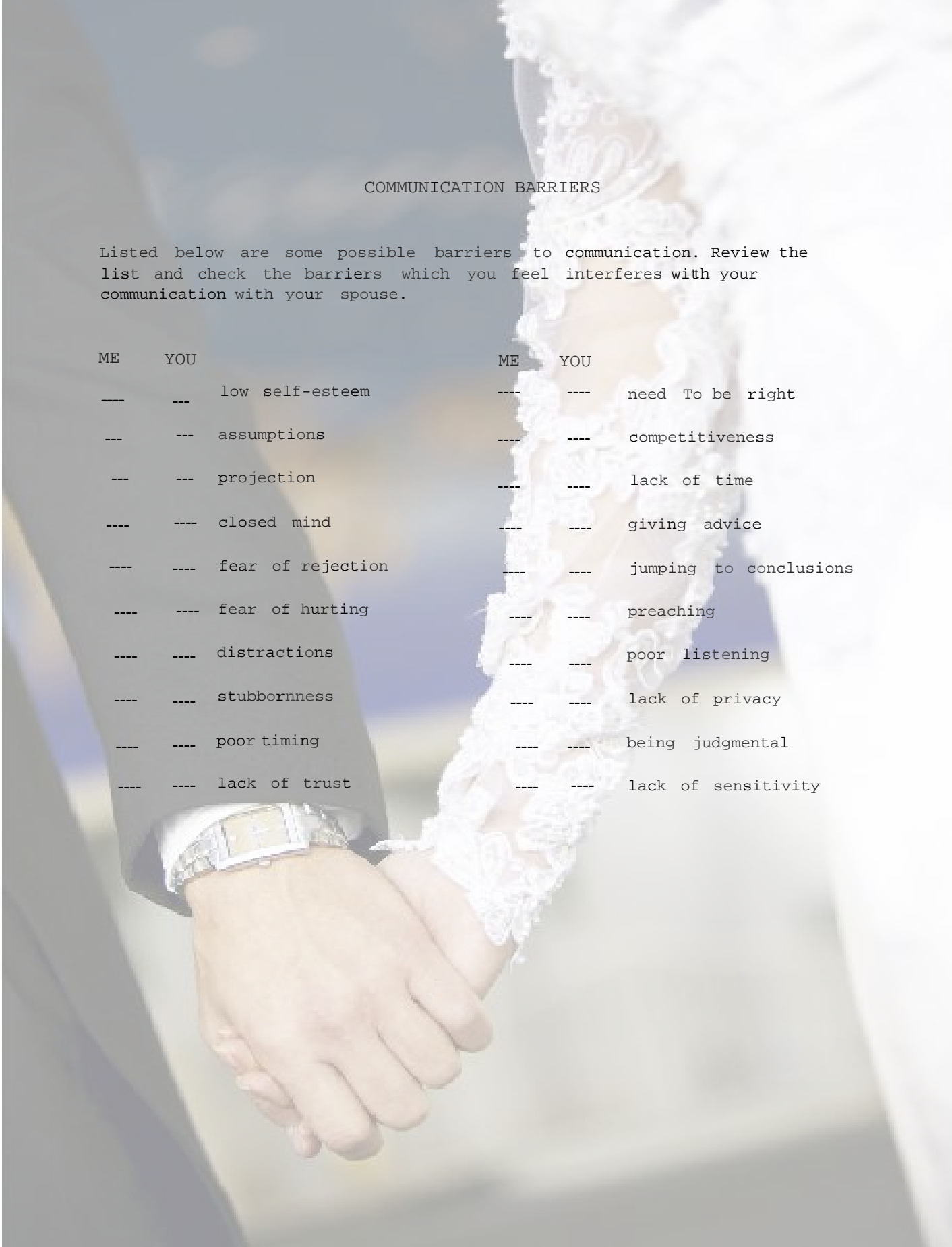




Arguing

1. What is your view of arguing?
2. How important is it for you to win an argument?
3. How would you describe your style of arguing?
4. Do you believe arguing can be constructive?



COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Listed below are some possible barriers to communication. Review the list and check the barriers which you feel interferes with your communication with your spouse.

ME	YOU		ME	YOU	
---	---	low self-esteem	---	---	need To be right
---	---	assumptions	---	---	competitiveness
---	---	projection	---	---	lack of time
---	---	closed mind	---	---	giving advice
---	---	fear of rejection	---	---	jumping to conclusions
---	---	fear of hurting	---	---	preaching
---	---	distractions	---	---	poor listening
---	---	stubbornness	---	---	lack of privacy
---	---	poor timing	---	---	being judgmental
---	---	lack of trust	---	---	lack of sensitivity



Communication During Controversy

1. Circle how you tend to respond when controversy arises:

Talk Incessantly

Clam Up

2. List several reasons you think a person might choose to be silent.

1

2

3

4

3. When would it be best for you to be silent?

4. Why?

5. Will your silence solve the problem or improve communication in the long run?

6. Write down several things you can do to encourage a silent partner to be more expressive.

HOW WELL DO WE LISTEN TO EACH OTHER?

First, what exactly is listening? Here are some answers:

1. It means that when you are speaking, I am not just thinking up what I am going to say when you stop talking.
2. It means complete acceptance, without judgment, of what you are saying, and of the way it is expressed.
3. It means being able to restate accurately, in later feedback, both the content of your message and the feelings it expressed.
4. It means much more than just hearing your words. I have to know just what those words mean to you. Hearing is for my sake, but listening is for your sake.

Here are some unhelpful ways of listening. See if you recognize any of them:

1. I've heard it all before, so I needn't listen.
2. I don't agree, so I don't need to hear it.
3. You are really attacking me, so I won't respond.

Now consider these questions separately at first. It is best to write down your responses:

1. How do you behave when you are not really listening to me?
2. How do you behave when you really are listening?
3. How do I feel inside when I know you're not really listening?
4. How do I feel inside when you really are listening?

Now talk over together what you have learned by doing this exercise. Do you want to contract to make any changes in your listening behavior? Write it down here.

Identifying Destructive Conflict Behavior

1. What happens over and over in our relationship that causes bad feeling?
2. How does the whole thing start? (Who does or says what first?)
3. Then what happens? (What do I or my spouse do or say in response?)
4. What happens next? (What do I or my spouse do in response?)
5. How does it all end? (What do I or my spouse do to end the conflict?)
6. How do I feel afterwards? (Am I sad, mad, scared, etc.?)

Directions:

Step One: Look at your responses and decide which step or steps you could handle differently in the future.

Step Two: Share your answers with your spouse. You may have selected different answers to the questions, and that is okay. Discuss your responses to the questions and identify some steps, that, together, you can do differently in the future. List the steps below.

Step Three: Now commit to each other that together you will work to do things differently in the future.