

Building Intimacy One Question at a Time

The purpose of this exercise is to build trust and understanding between you and your loved ones. This series of questions can be helpful whether you are a new couple getting to know each other for the first time, a long-term relationship in need of refreshed intimacy, or any other relationship dynamic that wants to become closer. You can complete this exercise alone completing the questionnaire as if you were the other person, but you may find it more fun to complete this together. Each partner can guess the answer for the other person and then can be given correction, clarification, affirmation, etc. This is not a competition, and someone who is unable to answer questions or answers incorrectly should not be chastised. Instead, use this as a time to get to know each other all over again. If completing this exercise together, you each may want a pen and paper to take notes for future reference.

If you feel uncomfortable answering any question for yourself or about the other person, it may be a good topic to mention in counseling. Be sure to check-out the last page as that section will help you reaffirm your dedication to a happy, healthy future together.

General Questionnaire

What is their ideal meal? What would they want to eat for a special occasion or as their last meal?

Who are two people they most admire? Why?

Who is/are their worst enemy or rival? What about this person is so provoking?

If they had to watch one movie on a loop for the rest of their life, what movie would they choose?

What would be their ideal vacation?

What hobby would they pursue if time/money/etc. allowed?

What are the first two things they would buy if they won the lottery?

What is one thing that person would like to change about themselves?

What is one thing that person would like to change about you?

Who is their least favorite relative?

Who is their favorite relative?

What kind of books/movies/shows do they enjoy?
Who is their favorite music performer, composer, or instrument?

What is their ideal job?

What is the toughest problem this person faced in their life? If your current relationship is that problem, what is another of their toughest problems faced in life?

In what places, situations, or events does this person feel uncomfortable?

What makes this person feel comforted when they are sick?

What is their saddest life event? Their worst life event?

What is their happiest life event? Their proudest life event?

What are their favorite ways to spend time with friends?

What song does this person listen to when they are sad or to feel sad? When they are happy or to get happy?

In what ways does this person most like to exercise?

What are their two worst fears or disaster scenarios?

What are the best parts of their current job or school life?

What are their favorite ways to get your attention?

What gift would this person want to give you for your birthday?

What activity makes this person feel most competent or in-control?

What is their secret ambition or unrealized dream?

Debriefing

You may have anticipated the “correct” answers to some of these questions, or you may have been surprised by the majority of your partner’s answers. You may also have been surprised at your own answers. Again, this exercise is to help you two feel closer together. Once you are able to talk through the above questionnaire with fun and curiosity, you may want to tackle the more challenging questions in the following sections.

For the more challenging questions that follow, be sure to maintain the approach of fun and curiosity. This is meant to be a nonjudgmental exploration of each other’s feelings, beliefs, expectations, etc. Issues of disagreement should be marked and discussed with your counselor.



Goal/ Problem Area: Priorities

Rank the following in order of importance, realizing that each comes with unique expense burdens. Another way to consider this exercise is prioritization; if you had only \$1,000, how much does each person think they should allocate to the following:

Partner 1		Partner 2
_____ Vehicle(s)		_____ Vehicle(s)
_____ Travel		_____ Travel
_____ Home (e.g., rent/mortgage)		_____ Home (e.g., rent/mortgage)
_____ Food & Drink		_____ Food & Drink
_____ Clothing		_____ Clothing
_____ Child(ren)		_____ Child(ren)
_____ Charity		_____ Charity

Goal / Problem Area: Home

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us discussing this topic area?

What does our dream home look like, physically? Outside? Inside?

What feeling do you want to experience when entering your home?

What experience do you want guests to have in your home?

Are friends and family members able to live with us in case of emergency? For what durations may they stay?

Who is / will be responsible for maintaining the various rooms of the house?

_____ Master Bedroom	_____ When is maintenance performed?
_____ Master Bathroom	_____ When is maintenance performed?
_____ Other Bedroom(s)	_____ When is maintenance performed?
_____ Other Bathroom(s)	_____ When is maintenance performed?
_____ Kitchen	_____ When is maintenance performed?
_____ Office	_____ When is maintenance performed?
_____ Living Room	_____ When is maintenance performed?
_____ Laundry Area/Room	_____ When is maintenance performed?
_____ Other _____	_____ When is maintenance performed?

Who is / will be responsible for maintaining the other home maintenance tasks?

_____ Yard Mowing	_____ When is maintenance performed?
_____ Yard Edging	_____ When is maintenance performed?
_____ Weeding	_____ When is maintenance performed?
_____ Light Bulbs	_____ When is maintenance performed?
_____ Pest Infestation	_____ When is maintenance performed?
_____ Other _____	_____ When is maintenance performed?

What is a fantasy feature of our home (e.g., waterslide, all-white décor, wild animal preserve, etc.)?

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us with this topic area after discussing these questions?



Goal / Problem Area: Extended Family

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us discussing this topic area?

Do we currently have regular interactions with extended family? Are we satisfied with the frequency of these interactions?

When we visit family for an extended period of time, should it be considered a vacation or just a trip?

When we visit family, how many days should we stay?

What holidays should be spent with what family members? Who is in charge of coordinating these visits?

If we have children, do we need/want to include the names of our current family members in the names?

Will our family give gifts to each other on holidays? Will our family give gifts to others on holidays? How do we decide how much money to invest in gifts for others?

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us with this topic area after discussing these questions?

Goal / Problem Area: Employment

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us discussing this topic area?

What are our separate professional goals in regards of position or job desired? One year from now? Five years from now? Career peak?

Do we know each other's colleagues? Supervisor(s)? Is there any tension for either of us with the other's workmates?

Is each of us content in our current jobs? If yes, why? If no, why?

How much time do each of us currently spend working? Does that need to be more or less in order to achieve our financial goals? Does that need to be more or less in order to achieve our other goals?

How much time do each of us currently spend working while at home? Should this work be performed in the early morning or evening?

Rating from one to ten, how ambitious do we each consider ourselves? Are we comfortable with each other's level of ambition?

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us with this topic area after discussing these questions?



Goal / Problem Area: Finances

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us discussing this topic area?

How much money do we currently earn as a household? How much annual income do we expect to earn in 5 years? 10 years? Career maximum? How did you guess at these future figures?

Are our current combined incomes enough to cover current expenses?

Have either of us created a working budget and maintained it for at least a year? Are we comfortable seeking professional guidance on a spending plan?

How much are we spending on rent/mortgage? Remember that it is recommended to not spend more than 30% of one's income on housing. Should we downsize our housing expenses?

How much money do we currently have in savings accounts?

How much money is specifically earmarked for emergency savings? Remember that at least six months of income is the recommended amount.

How much money do we have saved for retirement? How much are we saving each week/month/year for retirement? Remember that at least 10% of income is recommended to save just for retirement.

How should we arrange our checking accounts? Two separate accounts? Two separate accounts for independent expenses and a shared account for shared expenses? One combined account for all expenses?

How many credit cards do we each have? Are any of these in both our names?

How do we decide what to buy / what not to buy when the other partner is not present? Is there an amount (\$50, \$500, \$5000) over which we need to discuss a purchase before committing to it?

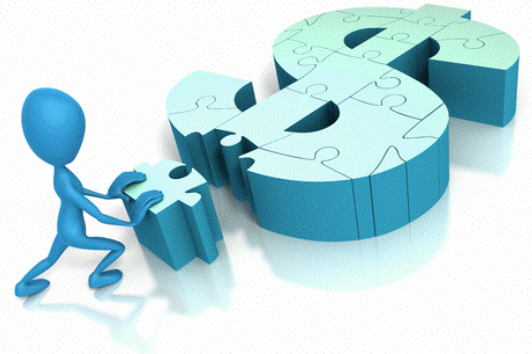
Whose name should be listed as the primary account holder for the utilities?

How much debt do we currently have? Student Loans? Personal debts? Credit Cards? Vehicles? Taxes & liens?

Who is responsible for paying what bills?

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| _____ Rent/Mortgage | _____ Car Payment(s) |
| _____ Electricity | _____ Car Insurance |
| _____ Gas | _____ Gasoline |
| _____ Water | _____ Credit Card(s) |
| _____ Home/Rent Insurance | _____ Cell Phones |
| _____ Flood Insurance | _____ Student Loan(s) |
| _____ Life Insurance(s) | _____ Pet Expenses |
| _____ Health Insurance(s) | _____ Groceries |

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us with this topic area after discussing these questions?



Goal / Problem Area: Health

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us discussing this topic area?

Who plans our meal schedule and home menu?

Who prepares our meals? Who cleans afterwards?

Do either of us have medically-mandated dietary restrictions? Do either of us have self-imposed restrictions?

How much time each week should each of us spend exercising? Together? Independently?

How much money should we invest toward physical health?

How should we handle it if we are concerned about the other's health?

Do either of us have current health concerns (e.g., weight, calorie intake, substance use, flexibility, etc.)?

Is either of us concerned with the health concerns of our extended families?

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us with this topic area after discussing these questions?

Goal / Problem Area: Future Children

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us discussing this topic area?

Rating from one to ten, how important is it to each of us to have children?

What makes each of us excited about having children?

What makes each of us hesitant about having children?

Have either of us investigated the monetary expenses of pregnancy? Child rearing?

Will we have children together? If so, how will we decide when and how many?

Is it necessary or desirable to consider adoption, infertility counseling, or genetic testing?

If we were to become unexpectedly pregnant, when should it be discussed? How should the subject be first introduced?

If we become unexpectedly pregnant, would we consider abortion? Adoption?

How would having a child change our current lifestyle? Do either of us expect to take time off from work during or after the pregnancy?

Do either of us expect us reduce or increase our work schedule because of children?

What values/habits do we hope to instill in our children?



What religious/spiritual beliefs do we hope to instill in our children? How do we handle it if we disagree on these issues?

What forms of rewards and punishments do we hope to practice? What forms are not acceptable in our family? How should we handle it if/when we disagree on behavior rewards and punishments?

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us with this topic area after discussing these questions?

Goal / Problem Area: Physical Intimacy

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us discussing this topic area?

Ranked, how do we most want to feel appreciated / loved by others person?

Partner 1	Partner 2
_____ Acts of Service (e.g., car washing, dishes, etc.)	_____ Acts of Service
_____ Gifts	_____ Gifts
_____ Quality Time	_____ Quality Time
_____ Physical Touch	_____ Physical Touch
_____ Words of Affirmation	_____ Words of Affirmation

Ranked, how do we most often express our appreciation / love for the other person?

Partner 1	Partner 2
_____ Acts of Service (e.g., car washing, dishes, etc.)	_____ Acts of Service
_____ Gifts	_____ Gifts
_____ Quality Time	_____ Quality Time
_____ Physical Touch	_____ Physical Touch
_____ Words of Affirmation	_____ Words of Affirmation

Which of us is more expressive with affection? Do either or both of us wish we were more/less affectionate?

Are each of us comfortable expressing lust to each other?

Are there specific situations that make us uncomfortable expressing lust (e.g., in public, around family, etc.)?

What physical attribute(s) does each of us most like about the other?

What of our own physical attribute(s) make us uncomfortable?

How should we handle it if/when one of us feels attracted to someone else? A stranger? A celebrity? Someone we each know?

Rating from one to ten, how likely are we to engage in the following activities **without** it leading to sexual intercourse? (10 is very likely, 1 is very unlikely)

_____ Bed Cuddling	_____ Hand-Holding
_____ Baths Together	_____ Muscle Massage
_____ Couch Cuddling	_____ Sensual Massage



What does each of us consider "sex"?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Masturbation Alone | <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Stimulation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Masturbation Together | <input type="checkbox"/> Genital Penetration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Viewing Pornography | <input type="checkbox"/> Anal Stimulation/Penetration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manual Stimulation (i.e., hands) | <input type="checkbox"/> Any of the above with others |

What of the following is each of us comfortable *discussing* for future exploration?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Masturbation Alone | <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Stimulation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Masturbation Together | <input type="checkbox"/> Genital Penetration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Viewing Pornography | <input type="checkbox"/> Anal Stimulation/Penetration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manual Stimulation (i.e., hands) | <input type="checkbox"/> Any of the above with others |

Is each of us satisfied with the current frequency of the following?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bed Cuddling | <input type="checkbox"/> Hand-Holding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Baths Together | <input type="checkbox"/> Muscle Massage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Couch Cuddling | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensual Massage |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Masturbation Alone | <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Stimulation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Masturbation Together | <input type="checkbox"/> Genital Penetration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Viewing Pornography | <input type="checkbox"/> Anal Stimulation/Penetration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manual Stimulation (i.e., hands) | <input type="checkbox"/> Any of the above with others |

How should we handle it if/when our desire for physical intimacy is not shared?

Is each of us comfortable sharing our sexual fantasies? Is each of us comfortable hearing the other's sexual fantasies? If so, what are our sexual fantasies?

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us with this topic area after discussing these questions?

Goal / Problem Area: Spiritual Life

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us discussing this topic area?

Who in our separate lives has been most important in shaping our respective spiritual beliefs?

Do we have family members whose spiritual beliefs positive or negatively shape our lives?

Have either of us felt burned by or bored with a particular religious practice?

What spiritual practices do we currently enjoy? Connection to nature? Prayer? Meditation?

Do either of us long for an improved spiritual connection?

Do we share a religion? Do we belong to a church, synagogue, mosque, or temple? More than one?

How much daily/weekly/yearly time should we dedicate to spiritual practices?

How much money should be invested into spiritual practices?



Do either of us demonstrate a spiritual practice that makes the other uncomfortable?

How should we mark births and deaths?

Once we die, what are general practices that we would like to occur?

Rating from one to ten, how nervous/anxious/uncomfortable are each of us with this topic area after discussing these questions?

A Promise to Each Other...

One can feel a broad combination of emotions when going through an exercise such as this. Each of you likely experienced moments of excitement, boredom, comfort, and worry while making your way through the various sections. Consider saying to each other the promise written below, as it may help reemphasize your commitment to a happy, healthy future together.

Thank you for sharing your time and thoughts with me during this project. Even if we disagree on important issues, I will do my best to treat you with love and respect. Please forgive me if I do not handle every situation with ideal grace. I will likewise try to forgive if you stumble in dealing with difficult issues. Completing exercises such as this helps build our relationship.

Partner 1 Signature

Partner 2 Signature

***Some issues may deserve / need additional conversation. Please consider counseling as an excellent opportunity to resolve difficult issues.

