



MARRIAGE

Discoveries & Encounters



HOW DO YOU SEE ME?

You are invited to compare your views of yourself with your fiancée's view of you. This exercise emphasizes the fact that the image we have of ourselves is not necessarily the image that even those near and dear to us have.

A. MAN ABOUT HIMSELF

S S
 O N O
 V M E M V
 E E U E E
 R W T W R
 Y H R H Y
 A A A
 T L T

calm	—	—	—	—	—	excitable
insistent	—	—	—	—	—	accommodating
undemonstrative	—	—	—	—	—	lovely-dovey
skeptical	—	—	—	—	—	trusting
extroverted	—	—	—	—	—	introverted
self-questioning	—	—	—	—	—	confident
procrastinating	—	—	—	—	—	compulsive
spendthrift	—	—	—	—	—	tightwad
happy-go-lucky	—	—	—	—	—	careful planner
pragmatist	—	—	—	—	—	optimist
hard-headed	—	—	—	—	—	soft-hearted
social	—	—	—	—	—	private
serious	—	—	—	—	—	whimsical
relaxed	—	—	—	—	—	intense
discerning	—	—	—	—	—	open-minded
liberal	—	—	—	—	—	conservative
reticent	—	—	—	—	—	expansive
self-sufficient	—	—	—	—	—	collaborative
outgoing	—	—	—	—	—	reserved
organized	—	—	—	—	—	laid-back
practical	—	—	—	—	—	dreamer
cautious	—	—	—	—	—	risk-taker

B. MAN ABOUT WOMAN

S S
 O N O
 V M E M V
 E E U E E
 R W T W R
 Y H R H Y
 A A A
 T L T

calm	—	—	—	—	—	excitable
insistent	—	—	—	—	—	accommodating
undemonstrative	—	—	—	—	—	lovely-dovey
skeptical	—	—	—	—	—	trusting
extroverted	—	—	—	—	—	introverted
self-questioning	—	—	—	—	—	confident
procrastinating	—	—	—	—	—	compulsive
spendthrift	—	—	—	—	—	tightwad
happy-go-lucky	—	—	—	—	—	careful planner
pragmatist	—	—	—	—	—	optimist
hard-headed	—	—	—	—	—	soft-hearted
social	—	—	—	—	—	private
serious	—	—	—	—	—	whimsical
relaxed	—	—	—	—	—	intense
discerning	—	—	—	—	—	open-minded
liberal	—	—	—	—	—	conservative
reticent	—	—	—	—	—	expansive
self-sufficient	—	—	—	—	—	collaborative
outgoing	—	—	—	—	—	reserved
organized	—	—	—	—	—	laid-back
practical	—	—	—	—	—	dreamer
cautious	—	—	—	—	—	risk-taker

Mark list A about yourself by checking one, *and only one*, of the five lines between each set words above: (each of the lines is keyed to one of the words above: very, somewhat, neutral, etc.). Check one line you feel most nearly describes your personality, e.g., in the first set of words it might be "very excitable" or "somewhat calm." Then proceed to the next set of words.

Next, mark list B about your *fiancée* by checking the line that most nearly describe your partner's personality traits for each set of words.

Compare your sheet with your partner's by holding them side by side. First compare A and D, then compare B and C. Discuss the differences in your perceptions of each other.

CLUE EACH OTHER IN

Your beloved has traits, qualities, and ways of acting which you especially prize and appreciate, which you wish he or she would develop even more. *But your partner is not a mind reader.* Tell him or her those qualities you find especially attractive. Most certainly love will lead your partner to concentrate on them even more.

Read the qualities presented (to the right). Pick out and list the seven you appreciate most in your partner. Feel free to include other qualities not on our list—these might be the most important of all. Next to each quality, write down one recent example of how your beloved demonstrated that quality.

Flexible and open
Imaginative
Socially at ease
Cares about people
Considerate of others
Confident and secure
Understanding
Hardworking
Cares about home and family
Affectionate
Even-tempered
Patient with me
Strong
Gentle and kind
Makes me laugh
Interesting and alive
Accepting and tolerant
Dependable
Talks to me
Compromising
Intelligent
Listens to me
Spiritual

What I appreciate about you most is:

A recent example:

- | | |
|----------|-------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |
| 4. _____ | _____ |
| 5. _____ | _____ |
| 6. _____ | _____ |
| 7. _____ | _____ |

HOW DO YOU SEE ME?

You are invited to compare your views of yourself with your fiancé's view of you. This exercise emphasizes the fact that the image we have of ourselves is not necessarily the image that even those near and dear to us have.

C. WOMAN ABOUT HERSELF

S S
 O N O
 V M E M V
 E E U E E
 R W T W R
 Y H R H Y
 A A A
 T L T

calm	—	—	—	—	—	excitable
insistent	—	—	—	—	—	accommodating
undemonstrative	—	—	—	—	—	lovey-dovey
skeptical	—	—	—	—	—	trusting
extroverted	—	—	—	—	—	introverted
self-questioning	—	—	—	—	—	confident
procrastinating	—	—	—	—	—	compulsive
spendthrift	—	—	—	—	—	tightwad
happy-go-lucky	—	—	—	—	—	careful planner
pragmatist	—	—	—	—	—	optimist
hard-headed	—	—	—	—	—	soft-hearted
social	—	—	—	—	—	private
serious	—	—	—	—	—	whimsical
relaxed	—	—	—	—	—	intense
discerning	—	—	—	—	—	open-minded
liberal	—	—	—	—	—	conservative
reticent	—	—	—	—	—	expansive
self-sufficient	—	—	—	—	—	collaborative
outgoing	—	—	—	—	—	reserved
organized	—	—	—	—	—	laid-back
practical	—	—	—	—	—	dreamer
cautious	—	—	—	—	—	risk-taker

D. WOMAN ABOUT MAN

S S
 O N O
 V M E M V
 E E U E E
 R W T W R
 Y H R H Y
 A A A
 T L T

calm	—	—	—	—	—	excitable
insistent	—	—	—	—	—	accommodating
undemonstrative	—	—	—	—	—	lovey-dovey
skeptical	—	—	—	—	—	trusting
extroverted	—	—	—	—	—	introverted
self-questioning	—	—	—	—	—	confident
procrastinating	—	—	—	—	—	compulsive
spendthrift	—	—	—	—	—	tightwad
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social	—	—	—	—	—	private
serious	—	—	—	—	—	whimsical
relaxed	—	—	—	—	—	intense
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reticent	—	—	—	—	—	expansive
self-sufficient	—	—	—	—	—	collaborative
outgoing	—	—	—	—	—	reserved
organized	—	—	—	—	—	laid-back
practical	—	—	—	—	—	dreamer
cautious	—	—	—	—	—	risk-taker

Mark list C about yourself by checking one, *and only one*, of the five lines between each set words above: (each of the lines is keyed to one of the words above: very, somewhat, neutral, etc.). Check one line you feel most nearly describes your personality, e.g., in the first set of words it might be "very excitable" or "somewhat calm." Then proceed to the next set of words.

Next, mark list D about your *fiancé* by checking the line that most nearly describe your partner's personality traits for each set of words.

Compare your sheet with your partner's by holding them side by side. First compare A and D, then compare B and C. Discuss the differences in your perceptions of each other.

CLUE EACH OTHER IN

Your beloved has traits, qualities, and ways of acting which you especially prize and appreciate, which you wish he or she would develop even more. *But your partner is not a mind reader.* Tell him or her those qualities you find especially attractive. Most certainly love will lead your partner to concentrate on them even more.

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- Flexible and open**
- Imaginative**
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- Confident and secure**
- Understanding**
- Hardworking**
- Cares about home and family**
- Affectionate**
- Even-tempered**
- Patient with me**
- Strong**
- Gentle and kind**
- Makes me laugh**
- Interesting and alive**
- Accepting and tolerant**
- Dependable**
- Talks to me**
- Compromising**
- Intelligent**
- Listens to me**
- Spiritual**

What I appreciate about you most is:

A recent example:

1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____

DISCOVERING EACH OTHER

A gentle exercise to help elicit important feelings that lovers might wish to discuss. Working alone, complete both column A and Column B.

After you have completed the exercise, exchange papers with your partner. Relax and compare them. Talk them over. Do any of his or her answers surprise you? Do you disagree with any of his or her answers? Are any especially interesting or thought-provoking?

A

Use this column to answer the following items as directly as you can.

B

Now, put yourself in your partner's shoes and jot down the answers you think he/she has written under column A.

1. The reason I love you

2. My strongest quality

3. My greatest weakness

4. My usual means of avoiding conflict

5. My usual means of dealing with conflict

6. My biggest worry

7. A sensitive area in which I can't take criticism

A
Your Answer

B
What You Think Your
Partner Will Answer

- | | | |
|--|-------|-------|
| 8. My greatest interest and concern other than our relationship | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| 9. My definition of sexual love | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| 10. My greatest fear about our upcoming marriage | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| 11. The biggest adjustment I'll have to make in our first year of marriage | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| 12. What describes us best as a couple | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| 13. The thing I find most difficult (unpleasant, confusing) to talk about | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| 14. Five years from now we will be | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| 15. My feelings toward God, spirituality, and religion | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |

DISCOVERING EACH OTHER

A gentle exercise to help elicit important feelings that lovers might wish to discuss. Working alone, complete both column A and Column B.

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5. My usual means of dealing with conflict

6. My biggest worry

7. A sensitive area in which I can't take criticism

A
Your Answer

B
What You Think Your
Partner Will Answer

- | | | |
|--|-------|-------|
| 8. My greatest interest and concern other than our relationship | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
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| | _____ | _____ |
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| 10. My greatest fear about our upcoming marriage | _____ | _____ |
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| | _____ | _____ |
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| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| 14. Five years from now we will be | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| 15. My feelings toward God, spirituality, and religion | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |
| | _____ | _____ |

FIGHTING FAIR

Take a moment to recall a recent conflict between you and your partner. Perhaps it was just a small misunderstanding, or maybe something major. What were the circumstances of the problem? Replay the event in your mind. How was the issue resolved? Have the two of you reconciled? How did you feel once the two of you had reconciled?

Someone once said that if you want to avoid conflict you will have to forego all intimacy. Not for us, thanks! Conflict is a part of every close relationship. The more intimate we are, the more vulnerable to hurt we become. As the two of you grow closer in love, you also become more aware of your differences in such things as assumptions and expectations of each other, abilities to listen, family backgrounds, communication patterns, habits, etc. Sometimes, the very things that attracted the two of you to each other in the beginning become the characteristics that grate and cause conflict later on.

To presume that you will never argue is too idealistic and simply not true. Yet working through a "good" conflict can be healthy for your marriage because it usually brings issues to the surface and clears the air between you. Remember, the flip side of conflict is intimacy. There are positive ways to handle conflict and "fight fair." The "DOs & DON'Ts" on the right can help you avoid the destructive and disheartening potential of marital conflict.

DO

1. Give each other equal opportunity to speak
2. Stick to the issues at hand.
3. Complete the argument. Come to some resolution, even if it means setting a later time to do so.
4. Seek first to understand the other, then to be understood.
5. Admit when you are wrong. Graciously accept the other's admission of guilt or wrong-doing.
6. Make up and mean it.
7. Call forth the core love you have in your heart for each other. Remember the vow you made to make your marriage work.

DON'T

1. Dominate the argument.
2. Dredge up past hurts or problems, whether real or perceived.
3. Postpone a resolution indefinitely.
4. Sling mud and arrows. Avoid put-downs, yelling and name calling. Terms such as "stupid jerk," "fat slob," "drunken bum," or "airhead" only incite more anger and hurt.
5. Use physical violence...ever!
6. Use sex as a source of power or manipulation. Never threaten to withdraw love or sex.
7. Use the "silent treatment."
8. Always give in. Your resentment will build because the conflict hasn't really been resolved.
9. Make a scene. Never deliberately embarrass each other in front of others. Most conflicts need private space and time to be resolved.

FIGHTING WITHOUT FIGHTING

While an argument may have its benefits in the long run, it's not exactly a pleasant experience—and it's certainly not what you are getting married to do. First of all, some things are just not worth arguing about. Remember, it's "for better or worse." You also need to learn now—before the wedding—the difference between the "negotiables" and the "non-negotiables" for both you...and your partner.

Still, there will be plenty of serious issues in the years ahead that will produce conflict. You both must stand up for what you believe and express your expectations. But you must also be willing to grow and change. Most conflicts signal a need to readjust expectations of each other. Here are some suggestions for healthy, non-combative conflict resolution:

TIPS AND SKILLS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT

- 1. Face the problem squarely.** The disagreement or difference of opinion will not go away just because you don't talk about it. In fact, it will only fester and grow.
- 2. Actively try to understand your partner's viewpoint.** Listen intently to what he or she is saying, rather than building up ammunition for your comeback.
- 3. Try the "two-question" method.** As your partner shares his or her side, ask at least one question to clarify or enhance what was said. Then, ask a second question about his or her response to your first question.
- 4. Respond to the problem and/or your beloved in an honest yet caring way.** Don't allow the *tone* of your voice communicate something different than your *words*.
- 5. Speak for yourself.** You are the world's greatest expert on *you*. Tell your beloved how you feel and allow him or her to do the same. It's better to get all the feelings and emotions on the table, including the negative ones, rather than trying to guess what they are.
- 6. Own your feelings.** Your beloved is not the one responsible for your emotions, so you cannot expect him or her to "fix" how you are feeling.
- 7. Take your share of initiative.** Don't always leave it up to your partner to raise sticky issues or propose solutions. Accept responsibility for resolving conflict.
- 8. Seek "win-win" solutions.** Most conflicts can be solved through creative compromise and seeking alternative ways to meet both person's needs. If an argument ends with one winner and one loser, in the long run you both lose.
- 9. Take immediate steps to implement your agreed-upon solution.** There's nothing worse than talking through a problem and then having nothing happen as a result. Even small, positive steps toward solution will make both sides feel better.
- 10. Set a definite time for review.** Schedule a date and time when you can both see if the issue needs further discussion and compromise. When the time arrives be sure to check with each other that the conflict has been resolved.