



Dialoguing About Your Sexual Relationship



It is difficult for many couples to initiate a discussion about their sexual relationship. For some it is a taboo subject. This exercise is designed to help you get started discussing this important aspect of your marriage. Read the questions independently and consider your responses. Then pick one or more to dialogue about.

1. Are you comfortable initiating a discussion about your sexual relationship with your spouse?
2. Are we both physically affectionate with each other?
3. Which one of you typically initiates sex? Are you satisfied with that?
4. Do we both agree about our frequency of intercourse?
5. Do I let you know what turns me on sexually? What turns me off?
6. Can I let you know when I'm disappointed with our sexual relationship?
7. Are we open to suggestions from each other for improving our sex life?
8. Do I feel you really understand my sexual needs?
9. Do I feel I really understand your sexual needs?
10. Can we discuss freely together the question of variety in our sexual experiences with each other?





GHOSTS IN THE BEDROOM



List all the ghosts you bring to the bedroom ...

Choose the 4that you think most influence your attitudes toward sex ...

Share with your partner those ghosts you feel comfortable discussing at this time





HOW I FEEL ABOUT OUR SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP?*

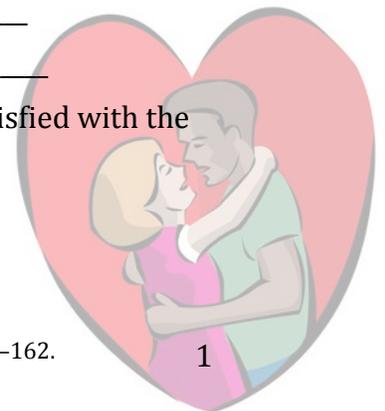


Before the Bedroom—Psychological Arousal

1. Are we best friends? _____
2. Do we talk to each other, sharing big and little things? _____
3. Am I satisfied with the amount of tenderness and affection we give each other in everyday living (not as an approach to, or way of asking for, intercourse)? _____
4. Do we do nice things for each other—read aloud, write love notes, do the other's chores? _____
5. Do we give each other enough understanding and consideration daily and not only as a means of leading up to intercourse? _____
6. Do we do enough touching (not as an invitation to sex)? _____
7. Does either of us do anything to create a romantic atmosphere—such as candlelight, music, gifts? _____
8. Do we send “I love you” signals—smiles, winks, whatever? _____
9. Do we have enough privacy together? _____
10. Do I tell my spouse I love him/her? _____
11. Do we usually choose the right time and place to initiate sex? _____
12. Do I have good memories of sexual experiences? _____
13. When sex is suggested, do I feel loved, or used? _____
14. Who initiates sex in our family? _____ Am I happy with it that way? _____

Before the Bedroom—Psychological Arousal

1. Am I happy with the way in which my sensitive body areas are stimulated? _____
2. Is this a two-way street (husband and wife)? _____
3. Would I like some new things to happen—different places, methods, times? _____
4. Do I know which parts of my body are sensitive to stimulation? _____
5. Do I say what I want, or do I expect my partner to already know? _____
6. Who decides when there has been enough foreplay? _____ Am I satisfied with the time we take? _____
7. Do I want this to be a serious or lighthearted time? _____





8. Do I have any fears, anxieties, or hostility that inhibit my sexual pleasure? _____
9. Am I embarrassed by nudity, or uncomfortable with my body or my spouse's? _____
10. What can I do to improve our lovemaking in the area of physical arousal? What would I like my partner to do? (Write below.)

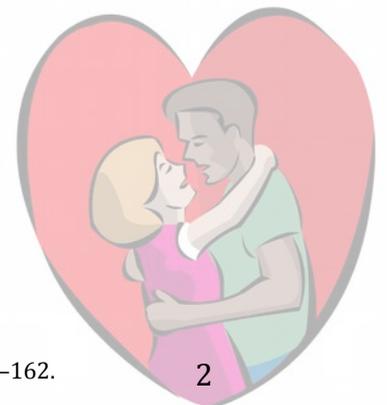
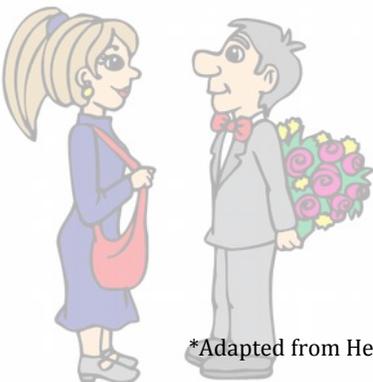


During Intercourse

1. Are we sensitive to each other's needs and feelings? _____
2. Would I like to have it last longer? _____
3. Am I satisfied with the number of times I reach a climax? _____
4. Am I satisfied with the number of times we have intercourse? _____
5. Would I like to investigate other contraceptive methods? _____
6. Would I like to read a book on different techniques with my spouse? _____
7. Do I keep my mind on my partner during intercourse? _____
8. Do I feel my partner's mind is on me and sex, or on other things? _____
9. Am I satisfied with how we both actively participate? _____
10. What changes would I like to see in my own behavior in this area? In my spouse's? (Write below.)

And After—Afterplay and Afterglow

1. Do I help my spouse reach satisfaction if I achieve it first? _____
2. Would I like my spouse to do that for me? _____
3. Do we express love, tenderness and affection after intercourse? _____
4. Am I happy with the amount of time we spend together after intercourse? _____
5. What do I need from my spouse during this time? What things would I like to change? (Write below.)
6. The things I like best about my spouse as a sexual partner are . . .
7. What I like most about myself as a sexual partner is . . .



RATING SCALE FOR A SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP



Mark an X in the appropriate space on each dimension below.

How you think your partner approaches sexual activity.

- Thoughtful : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Thoughtless
- Talkative : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Shyly
- Secretive : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Frank
- Tense : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Relaxed
- Submissive : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Demanding
- Confident : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Unsure
- Unwilling : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Willing
- Adaptable : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Rigid
- Unhappy : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Happy
- Sensitively : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Insensitively
- Infrequently : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Frequently
- Selfishly : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Unselfishly

How do you think you approach sexual activity

- Thoughtful : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Thoughtless
- Talkative : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Shyly
- Secretive : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Frank
- Tense : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Relaxed
- Submissive : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Demanding
- Confident : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Unsure
- Unwilling : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Willing
- Adaptable : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Rigid
- Unhappy : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Happy
- Sensitively : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Insensitively
- Infrequently : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Frequently
- Selfishly : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ Unselfishly

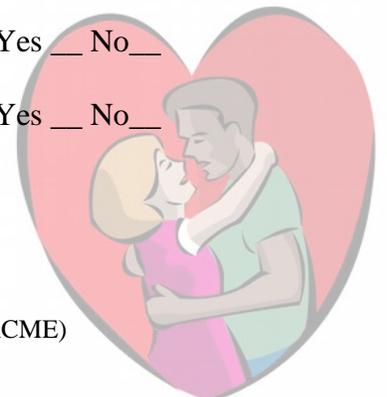
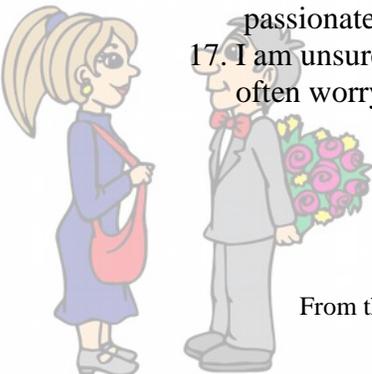


Marriage Enrichment Sexual Concerns



Here is an exercise that can help you assess your own concerns about sex and help you begin talking about the issues with your spouse. Answer each question with a yes or a no. There are no right answers, only feeling that will serve you most through honest expression.

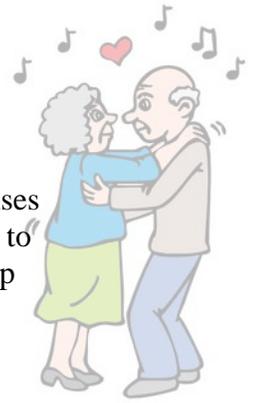
1. I worry about sexually pleasing my spouse. Yes__ No__
2. I sometimes wonder if my spouse is really that sexually turned on by me. Yes__ No__
3. I sometimes have difficulty “letting go” and experiencing intimate sexual pleasure. Yes__ No__
4. I feel blamed by my spouse for sexual difficulties. Yes__ No__
5. I am likely to blame my spouse for our sexual difficulties Yes__ No__
6. I tend to get irritated when my spouse is reluctant to have sex with me. Yes__ No__
7. When it comes to sex, I sometimes feel my spouse just wants to “get right to it” and doesn’t enjoy cuddling or getting me aroused. Yes__ No__
8. I am afraid of my spouse’s reaction when I don’t have sex. Yes__ No__
9. Sometimes, “out of duty,” I agree to sex and then later resent my spouse for it. Yes __ No__
10. I don’t like to respond sexually when my spouse pressures me: the more demands, the more I turn off. Yes __ No __
11. I sometimes feel my spouse withholds sex to control or manipulate, or punish me. Yes __ No __
12. I turn off sexually when my spouse doesn’t show sensitivity, care, and tenderness. Yes __ No__
13. Although I would like to experiment with new and different ways for sexual play, I feel my spouse is unwilling to try them. Yes __ No __
14. I feel that we don’t set aside enough quality time for intimacy and planned sex. Yes __ No __
15. It seems the only time we intimately touch is when we have sex. Yes __ No__
16. Sex has become more of pleasant pastime as opposed to something passionate and exciting. Yes __ No__
17. I am unsure about the effectiveness of our method of birth control and often worry about getting pregnant. Yes __ No__



Marriage Enrichment Sexual Concerns



Now tally the checks in both the yes and no columns. A greater number of yes responses indicates a level of concern that you have about your sexual intimacy. The goal is not to achieve a specific score to measure your level of sexual satisfaction; rather, it is to help you and your spouse explore those beliefs, attitudes, and habits you “bring to the bed with you” that limit sexually intimacy.



Now review the each response while considering the following:

1. What I need to let you know about my sexual needs is:
2. you could excite me more by:
3. I would feel less pressured if:
4. You could assist me by:
5. I could assist you by:
6. Some things I specifically want to do to grow our sexual intimacy are:



From the resource file of the Association for couples in Marriage Enrichment (ACME)





SEXUAL SATISFACTION INDICATOR



1. Our ability to openly discuss sexual intimacy
2. Our way of initiating sexual intimacy
3. Our frequency
4. Our timing
5. The setting and atmosphere
6. Amount of love play
7. Nature of variety of love play
8. Overall satisfaction

Circle the response which best reflects your feelings in each of the above areas.

	<u>Highly Satisfied</u>	<u>Mostly Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Highly Dissatisfied</u>
1.	*	*	*	*
2.	*	*	*	*
3.	*	*	*	*
4.	*	*	*	*
5.	*	*	*	*
6.	*	*	*	*
7.	*	*	*	*
8.	*	*	*	*

Share this with your partner.

