

The Marriage Quiz

Ted Huston, Ph.D.

For each question below, circle the response that best describes your feelings. Tally the points (indicated after each answer) as you go.

PART 1

As Newlyweds. . .

. . . we were constantly touching, kissing, pledging our love or doing sweet things for one another.

Strongly disagree (1 pt.) Disagree (2 pts.) Agree (3 pts.) Strongly agree (4 pts.)

. . . how often did we express criticism, anger, annoyance, impatience or dissatisfaction to one another?

Often (1 pt.) Sometimes (2 pts.) Rarely (3 pts.) Almost never (4 pts.)

. . . my partner and I felt we belonged together; we were extremely close and deeply in love.

Disagree (1 pt.) Mildly agree (2 pts.) Agree (3 pts.) Strongly agree (4 pts.)

. . . I think one or both of us worried that we weren't right for each other.

Strongly agree (1 pt.) Agree (2 pts.) Disagree (3 pts.) Strongly disagree (4 pts.)

PART 2

By Our Second Anniversary. . .

. . . we were disappointed that we touched, kissed, pledged our love or did sweet things for one another less often than we had as newlyweds.

Strongly disagree (1 pt.) Disagree (2 pts.) Agree (3 pts.) Strongly agree (4 pts.)

. . . we expressed more criticism, anger, annoyance, impatience or dissatisfaction.

Strongly disagree (1 pt.) Disagree (2 pts.) Agree (3 pts.) Strongly agree (4 pts.)

. . . we felt much less closeness.

Disagree (1 pt.) Mildly agree (2 pts.) Agree (3 pts.) Strongly agree (4 pts.)

. . . I felt much more confused or worried about the relationship.

Strongly disagree (1 pt.) Disagree (2 pts.) Agree (3 pts.) Strongly agree (4 pts.)

YOUR SCORES

Add up your points from Part 1:

4-8 points = Group A

9-16 points = Group B

Now add your points from Part 2:

4-8 points = Group C

9-16 points = Group D

YOUR RESULTS

Find the section below that corresponds to your results, and read what your early years together can tell you about your marriage now.

A + C = Mixed Blessings

Your marriage is filled with more conflict and ambivalence than the ideal, but it has lost only a modicum of good feeling. It seems to coast along, showing few signs that it will become deeply distressed.

Food for Thought: Many people in such relationships are content, finding their marriage a reassuringly stable foundation that allows them to devote attention to career, children or other pursuits. Others are dissatisfied, but figure the rewards outweigh the drawbacks. A few people may eventually leave in search of “a fine romance.”

B + C = A Fine Romance

You have a loving and harmonious marriage. It may have lost a touch of its initial glow as the mundane realities of marriage have demanded more time. But you feel secure. The relationship’s gifts you unwrapped as newlyweds continue to delight.

Food for Thought: You have the makings of a happy, stable, long-term marriage. Your success over the first two years suggests that you and your partner operate together like a thermostat: When it’s chilly, you eliminate the source of the draft, and when it’s hot, you find ways to circulate cool air.

A + D = Disengaging Duo

You and your mate aren’t overly affectionate and frequently express displeasure with one another. The love you once felt diminished soon after the wedding. You may already have a sense that your marriage is on shaky ground.

Food for Thought: Ask yourself: Did I think our problems would go away once we were married? What changes would I need to see in my partner in order to be happy? How likely are they to occur? How bad would things have to get before the marriage would no longer be worthwhile?

B + D = Disaffected Lovers

While you and your spouse are still in love, there are clouds on the horizon. Bickering and a loss of affection could give rise to doubts about your future.

Food for Thought: You may be at risk for divorce. But the decline doesn't have to continue. Ask yourself: Did we set ourselves up with an overly romantic view of marriage? Have we taken each other for granted? Has our disappointment led to frustration and anger? Will continued bickering erode the love we have left?

Loss of affection, rather than escalating conflict, is the most salient predictor of distress.

The dominant approach has been to work with couples to resolve conflict, but it should focus on preserving the positive feelings.

While all couples eventually lose a bit of that honeymoon euphoria, Houston notes, those who remain married don't consider this a crushing blow, but rather a natural transition from "romantic relationship" to "working partnership."