

Skill #1

PUT INTO WORDS WHAT YOU ARE FEELING

Try saying, I feel . . .

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ☐ Accepted | ☐ Unaccepted | ☐ Affectionate |
| ☐ Understood | ☐ Close to You | ☐ Tense |
| ☐ Rejected | ☐ Distant from You | ☐ Betrayed |
| ☐ Misunderstood | ☐ Afraid | ☐ Like You Don't
Even Like Me |
| ☐ Appreciated | ☐ Baffled | ☐ Irritable |
| ☐ Unappreciated | ☐ Neglected | ☐ Alienated |
| ☐ Abandoned | ☐ Comfortable | ☐ Angry |
| ☐ Connected | ☐ Uncomfortable | ☐ Horny |
| ☐ Agitated | ☐ Depressed | ☐ Romantic |
| ☐ Alone | ☐ Appreciative
of You | ☐ Unattractive |
| ☐ Lonely | ☐ Like a Failure | ☐ Regretful |
| ☐ Upset | ☐ Ashamed | ☐ Disgusted |
| ☐ Alarmed | ☐ Righteously
Indignant | ☐ Happy |
| ☐ Resentful | ☐ Apprehensive | ☐ Joyful |
| ☐ Belittled | ☐ Shy | ☐ Bored |
| ☐ Insulted | | |
| ☐ Tired | | |

Exercise

HOW MUCH DO YOU ACTUALLY CHERISH YOUR PARTNER?

Instructions: Imagine a life-sized cutout portrait of your partner. Now imagine covering the portrait with sticky notes that tell the story of all you've accomplished and enjoyed together. It can be all the fun times, the comforts, the small silly things, the dreams, the frustrations that you've conquered. Just consider your whole story and what living this life together so far has given you.

Now read the prompts below. Each one is a reason to communicate that you cherish your partner. They are simple yes-or-no answers and there are so many of them for a reason. Thinking about ways to cherish your partner will give power to your connection. Also, we listed so many because it's not likely that each and every one will resonate for you—but for the ones that *do* resonate (hopefully a lot of them!), make a commitment to tell your partner that you cherish this quality in them. Don't be like the Swedish farmer who loved his wife so much that one day he almost told her. Create a ritual time—maybe once a week—for cherishing your partner out loud. If you'd like to download and print these exercises go to workman.com/eightdates.

I TOLD YOU THAT I CHERISH YOU BECAUSE

- 1 We have played together and had fun together.
☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 2 We have laughed together easily. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 3 We have traveled well together. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER

- 4 No one in the world can replace you.
☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 5 We have been able to comfort each other. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 6 We have worked out our finances with each other.
☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 7 We have learned to truly trust each other. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 8 You have supported a personal dream of mine. ☐ YES
☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 9 You have been a great provider. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 10 We had some great adventures together. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 11 We have had some great road trips. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 12 We have enjoyed learning together. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 13 You know me well. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 14 I love the way you experience nature. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 15 We enjoyed singing together. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 16 We have done things together that I could never have
done with anyone else. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 17 You have been trustworthy. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 18 We have helped heal each other after experiencing a loss
or setback. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 19 We parented a child together. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER

- 20** You are worth more to me than riches and jewels.
☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 21** You have been loyal. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 22** I love how spontaneous you can be. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 23** You have taught me a lot. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 24** You accept me in spite of my faults. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 25** You have understood some of my personal goals.
☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 26** We played music so well together. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 27** I respect your wisdom. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 28** We have been a great team. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 29** I love the way you welcome guests. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 30** I love how organized and efficient you can be. ☐ YES
☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 31** We enjoyed listening to the same music together.
☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 32** I admire so many of your skills. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 33** You have loved or helped some of my relatives. ☐ YES
☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 34** I admire how brave you have been at times. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 35** I respect your values. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER

- 36** You understand my sense of humor. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 37** You have taken my side against someone who attacked me. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 38** We enjoy sex together. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 39** You always look great. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 40** I really appreciate the times when you have covered for me when I have been down. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 41** I can really count on you when the chips are down.
☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 42** We loved a pet together. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 43** We fell in love with each other. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 44** You can make me feel safe. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 45** We loved a child together. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 46** You are a kind person. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 47** You have forgiven me. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 48** We helped a friend in need together. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 49** I love how romantic you are. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 50** You are actually attracted to me. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 51** I love your mind. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 52** You are generous. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 53** We have worked out some major conflicts between us.
☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER

- 54** We took care of a relative together. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 55** I respect the way you treated a friend. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 56** I felt loved and cared for by you. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 57** I love the way you look in the shower. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 58** You helped build a home of solace and peace. ☐ YES
☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 59** You are a thoughtful person. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 60** We developed similar ethical values together. ☐ YES
☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 61** You loved my mother. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 62** You have comforted me when I was afraid. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 63** We have had some really romantic trips and dates.
☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 64** Our values and beliefs have meshed. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 65** I respect your intelligence. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 66** You have supported me against enemies I have had.
☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 67** I love the way you have at times really listened to me.
☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 68** You are a great parent. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 69** When I was sick you took care of me. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER

- 70** When I most doubted myself, you were in my corner.
☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 71** You have supported my own personal goals. ☐ YES
☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 72** I love the fact that you are not arrogant. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 73** You have stood up for me when someone criticized me in public. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 74** We gave birth to a child together. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 75** We created a home together. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 76** We had many of the same goals in life. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 77** I appreciate the fact that you are not a snob. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 78** I am very attracted to you. ☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 79** We have been together for so long. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 80** We worked together to create community. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 81** I am grateful that I can feel proud of you. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 82** We have overcome adversity together. ☐ YES ☐ NO
☐ TELL PARTNER
- 83** I appreciate the fact that I can really be myself with you.
☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER
- 84** You've always supported my own development. ☐ YES
☐ NO ☐ TELL PARTNER

- 85** I love how nice you are to strangers. ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**
☐ **TELL PARTNER**
- 86** I really cherish the way you have helped me grieve.
☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **TELL PARTNER**
- 87** I really appreciate that we have worshipped or prayed together. ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **TELL PARTNER**
- 88** I feel confident that we can get through any turmoil together. ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **TELL PARTNER**
- 89** I appreciate that I can always talk to you when I feel down. ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **TELL PARTNER**
- 90** I love how honest you have been. ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**
☐ **TELL PARTNER**
- 91** I respect that fact that you work very hard. ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**
☐ **TELL PARTNER**
- 92** I love the fact that you can laugh at yourself. ☐ **YES**
☐ **NO** ☐ **TELL PARTNER**
- 93** We have celebrated successes together. ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**
☐ **TELL PARTNER**
- 94** You are one of my best friends. ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **TELL PARTNER**
- 95** I love that you are not at all phony. ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO**
☐ **TELL PARTNER**
- 96** There have been times when I have felt lost and you helped me find my way. ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **TELL PARTNER**
- 97** I love our spiritual connection. ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **TELL PARTNER**
- 98** You have been strong at times when I have felt very weak.
☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **TELL PARTNER**
- 99** I feel that we can be proud of what we have built together in life. ☐ **YES** ☐ **NO** ☐ **TELL PARTNER**

Exercise

WHAT ENOUGH MONEY MEANS TO ME

Both you and your partner should complete the questionnaire below separately. Then be prepared to discuss your responses.

Read each item and circle the correct alternative that fits your point of view for each item, with the following key:

5 = Strongly Agree **4** = Agree **3** = Neither Agree nor Disagree
2 = Disagree **1** = Strongly Disagree

For me, having enough money means having power.

5 **4** **3** **2** **1**

For me, having enough money means being independent.

5 **4** **3** **2** **1**

For me, having enough money means being strong.

5 **4** **3** **2** **1**

For me, enough money means not having to rely on anyone else.

5 **4** **3** **2** **1**

For me, enough money means being responsible.

5 **4** **3** **2** **1**

For me, enough money means being able to relax and not worry.

5 **4** **3** **2** **1**

For me, enough money means being able to have time to do what I like.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, enough money means being able to have luxury.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, enough money means being able to create.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, enough money means being able to give some of it to other people.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money means love, caring, and affection.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money means safety, security, and stability.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money means feeling competent.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money means having control.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money allows me to feel positive self-esteem.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money means being acceptable to myself and others.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money means a reward for a lot of effort.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money means being a successful adult.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money means avoiding stress.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money means deserved self-indulgence.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money means feeling respected.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money means taking responsibility as an adult.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money has meant greater sexual opportunity.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money means great freedom.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money means I can have companionship.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money means feeling rich and comfortable.

5 4 3 2 1

For me, having enough money means filling a void in my life.

5 4 3 2 1

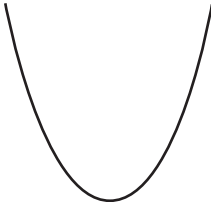
For me, having enough money means I can be happy.

5 4 3 2 1

The conflicts around money are best navigated when you understand the ways your history with money are the same, and the ways they're different. What to each of you constitutes *having enough*? With this quiz, you can delve deep into understanding what money means to your partner. Think about how you each contribute to the greater wealth of your relationship, whether that is time, work around the house, or financially. It's never too early to understand your partner's relationship and history with money, and it's never too late either. For a lifetime of love, and less conflict, express gratitude for what you have, what you each contribute, and what you are building together. Different meanings drive different relationships to money. There are ways to make your money attitudes compatible. It's worth the effort in discussion now to avoid the disagreements over how you spend and save your hard-earned cash.

SATISFACTION FIRST MARRIED

SATISFACTION LATER LIFE



KIDS LEAVING HOME

Exercise:

SHARED MEANING QUESTIONNAIRE

To get a sense of how well you and your partner create a sense of shared meaning in your lives together, answer the following True or False questions. If a question doesn't apply to you (a question involving family or children when you don't have children, or a question involving living together and you don't live together) simply skip it, modify it to your particular situation (dinnertime with just the two of you), or keep it in mind for future discussion.

YOUR RITUALS OF CONNECTION

- » We see eye to eye about rituals for family dinnertime in our home. ☐ T ☐ F
- » Holiday meals (like Thanksgiving, Christmas, Passover) are very special and happy times for us (or we both hate them). ☐ T ☐ F
- » End-of-the-workday reunions in our home are generally special times. ☐ T ☐ F
- » We see eye to eye about the role of TV in our home. ☐ T ☐ F
- » Bedtime is generally a good time for being close. ☐ T ☐ F
- » During the weekends we do things that we enjoy and value, both together and separately. ☐ T ☐ F
- » We have similar intentions and desires about entertaining in our home (having friends over, parties, and so on).
☐ T ☐ F

- »» We both value, or both dislike, special celebrations (like birthdays, anniversaries, family reunions). ☐ T ☐ F
- »» When I get sick, I feel taken care of and loved by my partner. ☐ T ☐ F
- »» I really look forward to and enjoy our vacations and the travel we do together. ☐ T ☐ F
- »» Spending our morning time together is special to us. ☐ T ☐ F
- »» When we do errands together, we generally have a good time. ☐ T ☐ F
- »» We have unique and specific ways of becoming renewed and refreshed together when we are burned out or fatigued. ☐ T ☐ F

After answering the questions above, especially if you had very few “True” answers, please create your own rituals of connection by discussing the following questions.

- »» When we eat dinner together, how can we make our dinnertime special for us? What is the meaning of dinnertime? What was dinnertime like in each of our families growing up?
- »» How should we part at the beginning of each day? What was this like in our families growing up? What should our reunions be like?
- »» What should getting ready for bed be like for us? What was it like in our families growing up?

- »» What do weekends mean for each of us? What were they like in our families growing up? How can we make them more meaningful?
- »» What were vacations like in our families growing up? How do we want our vacations to feel?
- »» Pick a special holiday. What is the true meaning of this holiday to us? How should it be celebrated this year? How was it celebrated in each of our families growing up?
- »» How do we each get refreshed and renewed? What makes these rituals meaningful for us?
- »» What rituals do we have when someone is sick? What was it like in our families growing up? What would we like it to be in our family?

Exercise

SHARED GOALS QUESTIONNAIRE

Both of you have goals for yourself and for your relationship. Goals can be indicators of how you might change. Goals can be practical, or deeply spiritual. Goals can sometimes cross over into life dreams, which we'll discuss in the next chapter. For now, you're going to explore the meaning of goals in your individual lives and in your relationship. Please answer the following True or False questions. If a question doesn't apply to you, skip it, modify it to your particular situation, or keep it in mind for future discussion.

YOUR GOALS

- » We share many of the same goals in our life together.
☐ T ☐ F
- » If I were to look back on my life in very old age, I think I would see that our paths had meshed very well. ☐ T ☐ F
- » My partner values my accomplishments. ☐ T ☐ F
- » My partner honors the personal goals I have that are unrelated to our relationship. ☐ T ☐ F
- » We share many of the same goals for others who are important to us (children, relatives, friends, and community). ☐ T ☐ F
- » We have very similar financial goals. ☐ T ☐ F
- » We tend to have compatible worries about potential financial disasters. ☐ T ☐ F
- » Our life dreams tend to be similar or compatible. ☐ T ☐ F

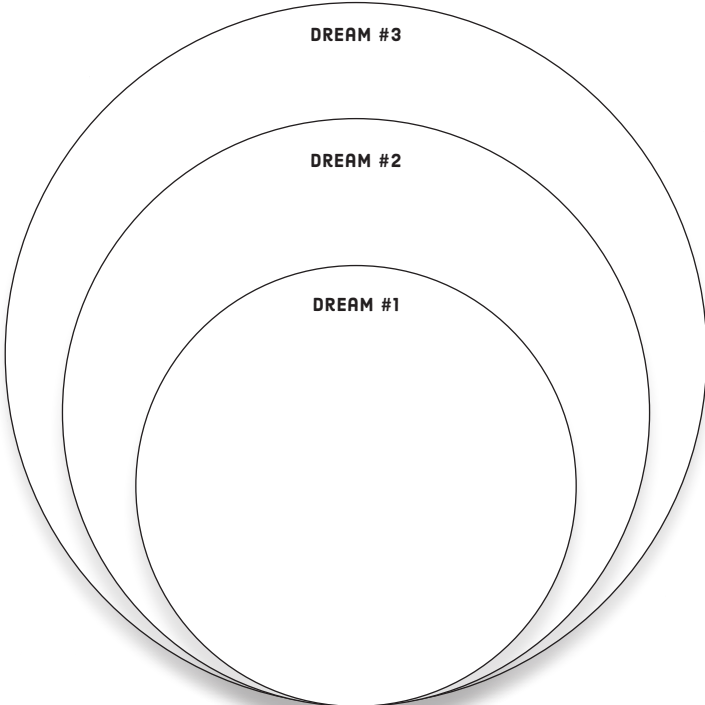
» Our hopes and aspirations, as individuals and together, for our children, for our life in general, and for our old age, are compatible. ☐ T ☐ F

» Even when they are different, we have been able to find a way to honor our life dreams. ☐ T ☐ F

After answering the questions above, especially if you had very few “True” answers, please explore your goals and their meanings by discussing the following questions.

- » Write your own eulogy. What would you like it to say? What qualities or accomplishments would you most like to be remembered for at the time of your death?
- » What goals do you have in life, for yourself, for your partner, for your children (if you have children)? What do you want to accomplish in the next five to ten years?
- » We often fill our time with things that demand immediate attention—putting out fires, so to speak. But what are the important things in your life that are truly great sources of energy and pleasure that you really need to block out time for, the important things that keep getting postponed or crowded out?
- » What is the role of spirituality or religion in your lives? What was this role in your families growing up? What would you like it to be now or in the future?

As individuals, you will grow and change over the course of your relationship. Your individual beliefs and practices about spirituality and religion aren’t as important as viewing your relationship and the rituals and goals you create together as sacred, spiritual, and meaningful.



DREAM #3

DREAM #2

DREAM #1