why can't you clean up before dinner?"

Reasonable part of wife's request:

You Say:

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The Gottman Island Survival Game

- (1) Imagine that you and your partner were on a cruise when your boat sank. You awaken to find yourselves on a tropical desert island. Some items from the ship have washed a shore but you only have time to carry 10 items before a storm comes in. Each of you make a list of the ten items you would chose. Have the most crucial item as number one and the least crucial item as number ten.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Two changes of clothes. | 2. AM-FM and short-wave radio receiver. |
| 3. Ten gallons of water | 4. Pots and pans |
| 5. Matches | 6. Shovel |
| 7. Backpack | 8. Toilet paper |
| 9. Two tents | 10. Two sleeping bags |
| 11. Knife | 12. Small Life Raft |
| 13. Sunblock lotion | 14. Cook stove and lantern |
| 15. Long rope | 16. Two walkie-talkies |
| 17. Freeze-dried food for seven days | 18. One change of clothing |
| 19. One-fifth of whiskey | 20. Flares |
| 21. Compass | 22. Regional aerial maps |
| 23. Gun with six bullets | 24. Bible |
| 25. First aid kits with penicillin. | 26. Binoculars |

- (2) Share your list with your partner and come to a consensus on your list.

- (3) Answer the following questions.

- How effective do you think you were at influencing your partner?
 - not at all
 - neither effective or ineffective
 - somewhat effective
 - very effective
- How effective way your partner at influencing you”
 - not at all
 - neither effective or ineffective
 - somewhat effective
 - very effective
- Did either of you try to dominate the other, or were you competitive with each other?
 - a lot
 - somewhat
 - a little
 - not at all
- Did you sulk or withdraw
 - a lot
 - somewhat
 - a little
 - not at all

5. Did your partner sulk or withdraw?
 - a) a lot
 - b) somewhat
 - c) a little
 - d) not at all
6. Did you have fun?
 - a) not at all
 - b) a little
 - c) somewhat
 - d) a lot
7. Did you work well as a team?
 - a) not at all
 - b) a little
 - c) somewhat
 - d) a lot
8. How much irritability or anger did you feel?
 - a) a lot
 - b) some
 - c) a little
 - d) none
9. How much irritability or anger did your partner feel?
 - a) a lot
 - b) some
 - c) a little
 - d) none
10. Did you both feel included?
 - a) not at all
 - b) a little
 - c) a reasonable amount
 - d) a great deal

(4) Scoring

- a) Give yourself one point for each “a” answer, two points for each “b” answer, three points for each “c” answer, and 4 points for each “d” answer.
- b) If your total is over 24 you are doing a good job.

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Solvable or Perpetual Problems

- (1) Below is a list of seventeen common causes of conflict in relationships and marriages. For each mark whether it is a perpetual problem, solvable problem or not a problem right now.
- (2) If it is a problem check all the sub-areas that are troublesome.

1. We are becoming emotionally distant.

Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now

- We have difficulty just simply talking to each other.
- We are staying emotionally in touch with each other less.
- I feel taken for granted
- I feel my spouse doesn't know me right now.
- My spouse is (or I am) emotionally disengaged.
- We spend less time together.

Comments:

2. There is spillover of non-relational stress (such as job tension) into our relationship.

Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now

- We don't always help each other reduce daily stress
- We don't talk about these stresses together
- We don't talk about stress in a helpful manner.
- My spouse doesn't listen with understanding about my stresses and worries.
- My spouse takes job or other stresses out on me.
- My spouse takes job or other stresses out on the children or others.

Comments:

3. Our marriage is becoming nonromantic and passionless; the fire is dying.

Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now

- My partner has stopped being verbally affectionate.
- My partner expresses love or admiration less frequently
- We rarely touch each other.
- My partner (or I) have stopped feeling very romantic
- We rarely cuddle
- We have fewer tender or passionate moments.

Comments:

4. *This question is only for those who are already married.* We are having a problem in our sex life.

Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now

- Sex is less frequent
- I (or my spouse) get less satisfaction from sex.
- We have problems talking about sexual problems
- Each of us wants different things sexually
- Desire is less than it once was
- Our lovemaking feels less loving.

Comments:

5. Our relationship is not dealing well with an important change. (Name the change)

Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now

- We have different views on how to handle things.
- This even has led my partner to be very distant
- This event has made us both irritable
- This event has led to a lot of fighting
- I'm worried about how this will all turn out
- We are taking very different positions.

Comments

6. Our relationship is not handling well or I fear our relationship will not handle well the major issue of children.

Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now

- We have very different goals for our children
- We differ on how to discipline children
- We differ on what to discipline children for.
- We have issues on how to be close to children
- We are not talking about these problems (potential problems) well
- There is much tension and anger about these differences.

Comments

7. Our relationship is not handling well a major issue or even concerning (future) in-laws or another relative.

Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now

- I feel unaccepted by my partner's family.
- I sometimes wonder which family my partner is in.
- I feel unaccepted by my own family
- There is tension between us about what might happen
- The issue has generated a lot of irritability.
- I worry about how this will turn out.

Comments

8. One of us is flirtatious outside the relationship or may have had a recent affair, and/or there is jealousy.

Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now

- This area is the source of lot of hurt
- This is an area that creates insecurity
- I can't deal with the lies
- It is hard to reestablish trust
- There is a feeling of betrayal
- It's hard to know how to heal over this.

Comments

9. Unpleasant fights have occurred between us.

Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now

- There are more fights now.
- Fights seem to come out of nowhere
- Anger and irritability have crept into our marriage.
- We get into muddles where we are hurting each other.
- I don't feel very respected lately
- I feel criticized.

Comments

10. We have differences in our basic goals and values or desired lifestyle.

Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now

- Differences have arisen in life goals
- Differences have arisen about important beliefs
- Differences have arisen on leisure time interests
- We seem to want different things out of life.
- We are growing in different directions
- I don't much like who I am with my partner.

Comments

11. Very disturbing events (for example, violence, drugs, an affair) have occurred within our relationship.

Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now

- There has been physical violence between us
- There is a problem with alcohol or drugs.
- This is turning into a relationship I hadn't bargained for.
- Our relationship "contract" is changing
- I find some of what my partner wants upsetting or repulsive
- I am now feeling somewhat disappointed by this relationship

Comments

12. We are not working well as a team.

Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now

- We used to share more of the family's workload.
- We seem to be pulling in opposite directions
- My partner does not fairly share in housework or child care
- My partner is not carrying his or her weight financially
- I feel alone managing this family
- My spouse is not being very considerate

Comments

13. We are having trouble sharing power and influence.
Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now
- I don't feel influential in decisions we make
 - My partner has become more domineering
 - I have become more demanding
 - My partner has become passive.
 - My partner is "spacey", not a strong force in our relationship
 - I am starting to care a lot more about who is running things.
- Comment:

14. We are having trouble handling financial issues well.
Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now
- One of us doesn't bring in enough money
 - We have differences about how to spend money
 - We are stressed about finances
 - My partner is financially more interested in self than in us.
 - We are not united in managing our finances.
 - There is not enough financial planning.
- Comments

15. We are not having much fun together these days.
Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now
- We don't seem to have much time for fun
 - We try but don't seem to enjoy our times together very much.
 - We are too stressed for fun.
 - Work takes up all our time these days
 - Our interests are so different, there are no fun thing we like to do together.
 - We plan fun things to do, but they never happen.
- Comments:

16. We are not feeling close about spiritual issues these days.
Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now
- We do not share the same beliefs
 - We do not agree about religious ideas and values
 - We differ about the specific church, mosque or synagogue.
 - We do not communicate well about spiritual issues.
 - We have issues about spiritual growth and change.
 - We have spiritual issues involving family and/or children.
- Comments

- 17 We are having conflict(s) about being a part of and building a community together.
Perpetual Solvable Not A Problem Right Now
- We feel differently about being involved with friends and other people or groups
 - We don't care to the same degree about the institutions that build community.
 - We have different opinions about putting time into the institutions of community (political party, school, hospital, church, mosque, synagogue, agencies, etc.
 - We disagree about doing projects or working for charity.
 - We disagree about doing other good deeds for others.
 - We have different views about whether to take a leadership role in service to our community.
- Comments

- (3) For each of the seventeen general areas that cause you problems, count up the number of specific bones of contention that you've checked. If you've checked more than two, then this is an area of significant conflict in your marriage.

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Your Last Argument

(1) Answer the following questions about the last argument you had.

During this argument I felt:

1.	Defensive	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
2.	Hurt	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
3.	Angry	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
4.	Sad	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
5.	Misunderstood	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
6.	Criticized	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
7.	Worried	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
8.	Righteously indignant	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
9.	Unappreciated	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
10.	Unattractive	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
11.	Disgusted	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
12.	Disapproving	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
13.	Like leaving	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
14.	Like my opinion didn't matter	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
15.	I had no idea what I was feeling	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
16.	Lonely	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All

What Triggered These Feelings?

1.	I felt excluded	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
2.	I was not important to my partner	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
3.	If felt cold toward my partner	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
4.	I definitely felt rejected	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
5.	I was criticized	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
6.	I felt no affection toward my partner	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
7.	I feel unattracted	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
8.	My sense of dignity was being compromised	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
9.	My partner was being domineering	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
10.	I couldn't persuade my partner at all.	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All

(2) Compare the above findings with the worksheet "Who Am I?" Use the following to find connections.

1. This recent argument was rooted in: (Circle all that apply)
 - The way I was treated in my family growing up.
 - A previous relationship
 - Past injuries, hard times, or traumas I've suffered
 - My basic fears and insecurities
 - Things and events I have not yet resolved or put aside.
 - Unrealized hopes I have
 - Ways other people treated me in the past
 - Things I have always thought about myself
 - Old "nightmares" or "catastrophes" I have worried about.

(3) Hopefully an honest look at these questions help you to realize that your perspective on an argument may be different from that of your partner. It is natural to make the fundamental error of believing that the fight is your partner's fault. To break the pattern, you both need to admit, some role (however slight at first) in creating the conflict. Circle the following statements that apply and the degree to which the statement does.

- | | | | |
|-----|---|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. | I have been very stressed and irritable lately. | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 2. | I have not expressed much appreciation toward my partner lately | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 3. | I have been overly sensitive lately | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 4. | I have been overly critical lately | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 5. | I have not shared very much of my inner world. | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 6. | I have been depressed lately | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 7. | I would say that I have a chip on my shoulder | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 8. | I have not been very affectionate. | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 9. | I have not been a very good listener lately | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 10. | I have been feeling a bit like a martyr. | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |

(4) Answer the following questions.

1. Overall my contribution to this mess was:

2. How can I make this better in the future?

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Harsh Startup Questionnaire

(1) Answer the following true false questions.

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-------------|--------------|
| 1. | My partner is often very critical of me. | True | False |
| 2. | I hate the way my partner raises an issue. | True | False |
| 3. | Arguments often seem to come out of nowhere. | True | False |
| 4. | Before I know it, we are in a fight | True | False |
| 5. | When my partner complains, I feel picked on. | True | False |
| 6. | I seem to always get blamed for issues. | True | False |
| 7. | My partner is negative all out of proportion. | True | False |
| 8. | I feel I have ward off personal attacks. | True | False |
| 9. | I often have to deny charges level at me. | True | False |
| 10. | My partner's feelings are too easily hurt | True | False |
| 11. | What goes wrong is often not my responsibility. | True | False |
| 12. | My partner criticizes my personality. | True | False |
| 13. | Issues get raised in an insulting manner. | True | False |
| 14. | My partner will at times complain in a smug or superior way. | True | False |
| 15. | I have just about had it with the negativity between us. | True | False |
| 16. | I feel basically disrespected when my partner complains. | True | False |
| 17. | I just want to leave the scene when complaints arise. | True | False |
| 18. | Our calm is suddenly shattered. | True | False |
| 19. | I find my partner's negativity unnerving and unsettling. | True | False |
| 20. | I think my partner can be totally irrational. | True | False |

(2) Scoring: Give yourself one point for each true answer. 5 Points or more this is an area that needs work in your relationship. 5 Points or below this is an area of weakness.

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Softened Startup

- (1) Test your ability to soften a harsh startup. For each item below supply a soften alternative.
1. When your mother-in-law visits tonight, you plan to tell her how much it hurts you when she criticizes your parenting skills. You want your partner, who is defensive when it comes to mom to back you up.
Harsh startup: *I can't stand it when your mother comes over.*
Soften startup:
 2. You wish that your partner would cook dinner tomorrow night or take you out to dinner.
Harsh startup: *You never take me anywhere. I sick of doing all the cooking.*
Soften startup:
 3. You think that your partner spends too much time with other people instead of you when you go to parties. Tonight, you want your partner to stick by you.
Harsh startup: *I just know that tonight you're gonna be flirting shamelessly again at the party.*
Soften startup:
 4. You want your partner to ask for a raise.
Harsh startup: *You're too wimpy to get a raise for your own family.*
Soften startup:

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Repair Attempts Questionnaire

(1) Answer the following true false questions.

During our attempts to resolve conflicts:

1. We are good at taking breaks when we need them. **True or False**
2. My partner usually accepts my apologies. **True or False**
3. I can say that I am wrong. **True or False**
4. I am pretty good at calming myself down. **True or False**
5. We can maintain a sense of humor. **True or False**
6. When my partner says we should talk to each other in a different way it usually makes a lot of sense. **True or False**
7. My attempts to repair our discussions when they get negative are usually effective. **True or False**
8. We are pretty good listeners even when we have different positions on things. **True or False**
9. If things get heated, we can usually pull out of it and change things. **True or False**
10. My partner is good at soothing me when I am upset **True or False**
11. I feel confident that we can resolve most issues between us. **True or False**
12. When I comment on how we could communicate better my partner listens to me. **True or False**
13. Even if things get hard at times I know we can get past our differences. **True or False**
14. We can be affectionate even when we are disagreeing. **True or False**
15. Teasing and humor usually work to get my spouse over negativity. **True or False**
16. We can start all over again and improve our discussion when we need to. **True or False**
17. When emotions run hot, expressing how upset I feel makes a real difference. **True or False**
18. We can discuss even big differences between us. **True or False**
19. My partner expresses appreciation for nice things I do. **True or False**
20. If I keep trying to communicate it will eventually work. **True or False**

(2) A point for each true answer. 6 Points and above is good. 6 points and below indicates a problem.

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Flooding Questionnaire

(1) Answer the following true false questions.

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. Our discussions get too heated. | True or False |
| 2. I have a hard time calming down. | True or False |
| 3. One of us is going to say something we will regret. . | True or False |
| 4. My partner gets too upset. | True or False |
| 5. After a fight I want to keep my distance. | True or False |
| 6. My partner yells unnecessarily. | True or False |
| 7. I can feel overwhelmed by our arguments. | True or False |
| 8. I can't think straight when my partner gets hostile. | True or False |
| 9. Why can't we talk more logically? | True or False |
| 10. My partner's negativity often comes out of nowhere. | True or False |
| 11. There's often no stopping my partner's temper. | True or False |
| 12. I feel like running away during our fights. | True or False |
| 13. Small issues suddenly become big ones. | True or False |
| 14. I can't calm down very easily during an argument. | True or False |
| 15. My partner has a long list of unreasonable demands. | True or False |

(2) Give your self one point for each true answer. 6 Points and above indicates a problem. 6 points and below indicates a strength.

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Self-Soothing

- (1) If an argument is getting out of hand and you feel flooded, it is important for you to take a break. During this break it is important for you to avoid thoughts of righteous indignation and innocent victimhood. Spend your time doing something soothing and distracting, like listening to music or exercising. You may also try the following exercise.
 1. Sit in a comfortable chair, or lie on your back on the floor.
 2. Focus on controlling your breathing. Usually when you get flooded you either hold your breath a lot or breath shallowly. So close your eyes and focus on taking deep breaths.
 3. Relax your muscles. One at a time, tightly squeeze the muscle groups that seem tense (usually your forehead and jaw, neck, shoulders, arms and back). Hold for two seconds then release.
 4. Let the tension flow out of each muscle group, and get the muscle group to feel heavy by imagining that it is.
 5. Let the tension flow out of each (now-heavy) muscle group, and get that muscle group to feel warm. One way is to keep your eyes closed and focus on one calming vision or idea. Many people find it effective to think of a place they associate with calmness, like a forest, a lake, or a beach. Imagine this place as vividly as you can. Keep focused on this calming vision for about thirty seconds.
 6. Find a personal image that brings all this soothing to mind.

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Soothing Each Other

- (1) After you have completed the self-soothing exercise and if you feel that you have the energy too, it would be of tremendous benefit to your marriage if you can take a few moments to soothe each other.

Talk earnestly about the following questions.

1. What makes me (you) feel flooded?
2. How do I (you) typically bring up issues or irritability or complaints?
3. Do I (you) store things up?
4. Is there anything I can do that soothes you?
5. Is there anything you can do that soothes me?
6. What signals can we develop for letting the other know when we feel flooded? Can we take breaks?

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Budgeting

(1) Itemize Your Current Expenditures:

Food		Parking/tolls
Mortgage or rent		Payments
Vacation rentals		Other Transportation – i. .e bus
Remodeling		Trips
Property Taxes		Business
Condo Maintenance Fees		Visiting family
Home office supplies		Vacation
Utilities		Recreation
Electric		Eating out
Gas		Baby sitters
Heat		Dates
Water		Home entertainment
Phone		Health
Internet		Insurance premiums
Household maintenance		Doctor
Housecleaning		Pharmacy
Laundry		Health club membership
Dry cleaning		Other
Supplies & equipment		Appliances & electronics
Clothes		Gifts
Personal care items		Charitable contributions
Car		Interest on loans, bank charges, credit
Gas	cards	
Maintenance & repairs		Life insurance
License		Investments & savings
Insurance		

Step 2 Manage Everyday finances

1. Write down every expense from the list above that you consider essential for your sense of wellbeing and happiness.
2. Look carefully at your income and assets. Now try to create a budget that allows you to manage everyday finances and other essentials based on your means.
3. Come up with a plan for paying bills on a regular basis. Determine who writes the checks, when, and who balances the checkbook.
4. Discuss your separate lists and plans with each other. Look for common ground between your two approaches. Decide on a workable strategy and agree to revisit the plan in a few months.

Step 3 Plan your financial future.

1. Imagine your life 5, 10, 20, 30 years from now.
2. Share with your spouse
3. Come up with a long-range plan.

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Building a Healthy Marriage

- Building Fondness and Admiration
- Turning Towards Each Other



1. Introduction
 2. We've got to cover two major themes that are key to marriage success today so we need to get into the material.
 3. As we go through this lesson, it's important to not focus on your spouse but to focus on yourself.
 4. The only person you can control is yourself. If you do that, you will have success in what we do here.
- This *Building a Healthy Marriage* course is based on a study of nearly four decades with over 700 couples by Dr. John Gottman.
 - Through years of research Dr. Gottman was able to isolate the keys to a successful marriage.
 - In fact he has gotten to the point that within a five minute interview with couples he can predict with over 90% accuracy if the couple will have a healthy and sustainable marriage.

“Fondness and admiration are two of the most crucial elements in a rewarding and long lasting romance.”

Although happily married couples may feel driven to distraction at times by their spouse’s personality flaws, they still feel that the person they married is worthy of honor and respect. When this sense is completely missing from a marriage, the relationship can not be revived.”



The basis is you really have to like each other.

Think about it, do you have any lasting relationships where you don't like each other?

Fondness and Admiration Questionnaire



1. Fill out questionnaire separately
 2. Give yourself one point for each true answer.
 3. Share with your spouse.
 4. Every marriage can use improvement
 5. These questionnaires will help guide which exercises and homework you choose to work on.
 6. You have five minutes.
- Ten or above this is an area of strength for your marriage
 - Ten or below you may need to focus on what we will share today.

Fondness and Admiration Questionnaire

Answer the following true false questions.

1. I can easily list the three things I most admire about my partner. T or F
2. When we are apart, I often think fondly of my partner. T or F
3. I will often find some way to tell my partner "I love you." T or F
4. I often touch or kiss my partner affectionately. T or F
5. My partner really respects me. T or F
6. I feel loved and cared for in this relationship T or F
7. I feel accepted and like by my partner. T or F
8. My partner finds me sexy and attractive. T or F
9. My partner turns me on sexually. T or F
10. There is a fire and passion in this relationship. T or F
11. Romance is definitely still a part of our relationship. T or F
12. I am really proud of my partner. T or F
13. My partner really enjoys my achievements and accomplishments. T or F
14. I can easily tell you why I want to marry my partner. T or F
15. If I had it all to do over again, I would. T or F
16. We rarely part from each other without showing some sign of love and affection. T or F
17. When I come into a room, my partner is glad to see me. T or F
18. My partner appreciates the things I do in this relationship. T or F
19. My spouse generally likes my personality. T or F
20. Our sex life is generally satisfying. T or F

Learning from History

- **94% of the time that couples who put a positive spin on their marriages history are likely to have a happy future as well.**
- **When happy memories are distorted it's a sign that the marriage needs help.**
- **Having a fundamentally positive view of your spouse and your marriage is a powerful buffer when bad times hit.**
- **Fondness and admiration are anecdotes for contempt.**
- **Contempt is a corrosive that, over time, breaks down the bond between husband and wife.**



When Dr. Gottman asked couples to describe their first date or wedding day he listened to their answers very carefully.

Keep in mind he studied couples for 3-4 decades so he knew what the outcomes were.

1. When couples talked about their first date or wedding day, if they talked positively about it they would have a 94% success rate.
2. If they distorted or adjusted the story they were in trouble.
3. One of the keys is if you have this positive view, it helps you though the hard times.
4. So showing fondness and admiration keeps your perspective positive
5. Contempt is one of the four horseman that causes divorce.

Focus on the Positive

I Appreciate Exercise

“I Appreciate...”

(1) Circle three items that you think are characteristics of your partner. Circle just three. (You can do the exercise over again with a different three if you want to).

- | | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Loving | 2. Sensitive | 3. Brave | 4. Intelligent |
| 5. Thoughtful | 6. Generous | 7. Loyal | 8. Truthful |
| 9. Strong | 10. Energetic | 11. Sexy | 12. Decisive |
| 13. Creative | 14. Imaginative | 15. Fun | 16. Attractive |
| 17. Interesting | 18. Supportive | 19. Funny | 20. Considerate |
| 21. Affectionate | 22. Organized | 23. Resourceful | 24. Athletic |
| 25. Cheerful | 26. Coordinated | 27. Graceful | 28. Elegant |
| 29. Gracious | 30. Playful | 31. Caring | 32. A Great Friend |
| 33. Exciting | 34. Thrifty | 35. Full Of Plans | 36. Shy |
| 37. Vulnerable | 38. Committed | 39. Involved | 40. Expressive |
| 41. Active | 42. Careful | 43. Reserved | 44. Adventurous |
| 45. Receptive | 46. Reliable | 47. Responsible | 48. Dependable |
| 49. Nurturing | 50. Warm | 51. Virile | 52. Kind |
| 53. Gentle | 54. Practical | 55. Healthy | 56. Witty |
| 57. Relaxed | 58. Beautiful | 59. Handsome | 60. Rich |
| 61. Calm | 62. A Great Partner | 63. Lively | 64. A Great Parent |
| 65. Assertive | 66. Protective | 67. Sweet | 68. Tender |
| 69. Powerful | 70. Understanding | 71. Flexible | 72. Totally Silly |
| 73. Prayerful | 74. Holy | 75. Loving | 76. Humble |
| 77. Forgiving | 78. Thinker | 79. Patient | 80. Hopeful |

(2) For each item you checked please briefly think of an actual incident that illustrates this characteristic of your partner.

1. Characteristic: _____
Incident: _____
 2. Characteristic: _____
Incident: _____
 3. Characteristic: _____
Incident: _____
- (3) Now share your list with your partner. Let him or her know what it is about these traits that you value so highly.

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Turning Towards Each Other

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1r8rmNFycSg>

Here is an example of how not to do it.

Humor is very good in a marriage.

We have a longstanding joke in my family that Suzanne tells me three times.

When she says your not listening to me I reply that I'm waiting for the third and final time.

But there is no quick fix or pill that can make your spouse listen.

Is Your Marriage Primed for Romance Questionnaire



1. Fill out questionnaire separately
 2. Give yourself one point for each true answer.
 3. Share with your spouse.
 4. Every marriage can use improvement
 5. These questionnaires will help guide which exercises and homework you choose to work on.
- Ten or above this is an area of strength for your marriage
 - Ten or below you may need to focus on what we will share today.

Is Your Marriage Primed For Romance

- (1) Answer the following true false questions.
1. We enjoy doing small things together, like folding laundry or watching TV. T or F
 2. I look forward to spending my free time with my partner. T or F
 3. At the end of the day my partner is glad to see me. T or F
 4. My partner is usually interested in hearing my views. T or F
 5. I really enjoy discussing things with my partner. T or F
 6. My partner is one of my best friends. T or F
 7. I think my partner would consider me a very close friend. T or F
 8. We just love talking to each other. T or F
 9. When we go out together, the time goes very quickly. T or F
 10. We always have a lot to say to each other. T or F
 11. We have a lot of fun together. T or F
 12. We are spiritually very compatible. T or F
 13. We tend to share the same basic values. T or F
 14. We like to spend time together in similar ways T or F
 15. We really have a lot of common interests. T or F
 16. We have many of the same dreams and goals. T or F
 17. We like to do a lot of the same things. T or F
 18. Even though our interests are somewhat different, I enjoy my partner's interests. T or F
 19. Whatever we do together, we usually tend to have a good time. T or F
 20. My partner tells me when he or she has had a bad day. T or F
- (2) 10 and above is good. 10 and below shows improvement is needed.

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Turning Toward Each Other

- Husbands and wives constantly make choices in how they respond to one another.
- One spouse is bidding for the attention, affection, humor or support of the other.
- How the spouse responds to these bids directly impacts emotional connection, romance, passion and sex life.
- When receiving one of these bids, the spouse will either turn toward the other or away.
- Example: Over breakfast one spouse says to the other, "I had a crazy dream last night".
 1. Turning away – ignore or saying "I don't have time."
 2. Turning toward – "I've got to get to work but lets talk over dinner."
 3. Affirmed or rejected?

Romance and Intimacy are outcomes of Turning Toward Each Other.

Building an Emotional Bank Account

- Couples who actively acknowledge and engage with each other are putting money in their emotional bank account.
- The bank account will serve as a cushion when times get tough.
- Because they have stored up this goodwill, they can make allowances for each other when conflict arises.



1. Romance is an outcome.
2. The questionnaire is designed to get a gauge on where you are in connecting.
3. Now lets talk about how to get that engagement and connection.

Turning Towards Each Other

- **Listening and responding to what your spouse says.**
- **Happily married couples notice almost all of the positive things their partners do for them.**
- **Unhappily married couples underestimate their partners loving intentions by 50%.**
- **Often couples turn away from each other not out of malice but out of mindlessness**
- **Helping your partner manage stress (that is not caused by your marriage) is crucial to a marriages long term health.**



Take Home Exercises

- Building an Emotional Bank Account
- What to do When Your Spouse Doesn't Turn Toward You



The Emotional Bank Account

Keeping an account in your head of how much you're connecting with your spouse emotionally in little ways can greatly benefit your marriage. But for some couples it sometimes helps them get started by keeping track on paper. Be careful not to turn this into a competition or a quid pro quo. The focus is to see how you can improve your relationship not what your partner is not doing.

Below is a list of things that couples can do together. Circle three things that you wish your partner would do with you.

1. Reunite at the end of the day and talk about how it went.
2. Shop for groceries.
3. Cook dinner/bake.
4. Clean house/do laundry
5. Shop together for gifts or clothes.
6. Go out for brunch or dinner.
7. Read the morning paper
8. Help each other with a self-improvement plan (i.e. exercise)
9. Plan and host a dinner party
10. Call and/or think about each other during the workday.
11. Pray together
12. Eat breakfast together during the workweek.
13. Go to a church
14. Do yard work, shovel the walk, do home repairs, car maintenance, and washing.
15. Perform committee work in the community (volunteering).
16. Exercise together
17. Go on a weekend outing.
18. Alone time together.
19. Go to the museum, zoo, etc.
20. Attend a class together.
21. Stay in touch with/spend time with kin (parents, siblings, etc.)
22. Entertain out of town guests.

23. Travel together.
24. Watch TV or a video
25. Order take out
26. Double-date with friends.
27. Attend a sporting event
28. Engage in a favorite activity (bowling, amusement park, bicycle, hike, jog, horseback riding, etc.)
29. Talk or read together by an open fire.
30. Listen to music
31. Attend a concert, jazz club or theater.
32. Host a birthday party
33. Take up a new hobby together³⁵
34. Attend a play or recital together
35. Pay bills
36. Write letters or cards.
37. Deal with medical records
38. Volunteer together
39. Go to a community event
40. Go to a party
41. Drive to and from work together
42. Celebrate each other family's milestones
43. Celebrate each other's life milestones.
44. Play computer games together
45. Watch a niece or a nephew together.
46. Plan a vacation together
47. Plan your future together.
48. Walk the dog
49. Read out loud together.
50. Play a board game together
51. Put on a play or a skit together.

- 52. Do errands together
- 53. Engage in hobbies together
- 54. Talk stuff over coffee or tea
- 55. Find time to just talk without interruptions.
- 56. Philosophize
- 57. Attend a funeral
- 58. Help out other people
- 59. Hunt for a new house or apartment.
- 60. Test-drive new cars.
- 61. Other_____

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Is Your Marriage Primed For Romance

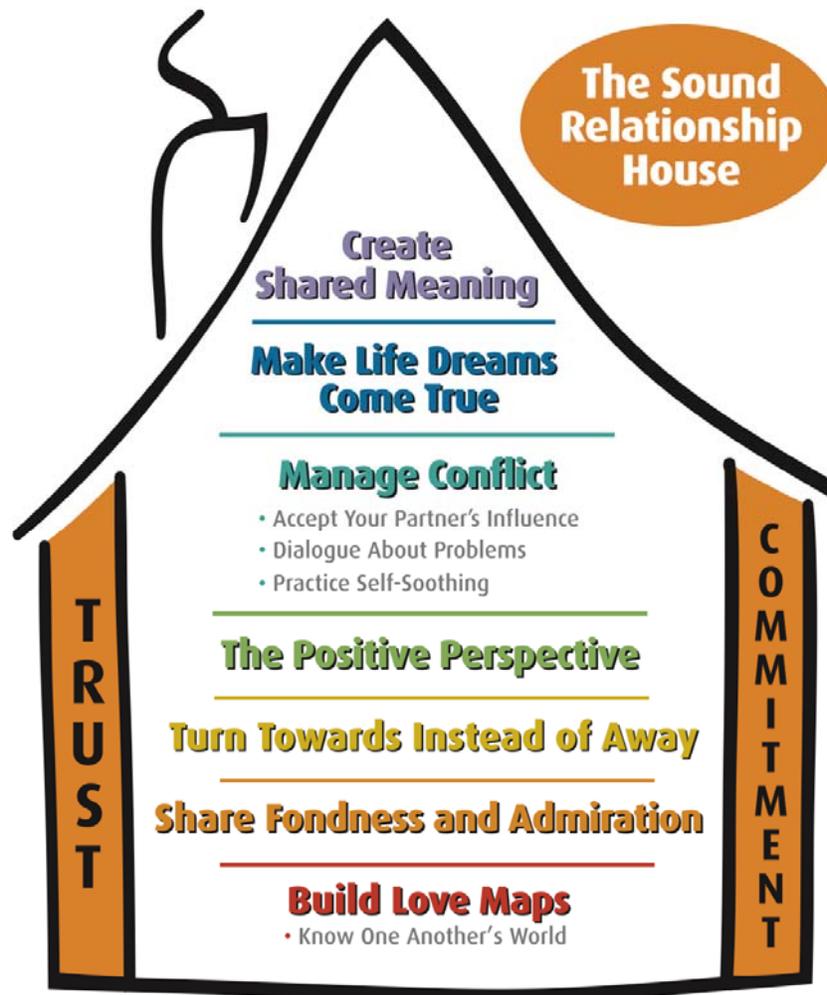
Answer the following true false questions.

1. We enjoy doing small things together, like folding laundry or watching TV. T or F
2. I look forward to spending my free time with my partner. T or F
3. At the end of the day my partner is glad to see me. T or F
4. My partner is usually interested in hearing my views. T or F
5. I really enjoy discussing things with my partner. T or F
6. My partner is one of my best friends. T or F
7. I think my partner would consider me a very close friend. T or F
8. We just love talking to each other. T or F
9. When we go out together, the time goes very quickly. T or F
10. We always have a lot to say to each other. T or F
11. We have a lot of fun together. T or F
12. We are spiritually very compatible. T or F
13. We tend to share the same basic values. T or F
14. We like to spend time together in similar ways T or F
15. We really have a lot of common interests. T or F
16. We have many of the same dreams and goals. T or F
17. We like to do a lot of the same things. T or F
18. Even though our interests are somewhat different, I enjoy my partner's interests. T or F
19. Whatever we do together, we usually tend to have a good time. T or F
20. My partner tells me when he or she has had a bad day. T or F

(2) 10 and above is good. 10 and below shows improvement is needed.

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The Positive Perspective





"I Like You"
by Ben Rector

There's no need to complicate it
Dress it up or overstate it
Without too much hesitation
Here's the way I feel

I like you, I like you
Even when I don't try to
Yes I do, that's the truth
I like you

Seven years is a long, long while
Somehow you still make me smile
I'd say almost most the time
Here's the way I feel

I like you, just like you
Even when I don't try to
Yes I do, that's the truth
I like you

There're way too many love songs
And I think they've got it all wrong
Cause life is not the mountain tops
It's the walking in between
I like you walking next to me

Hhhmmm ooohhhh aaaaahhhh

Well I like you, I like you
Even when I don't try to
Yes I do, that's the truth
I like you
Ooooo even when I don't try to
I still like you



Research Proven Skills for Softening your Start-up:

Complain but don't blame.

Make statements that start with "I" instead of "You."

Describe what is happening, but don't evaluate or judge.

Be polite and kind/Don't be a porcupine. (Eph. 4:32)

Don't store things up .

Statistics show 96% of the time you can predict the outcome of a conversation based on the first three minutes of a 15 minute conversation up you might as well pull the plug and start over.



Harsh Startup:

IRIS: Another Saturday, and once again I'm spending my free time picking up after you. The trouble with you, Richard, is that... (*Criticism, blame*)

RICHARD: Yep, here we go again. "The trouble with you, Richard, the trouble with you, Richard," There's nothing wrong with me!

IRIS: Then why do I always have to tell you what to do? Never mind, I've finished cleaning up your stuff anyway, or were you too busy reading the Sunday paper to notice? (*Contempt*)

RICHARD: Look I hate cleaning up. I know you do, too. I've been thinking about what we should do. (*Repair attempt*)

IRIS: This I've got to hear. (*More contempt*)

RICHARD: Well, actually I was thinking that we could use a vacation. Wouldn't it be nice for you to be waited on hand and foot? (*Second repair attempt*)

IRIS: Come on, we can't afford a cleaning lady much less a vacation like that.

Softened Startup:

IRIS: This house is an incredible mess, and we're having company tonight. (*Describing*) I am really upset that I am doing all this cleaning, alone, on a Saturday. (*"I" statement*) Come on, please help me. Maybe you could do the vacuuming? (*Being clear*)

RICHARD: All right. I hate cleaning up, but I guess vacuuming is the best of the worst. I'll do the bathrooms, too.

IRIS: That'd be a big help. (*Appreciation*) Thank you. (*Politeness*)

RICHARD: When we're done, we deserve a reward - let's go out for lunch.

IRIS: Okay.

When you switch to a soft startup, your spouse may not automatically react so sweetly. He or she may still be anticipating criticism or contempt from you and therefore respond negatively. Don't give up or fall into the trap of then escalating the conflict. Continue to broach the topic gently, and eventually you will see a change in how your spouse responds.



Here are some other examples that illustrate the difference between a harsh startup and a softened alternative:

Harsh startup:

Angela:

You never touch me.

Softened alternative: I loved it when you kissed me in the kitchen the other day. You are a natural-born kisser. Let's do that some more.

Harsh startup:

Brad:

I see you dented the car again. When are you going to stop being so reckless?

Softened alternative: I saw that new dent. What happened? I am really getting worried about your driving, and I want you to be safe. Can we talk about this?

Harsh startup:

Angela:

You always ignore me!

Softened alternative: I have been missing you lately, and I'm getting a little lonely.



Harsh Startup Questionnaire:

To get a sense of whether harsh startup is a problem in your marriage, answer the following questions. Read each statement and circle **T** for true or **F** for false.

When we begin to discuss our marital issues:

- | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|
| 1. My partner is often very critical of me. | 1 | T | F |
| 2. I hate the way my partner raises an issue. | 2 | T | F |
| 3. Arguments often seem to come out of nowhere. | 3 | T | F |
| 4. Before I know it, we are in a fight. | 4 | T | F |
| 5. When my partner complains, I feel picked on. | 5 | T | F |
| 6. I seem to always get blamed for issues. | 6 | T | F |
| 7. My partner is negative all out of proportion. | 7 | T | F |
| 8. I feel I have to ward off personal attacks. | 8 | T | F |
| 9. I often have to deny charges leveled against me. | 9 | T | F |
| 10. My partner's feelings are too easily hurt. | 10 | T | F |
| 11. What goes wrong often is not my responsibility. | 11 | T | F |
| 12. My spouse criticizes my personality. | 12 | T | F |
| 13. Issues get raised in an insulting manor. | 13 | T | F |
| 14. My partner will at times complain in a smug or superior way. | 14 | T | F |
| 15. I have just about had it with all this negativity between us. | 15 | T | F |
| 16. I feel basically disrespected when my partner complains. | 16 | T | F |
| 17. I just want to leave the scene when complaints arise. | 17 | T | F |
| 18. Our calm is suddenly shattered. | 18 | T | F |
| 19. I find my partner's negativity unnerving and unsettling. | 19 | T | F |
| 20. I think my partner can be totally irrational. | 20 | T | F |

SCORING: Give yourself one point for each "true" answer.

UNDER 5: This is an area of strength in your marriage. You and your spouse initiate difficult discussions with each other gently - without being critical or contemptuous. Because you avoid being harsh, your chances of resolving your conflict or learning to manage it successfully together are dramatically increased.

5 OR ABOVE: Your marriage could stand some improvement in this area. Your score suggests that when you address areas of disagreement with your spouse, one of you tends to be harsh. That means you immediately trot out at least one of the four horsemen, which automatically prevents the issue from being resolved.



Principle #4:

The Positive Perspective

Behavior/Expectations Chart:

A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for a Behavior/Expectations Chart.

Accepting Influence Questionnaire

(From: "The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work" by John Gottman)

Read each statement and circle T for "true" or F for "false."

- 1.) I am really interested in my spouse's opinions on our basic issues. T F
- 2.) I usually learn a lot from my spouse even when we disagree. T F
- 3.) I want my partner to feel that what he or she says really counts with me. T F
- 4.) I generally want my spouse to feel influential in this marriage. T F
- 5.) I can listen to my partner, but only up to a point. T F
- 6.) My partner has a lot of basic common sense. T F
- 7.) I try to communicate respect even during our disagreements. T F
- 8.) If I keep trying to convince my partner, I will eventually win out. T F
- 9.) I don't reject my spouse's opinions out of hand. T F
- 10.) My partner is not rational enough to take seriously when we discuss our issues. T F
- 11.) I believe in lots of give and take in our discussions. T F
- 12.) I am very persuasive and usually can win arguments with my spouse. T F
- 13.) I feel I have an important say when we make decisions. T F
- 14.) My partner usually has good ideas. T F
- 15.) My partner is basically a great help as a problem solver. T F
- 16.) I try to listen respectfully, even when I disagree. T F
- 17.) My ideas for solutions are usually much better than my spouse's. T F
- 18.) I can usually find something to agree with in my partner's position. T F
- 19.) My partner is usually too emotional. T F
- 20.) I am the one who needs to make the major decisions in this marriage. T F

Fondness and Admiration Questionnaire

Answer the following true false questions.

1. I can easily list the three things I most admire about my partner. T or F
2. When we are apart, I often think fondly of my partner. T or F
3. I will often find some way to tell my partner "I love you." T or F
4. I often touch or kiss my partner affectionately. T or F
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6. I feel loved and cared for in this relationship T or F
7. I feel accepted and like by my partner. T or F
8. My partner finds me sexy and attractive. T or F
9. My partner turns me on sexually. T or F
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14. I can easily tell you why I want to marry my partner. T or F
15. If I had it all to do over again, I would. T or F
16. We rarely part from each other without showing some sign of love and affection. T or F
17. When I come into a room, my partner is glad to see me. T or F
18. My partner appreciates the things I do in this relationship. T or F
19. My spouse generally likes my personality. T or F
20. Our sex life is generally satisfying. T or F

The Emotional Bank Account

Keeping an account in your head of how much you're connecting with your spouse emotionally in little ways can greatly benefit your marriage. But for some couples it sometimes helps them get started by keeping track on paper. Be careful not to turn this into a competition or a quid pro quo. The focus is to see how you can improve your relationship not what your partner is not doing.

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9. Plan and host a dinner party
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30. Listen to music
31. Attend a concert, jazz club or theater.
32. Host a birthday party
33. Take up a new hobby together³⁵
34. Attend a play or recital together
35. Pay bills
36. Write letters or cards.
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 56. Philosophize
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 58. Help out other people
 59. Hunt for a new house or apartment.
 60. Test-drive new cars.
 61. Other _____
-

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What to do when your spouse doesn't turn toward you:

If one of you is feeling rebuffed by the other lately, or overwhelmed by your spouse's need for closeness, you should both fill out this form and then share your answers. There is no answer key for these questions, they are merely a point of departure for discussions with your spouse. The bottom line for this approach is that there isn't one reality when a couple misses each other in little ways. There are two equally legitimate perspectives. Once you understand and acknowledge this, you'll find that reconnecting just comes naturally.

During this week I felt:

1. Defensive	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
2. Hurt	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
3. Angry	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
4. Sad	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
5. Misunderstood	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
6. Criticized	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
7. Worried	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
8. Righteously indignant	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
9. Unappreciated	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
10. Unattractive	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
11. Disgusted	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
12. Disapproving	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
13. Like leaving	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
14. Like my opinion didn't matter	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
15. I had no idea what I was feeling	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
16. Lonely	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All

What Triggered These Feelings?

1. I felt excluded	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
2. I was not important to my partner	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
3. If felt cold toward my partner	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
4. I definitely felt rejected	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
5. I was criticized	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All

6. I felt no affection toward my partner	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
7. I felt my partner was not attracted to me	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
8. My sense of dignity was being compromised	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
9. My partner was being domineering	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All
10. I couldn't persuade my partner at all.	A Great Deal	Definitely	A Little	Not At All

These recent feelings about my marriage came from: (Circle all that apply)

- The way I was treated in my family growing up.
- A previous relationship
- Past injuries, hard times, or traumas I've suffered
- My basic fears and insecurities
- Things and events I have not yet resolved or put aside.
- Unrealized hopes I have
- Ways other people treated me in the past
- Things I have always thought about myself
- Old "nightmares" or "catastrophes" I have worried about.⁵⁰

After you've read each other's answers above, you will, I hope, come to see that many of your differences are really not matters of "fact". We are all complicated creatures whose actions and reactions are governed by a wide array of perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and memories. In other words, reality is subjective, which is why your partner's perspective on the past week may be different from yours without either of you being right or wrong about what really happened. In your notebook, write out a short description of your point of view, and then do the same for your partner's perspective.

It's natural to make the fundamental error of assuming that distance and loneliness are all your partner's fault. In truth, they're nobody's fault. In order to break the pattern, you both need to admit playing some role (however slight at first) in creating the problem. To do that, read the following list and circle all that apply to you and that may have contributed to the turning away of the feelings of being swamped and smothered recently.

- | | | |
|--|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. I have been very stressed and irritable lately. | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 2. I have not expressed much appreciation toward my partner lately | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 3. I have been overly sensitive lately | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 4. I have been overly critical lately | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 5. I have not shared very much of my inner world. | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |

- | | | |
|--|-----------------|----------------|
| 6. I have been depressed lately | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 7. I would say that I have a chip on my shoulder | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 8. I have not been very affectionate. | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 9. I have not been a very good listener lately | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |
| 10. I have been feeling a bit like a martyr. | Yes, Definitely | Maybe a Little |

Answer the following questions.

1. Overall my contribution to this mess was:

2. How can I make this better in the future?

3. What one thing could my partner do next time to avoid this problem?

Gottman, John and Nan Silver: The Seven Principles For Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide
From the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999).



Four ways couples can build a stronger relationship with shared meaning:

1. **Sharing a common dream or vision** for life can help you gain a healthy perspective. When couples have that, the inevitable ups and downs of marriage are less bothersome. Creating a larger context of meaning in life, can help couples to avoid focusing on the little stuff that happens and to keep their eyes on the big picture.

2. **Talking about your shared vision** can foster attunement. Taking time to process your dreams can bring you closer. Couples who practice emotional attunement and "turn toward" one another rather than "turning away" are more likely to be happy and less likely to be headed toward divorce according to Dr. John Gottman.

3. **Creating daily or weekly rituals** will enable you to spend quality time together. Carve out time to be together so you don't become "two ships passing in the night." Focus on spending time doing enjoyable activities that bring you both pleasure. Dr. John Gottman suggests that couples make a commitment to spend a magic five hours a week together.

4. **Implementing your shared goals** can help you to be a stronger couple with a purpose. For instance, your goals might include volunteering in the community, raising your children in a positive way or adopting a sustainable lifestyle. Regardless of what your shared vision or goals are, they can strengthen your bond.

Couples who take the time to develop shared meaning and goals are more likely to experience mutual admiration -- a hallmark of mature, lasting love. It is something not simply arrived at by chance, but is deliberately cultivated. It's important to remember that maintaining admiration for your partner does not mean you put him or her on a pedestal. But it does mean that you like and respect who they are and how they conduct themselves in their world.