

## Table 1 – Marital Problems Questionnaire

*Adapted from [BradLombardiCounseling.com](http://BradLombardiCounseling.com)*

Rate each area in terms of how much a problem it is in your marriage by using the following scale:

- 0 = This area almost never (less than once a year) causes conflict
- 1 = This area rarely (1-4 times/year) causes conflict
- 2 = This problem causes occasional (5-10 times/year) conflict
- 3 = This problem causes frequent (monthly) conflict
- 4 = This problem causes weekly conflict
- n/a = mark n/a if not applicable

|     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |     |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 1.  | Spouse's friends                          | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 2.  | Spouse's family                           | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 3.  | Spouse's friends of opposite sex          | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 4.  | Spouse's job                              | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 5.  | Spouse's mood/temper                      | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 6.  | Spouse's honesty                          | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 7.  | Spouse's behaviour at social events       | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 8.  | Religious beliefs and practices           | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 9.  | Charitable gifts                          | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 10. | Sexual frequency                          | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 11. | Sexual infidelity                         | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 12. | Love and affection                        | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 13. | Paying bills                              | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 14. | Spending money on clothes or hobbies      | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 15. | Saving/investment                         | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 16. | Use of credit cards                       | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 17. | Family activities                         | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 18. | Resolving differences of opinion          | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 19. | Lack of companionship                     | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 20. | Household chores                          | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 21. | Intellectual discussion                   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 22. | Alcohol/drug use                          | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 23. | Long range goals and priorities           | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 24. | Use of vacation and leisure time          | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 25. | Communication                             | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 26. | Agreement upon who is "head" of household | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 27. | Discipline of children                    | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 28. | Gambling                                  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |
| 29. | Pornography                               | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | n/a |

## Table 2 – Fair Fighting: Ground Rules

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1. **Remain calm.** Try not to overreact to difficult situations. By remaining calm, it is more likely that others will consider your viewpoint.
2. **Express feelings in words, not actions.** If you start to feel so angry or upset that you feel you may lose control, take a “time out” and do something to help yourself feel calm: take a walk, do some deep breathing, play with the dog, write in your journal—whatever works for you.
3. **Be specific about what is bothering you.** Vague complaints are hard to work on.
4. **Deal with only one issue at a time.** Don’t introduce other topics until each is fully discussed. This avoids the “kitchen sink” effect where people throw in all their complaints while not allowing anything to be resolved.
5. **No hitting below the belt.** Attacking areas of personal sensitivity creates an atmosphere of distrust, anger, and vulnerability.
6. **Avoid accusations.** Accusations will lead others to focus on defending themselves rather than on understanding you. Instead, talk about how someone’s actions made you feel.
7. **Try not to generalize.** Avoid words like “never” or “always.” Such generalizations are usually inaccurate and will heighten tensions.
8. **Avoid make believe.** Exaggerating or inventing a complaint—or your feelings about it—will prevent the real issues from surfacing. Stick with the facts and your honest feelings.
9. **Don’t stockpile.** Storing up lots of grievances and hurt feelings over time is counterproductive. It’s almost impossible to deal with numerous old problems for which recollections may differ. Try to deal with problems as they arise.
10. **Avoid clamming up.** Positive results can only be attained with two-way communication. When one person becomes silent and stops responding to the other, frustration and anger can result. However, if you feel yourself getting overwhelmed or shutting down, you may need to take a break from the discussion. Just let your partner know you will return to the conversation as soon as you are able and then don’t forget to follow-up.
11. **Establish common ground rules.** You may even want to ask your partner-in-conflict to read and discuss this information with you. When both people accept positive common ground rules for managing a conflict, resolution becomes much more likely.

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<sup>1</sup> University of Texas Counseling and Mental Health Center. (2017). Fighting fair to resolve conflict. *University of Texas*. Retrieved from <https://cmhc.utexas.edu/fightingfair.html>