

10 Ways to Create a Strong, Intimate Relationship¹

Lynn Newman

1. Use relationships to teach you how to be whole within.
2. See your partner for who he or she really is.
3. Be willing to learn from each other.
4. Get comfortable being alone.
5. Look closely at why a fight may begin.
6. Own who you are.
7. Embrace ordinariness.
8. Expand your heart.
9. Focus on giving love.
10. Let go of expectations.

The Love Map Questionnaire²

John Gottman, PhD and Nan Silver

By giving honest answers to the following questions, you will get a sense of the quality of your current love maps. Read each statement, and select T for “true” or F for “false.”

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. I know my partner’s major current worries. | T F |
| 2. I know what my partner would want to do if he or she suddenly won the lottery. | T F |
| 3. My partner knows who my friends are. | T F |
| 4. I know the three most special times in my partner’s life. | T F |
| 5. I know the names of some of the people who have been irritating my partner lately. | T F |
| 6. Periodically I ask my partner about his or her world right now. | T F |
| 7. I can list the relatives my partner likes the least. | T F |
| 8. My partner is familiar with my hopes and aspirations. | T F |
| 9. I can tell you the most stressful things that happened to my partner as a child. | T F |
| 10. My partner is familiar with my current stresses. | T F |

Scoring (1 point for each “true” answer)

- **5 or higher:** This is an area of strength for your marriage. You have a fairly detailed map of your spouse’s everyday life, hopes, fears, and dreams.
- **Below 5:** Your relationship could stand some improvement in this area. Perhaps you never had the time or the tools to really get to know each other.

¹ Newman, L. (2011). 10 ways to create a strong, intimate relationship. *Tiny Buddha*. Retrieved from <http://tinybuddha.com/blog/10-ways-to-create-a-strong-intimate-relationships/>

² Gottman, J., & Silver, N. (2015). *The seven principles for making marriage work: A practical guide from the country’s foremost relationship expert*. New York, NY: Harmony Books.

Love Quiz: 36 Questions to Reignite the Flame³

Arthur Aron, Rich Slatcher, and Keith Welker

These questions are most effective when couples go through the list together.

The questions are in three sets. Allow about 15 minutes for each set. We should not rush through the questions, but each of us answer each question at a normal, conversational pace. We probably won't get even close to doing all 12 questions in each set, and that's perfectly OK.

When about 15 minutes is up, we finish answering the question we are on. Then we start with the first question in the second set. And so on.

Set 1:

1. What would constitute a "perfect" day for you?
2. Have you ever moved to a different place? If so, what was it like to move and what things did you experience moving to a different location?
3. Would you like to be famous? In what way?
4. Before making a telephone call, do you ever rehearse what you are going to say? Why?
5. Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest?
6. If you were able to live to the age of 90 and retain either the mind or body of a 30-year-old for the last 60 years of your life, which would you want?
7. When did you last sing to yourself? To someone else?
8. Name three things that the four of you appear to have in common.
9. For what in your life do you feel most grateful?
10. If you could change anything about the way you were raised, what would it be?
11. Take 4 minutes and tell your partner and the other couple your life story in as much detail as possible.
12. If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability, what would it be?

³ Dawn, R., & Dunlop, M. (2015, February 17). 36 questions to reignite the flame: love quiz by Arthur Aron. *Today*. Retrieved from <http://www.today.com/health/36-questions-reignite-flame-love-quiz-couples-t3221>

Set 2:

1. If a crystal ball could tell you the truth about yourself, your life, the future, or anything else, what would you want to know?
2. Is there something that you've dreamed of doing for a long time? Why haven't you done it?
3. What is the greatest accomplishment of your life?
4. Have you experienced a culture other than your own? What was the most interesting part of this experience?
5. What do you value most in a friendship?
6. What is your most treasured memory?
7. What is your most terrible memory?
8. What does friendship mean to you?
9. What roles do love and affection play in your life?
10. Alternate sharing something you consider a positive characteristic of the other participants. Share a total of 5 items.
11. Make 3 true "we" statements each. For instance, "We are all in this room feeling..."
12. How do you feel about your relationship with your mother?

Set 3:

1. How close and warm is your family? Do you feel your childhood was happier than most other people's?
2. If you were going to become close friends with the other couple, please share what would be important for them to know
3. Tell the members of the other couple what you like about them; be very honest, saying things that you might not say to someone you've just met.
4. Share with the others in the group an embarrassing moment in your life.
5. Talk about a time when you had to leave home for a significant amount of time (e.g., for university, work, long travel). Was it difficult? What made it so?
6. If you knew that in one year you would die suddenly, would you change anything about the way you are now living? Why?
7. When did you last cry in front of another person? By yourself?
8. If you could go back in your life and change any one experience, what would it be and why?
9. What, if anything, is too serious to be joked about?
10. If you were to die this evening with no opportunity to communicate with anyone, what would you most regret not having told someone? Why haven't you told them yet?
11. Your house, containing everything you own, catches fire. After saving your loved ones and pets, you have time to safely make a final dash to save one item. What would it be? Why?
12. Share a personal problem and ask the other participants' advice on how they might handle it. Also, ask the other participants to reflect back to you how you seem to feeling about the problem you have chosen.