



**relationship diagnostic
questionnaire**

> Personal Relationship Report

Name: **sue smith**

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Internet: www.relatebetter.com
Email: support@relatebetter.com

Introduction

Good relationships are good for you. People in supportive, loving relationships are more likely to feel healthier, happier and satisfied with their lives and less likely to have mental or physical health problems.

Most people know this instinctively and want to have a stable relationship but the statistics show that it is difficult to achieve. One in three first marriages and two in three second marriages end in divorce. Recovery from a marital/relationship breakdown is usually slow. It often takes two to three years for a couple whose relationship has broken up to put their lives back together again.

After splitting up, many people say they wish they hadn't. Four out of ten people regret their divorce five years later and say with hindsight that they think it could have been avoided.

How could divorce have been avoided? In part, though better relationship management skills. The Relationship Diagnostic Questionnaire (RDQ) assesses one partner's views and experience of the other partner's attitudes and behaviors in two key areas.

- **Interaction and Support.** This covers questions such as whether you give each other space and freedom in which to develop, do you get on well and communicate effectively, how do you handle disagreements and resolve conflict, and how effectively do you share responsibilities.
- **Sex and Romance.** This covers issues such as how attracted you are to your partner, is there affection and romance, and how successful is the sexual side of the relationship.

Taken alone, this questionnaire will give you an objective and scientific indication of the success of your partnership relative to other people's relationships. This is because we evaluate your responses against a very large international comparison group of people who have completed the questionnaire.

The questionnaire is a more powerful development framework, however, when both partners complete it. You can then look at your assessments of each other, identify where there seem to be significant variations and use these to discuss how to make improvements.

Please be sensitive about how you use the information in this report to communicate any areas of dissatisfaction with the relationship to your partner.

If you or your partner is feeling sensitive or emotional, or experiencing upsetting feelings, you are advised you to seek help from a counselor or mental health professional.

Relationship Assessment Scales

The RDQ has twelve scales that measure two different aspects of your relationship with your partner: a) interaction and support, and b) sex and romance. This section describes what the individual scales measure.

Interaction and Support

Autonomy

In successful relationships, you find that each partner gives the other freedom. The partners try to help each other to achieve their respective goals in life. Neither partner attempts to impose his or her will on the other nor tries to change the other's personality.

Control

In unequal partnerships, one partner wants to run the show in the relationship. That partner bosses the other around and has to be right about everything. The controlling partner makes decisions alone and ignores their partner's views and opinions. Control freaks make their partners unhappy because they prevent their partners developing and make them feel inconsequential.

Commitment

The signs of commitment are being willing to work hard at the relationship, doing things to make your partner happy, and being prepared to compromise to make the relationship work. Telling your partner regularly that you love him/her is a good signal of commitment. In successful relationships, the partners have high expectations of each other and do not tolerate poor behavior from one another.

Friendship

The signs of friendship are the partners sensing each other's feelings and emotions, enjoying spending time together and making each other laugh. The partners act like best friends. Where there is a lack of friendship and closeness, the partners get easily irritated with each other, they have totally different interests, and they are preoccupied with themselves rather than each other.

Responsibilities

In a successful relationship, the partners discuss and agree their respective roles and responsibilities and they share household work activities such as shopping, cooking, and cleaning. This also applies to childrearing if the partners have children. Sharing means accepting influence and being prepared to adapt and change. In marriage, a husband's willingness to accept influence from his wife is crucial because women adapt for men.

Communication

Communication is the glue of a successful relationship. Good communication is apparent when the partners talk to each other regularly, they feel able to express their feelings and emotions, they listen to each other's problems and they give each other reassurance and positive feedback. Where communication is poor, you find the partners ignoring each other's need for attention or bickering, criticizing each other, holding back or venting their feelings.

Disagreements

In every relationship, people have disagreements, but in a relationship that is struggling, you will find the partners disagreeing regularly about a range of things - for example, money, friends, in-laws, childrearing, and sex. Successful couples reduce disagreements by avoiding making provocative remarks when discussing difficult topics. They also know how to prevent a minor disagreement escalating into a row.

Conflict Resolution

An important skill in having a stable long-term relationship is the ability to resolve conflict effectively. People in successful relationships learn how to recognize and manage each other's different emotional states. They know when to back off, they know how to recover things before they get out of control and they forgive each other quickly. The indicators of poor conflict resolution skills are the partners escalating arguments, lashing out at and letting disagreements continue for days or refusing to talk to each other afterwards.

Sex and Romance

Attraction

Physical attraction often brings people together initially but it is also important in keeping them together. Signs of mutual attraction are the partners feeling good in each other's company, fancying each other and admiring each other's positive qualities. If one partner does not find the other sexy, recoils at the sight of the other in the nude or makes them feel inadequate, then there is an attraction failure.

Affection

People demonstrate affection for each other by being thoughtful and considerate, and displaying nonverbal behaviors like holding hands and hugging and kissing. Where affection is absent, you find the partners being unkind to each other and maintaining a distance between each other. In a happy relationship, the partners make many positive statements to and about each other and their relationship. Relationships do best in rich positive climates.

Romance

Is there romance in the relationship? If there is, the partners will be doing things like buying each other presents, talking about their love for each other and remembering and celebrating important events like birthdays and anniversaries. Making regular deposits into the romance account is important in sustaining a lifelong relationship.

Sex

If the sexual side of the relationship is strong, you will find the partners know how to turn each other on and satisfy each other's desires. They will have discussed their sexual preferences and they will make each other feel fulfilled and loved in bed.

Scoring System

Your results are reported on a ten point scale known as the Standard Ten (Sten) scoring system. The table below indicates what different scores mean and how they should be interpreted.

Sten Score	Percent of scores	Flag Color	Relationship Meaning
8-10	15	Green	Excellent
7	15	Amber green	More than satisfactory
5-6	40	Amber	Satisfactory
4	15	Amber red	Not quite good enough
1-3	15	Red	Inadequate

Relationship Quality Summary

This section provides a summary of your views and experience of your relationship at the present time. It describes how you feel about key areas of the relationship, and assesses the overall strength of the relationship.

Interaction and Support

This covers issues such as whether you feel your partner gives you space or tries to control you, whether you get on well and communicate effectively, how frequently you have disagreements, and whether you feel that your partner does their share of domestic work. For the most part, you seem to be somewhat dissatisfied with this part of the relationship.

Sex and Romance

This covers issues such as how attracted you are to your partner, whether there is affection and romance, and whether the sexual side of the relationship meets your needs. On the whole, you seem to be moderately satisfied with this part of the relationship.

Overall Strength of the Relationship

Overall, it looks like you are not terribly happy with your relationship at the present time. Although you are reasonably content with the sexual and romantic side of the relationship, you are not very happy with the way your partner interacts with you and supports you.

The rest of the report describes your relationship profile in more detail and offers advice on how to improve it.

Interaction and Support Scorecard

	Inadequate			Satisfactory				Excellent		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Autonomy	Orange			Yellow	< ... >	Green		Green		
Control	Orange			Yellow	< ... >	Green		Green		
Commitment	Orange		Yellow	< ... >	Green		Green			
Friendship	Orange			Yellow	< ... >	Green		Green		
Responsibilities	Orange			Yellow	< ... >	Green		Green		
Communication	Orange		Yellow	< ... >	Green		Green			
Disagreements	Orange	Yellow	< ... >	Green		Green			Green	
Conflict Resolution	Orange			Yellow	< ... >	Green		Green		
Interaction and Support	Orange		Yellow	< ... >	Green		Green			

Interaction and Support Summary Amber Red Flag. From your perspective, this part of the relationship is not really working as well as it should. There needs to be some change in some of your partner's behaviors to preserve the relationship.

Interaction and Support Behaviors

Autonomy	Amber Flag. Your partner allows you some degree of freedom, shows some consideration for your need for occasional privacy, and shows some respect for the differences between the two of you.
Control	Amber Flag. You are reasonably content that your partner listens to your views and opinions, takes decisions with you, and does not try to run the show in the relationship.
Commitment	Amber Red Flag. For the most part, your partner shows little commitment, does not act as if they want the relationship to succeed, and is not prepared to compromise to make things work.
Friendship	Amber Flag. You are reasonably content that your partner acts like your best friend sensing your feelings, showing concern for your problems, and making you laugh.
Responsibilities	Amber Green Flag. Your partner usually does an equal share of housework, values your contribution to the relationship, and gives you extra support when you ask.
Communication	Amber Red Flag. Your partner tends not to express their feelings and emotions, does not really listen to your views and opinions, and criticises you quite often.
Disagreements	Red Flag. Your partner frequently disagrees with you about priorities and lifestyle choices - for example, money, friends, leisure, in-laws etc.
Conflict Resolution	Amber Flag. You are fairly clear in your mind that your partner accepts that it is okay to disagree, knows when to back off, and forgives you quickly after arguments.

Sex and Romance Scorecard

	Inadequate			Satisfactory				Excellent		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Attraction					< ... >					
Affection				< ... >						
Romance				< ... >						
Sex					< ... >					
Sex and Romance				< ... >						
Sex and Romance Summary	Amber Flag. From your perspective, this part of the relationship works moderately well but there is certainly scope for improvement.									
Sex and Romance Behaviors										
Attraction	Amber Flag. You are moderately satisfied with your partner's behaviors in this area - for example, telling you that they find you physically attractive, complimenting you about your looks, and saying you turn them on.									
Affection	Amber Red Flag. You feel that your partner does not display affection very often, can be pretty thoughtless and inconsiderate, and breaks their promises to you.									
Romance	Amber Red Flag. Your partner buys you presents infrequently, tends to forget important events, and does not really talk enthusiastically about your relationship.									
Sex	Amber Flag. You are fairly positive about your partner being a good lover, communicating their desires, and making you feel loved.									

Next Steps

The table below summarises the strength of your relationship at the present time. The Improve column shows any areas that you are dissatisfied with which need to be improved. You identified 5 areas that you were unhappy about. The Strengthen column shows any areas that you are okay about which need to be worked on before they can be called strengths. You recognized 6 areas in this category. The Celebrate column shows any key aspects of your partner's relationship behaviors that you are really satisfied with. The assessment detected one area that you were really pleased with.

Improve	Strengthen	Celebrate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment • Communication • Disagreements • Affection • Romance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomy • Control • Friendship • Conflict Resolution • Attraction • Sex 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibilities

In conclusion, it looks like you are not terribly pleased with your relationship at the moment. Although you are reasonably content with the sexual and romantic side of the relationship, you are not very pleased with the way your partner interacts with you and supports you. On the positive side, we have identified one area of the relationship that you are more than satisfied with. The assessment also revealed 5 areas of the relationship that you are dissatisfied with.

If you feel unhappy about some aspect of your partner's attitudes or behavior towards you, then you need to find a way of sharing your views with your partner. In successful relationships, people have high expectations of each other, and they do not tolerate poor behavior. If you and your partner have both completed the questionnaire, focus on the areas where there are the widest gaps.

Tell your partner how you feel about things and how he or she could do things differently to make things better for you. Be sensitive about how you give feedback and explore your own behavior and how it might be contributing to the situation. Your partner will be able to handle negative feedback more easily if you also say nice things about the things you like in him or her at the same time.

Dr John Gottman, the relationships expert, has found that the way people give and receive feedback is a critical factor in whether they stay together or go their separate ways. He calls the following four corrosive negative behavior patterns 'The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.'

- **Criticism.** Do not state your complaints as a defect in your partner's personality. An example of this would be "You are only interested in yourself. You are so selfish."
- **Contempt.** Don't make statements that suggest you feel superior to your partner – for example, "You're a fool". Contempt leads to divorce.
- **Defensiveness.** Don't be defensive – for example, "It's not my fault that we're always late. It's your fault."
- **Stonewalling.** Don't emotionally withdraw from interaction, and give the impression that you are not listening. Men tend to experience more stress than do women during disagreements, and men are more likely to withdraw.

Happy couples behave like good friends, and they handle their conflicts in affectionate and positive ways.

If you are experiencing real difficulties in the relationship, and you can't resolve these yourselves, it is a good idea to seek help early. Do not let things worsen. Many people who seek support from counsellors often say that they wish they had sought help earlier.

Finally, in a heterosexual relationship, a critical factor is how far the man is prepared to change to accommodate their partner, because women tend to be better at adapting their behavior for men.

[Click here](http://www.relatebetter.com/rdq_relationship_recommendations.pdf) to download suggestions for developmental activities and a personal improvement planning template. (http://www.relatebetter.com/rdq_relationship_recommendations.pdf)

Notes



relationship diagnostic questionnaire

> Relationship Improvement Recommendations

RelateBetter.com

Relationship improvement suggestions and recommendations for couples who have taken the Relationship Diagnostic Questionnaire.

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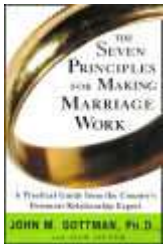
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Key Area	Interaction and Support
1	Autonomy
1.1	Talk to your partner about their career and life goals, and how you can help them develop and reach their potential.
1.2	Discuss and agree areas of autonomy and togetherness in your relationship.
1.3	Discuss what you each think is the right balance of time spent together and apart.
1.4	Try to find a balance where you are neither too separate from one another, nor excessively involved with one another.
1.5	Aim to spend a minimum of at least 12 hours of non-sleep, non-TV time together each week.
1.6	Bear in mind that women tend to rely on friends and relatives, in addition to their partner, for emotional support, whereas men tend to rely more on their partner for most of their support.
2	Control
2.1	Show respect for your partner's needs, feelings, preferences, and opinions.
2.2	Aim to create a relationship where you and your partner both feel empowered and in control of decisions and what happens in the relationship and in your lives.
2.3	Consult your partner before taking decisions that will affect them, and try to reach joint decisions.
2.4	Don't try to micro-manage your partner's behavior – allow them to decide what to do, how to do it, and when to do it.
2.5	Encourage your partner to pursue their goals and realize their ambitions.
2.6	Do not attempt to change a controlling partner by trying to placate or please them as this will reinforce their controlling behavior and make you angry and resentful.
3	Conflict Resolution
3.1	Recognize that you can thrash out differences and disagreements without harming the relationship.
3.2	Show humour, affection, and respect for each other when you disagree.
3.3	Let your partner know that you understand their worries and concerns.
3.4	Stop arguments escalating by consciously avoiding the “four Horseman of the Apocalypse” behaviors – criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling.
3.5	Don't continually sidestep differences, problems, and conflict as this leads to emotional distance.
3.6	Show a sense of humour and perspective to help you get through the difficult periods.
4	Communication
4.1	Initiate interactions and communications with your partner rather than waiting for them to come to you.
4.2	Set aside time to discuss the things you will be doing separately and together in the week.
4.3	In conversations, show that you are listening and care about what your partner is saying by turning towards your partner and giving them your full attention.
4.4	When you face problems or major decisions, give your partner the opportunity to express their views and feelings, and really listen to what they have to say.
4.5	Aim to be moderately assertive in the relationship pushing your views and ideas at times, and backing off at other times.
4.6	Maintain your level of interaction with your partner when you feel stressed rather than cutting yourself off.

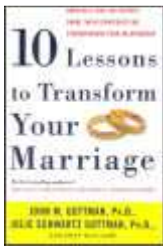
Key Area	Interaction and Support
5	Disagreements
5.1	Accept that it is normal for two people to have different views, ideas, and positions on certain things in any relationship.
5.2	Try to see the world from your partner's perspective to understand where they are coming from.
5.3	Don't dig yourself into a hole in arguments - be prepared to compromise and change to reach common ground and make things better.
5.4	Prevent disagreements turning into full blown arguments by avoiding the "four Horseman of the Apocalypse" behaviors – criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling.
5.5	Use anger and frustration to help understand and tackle what needs to be improved in the relationship.
5.6	Ask your partner to tell you when you are being inconsiderate and insensitive.
6	Friendship
6.1	Explore with your partner your individual and joint dreams and goals.
6.2	Focus on your partner's positive attributes rather than trying to change them.
6.3	Look for ways to bring out the positive in your interactions, and try to say "yes" as often as possible to your partner.
6.4	Develop emotional closeness by reading and responding to your partner's feelings and emotions.
6.5	Increase your own and your partner's sense of well-being by expressing positive feelings and emotions to your partner.
6.6	Although it is important to tell your partner when you are unhappy, try to avoid replaying negative thoughts about your partner.
7	Responsibilities
7.1	Discuss how to share responsibilities in order to make life less difficult for each other and function as an effective team.
7.2	Review what you each have on at the start of the week and what this means for who does what.
7.3	Use lists and post it notes to remind your partner what needs to be done.
7.4	Allow your partner to carry out their share of the work in their own way.
7.5	If you see something that needs to be done, do it yourself rather than waiting for your partner to do it.
7.6	Invite feedback on whether you are doing your fair share, and what additional things you could be doing to support your partner.
8	Commitment
8.1	Develop a long-term, big picture view of what you want to achieve as a couple.
8.2	Make time for and put effort into creating and maintaining a good relationship.
8.3	Express your commitment by showing initiative, putting in extra effort when required, demonstrating a sense of urgency etc.
8.4	Celebrate individual and joint accomplishments and milestones.
8.5	Maintain a work life balance and continually experiment in and improve all dimensions of your life – for example, work, home, community, and leisure.
8.6	Step back regularly and ask yourself how you are contributing to the relationship, and what you may need to do differently.

Key Area	Sex and Romance
9	Sex
9.1	Make time in your relationship for sex and don't be afraid to ask for it.
9.2	Find out about your partner's sexual needs and desires and express your own ones.
9.3	Relax and have fun trying new things.
9.4	If you have a television in your bedroom, get rid of it.
9.5	Seek help early from a qualified professional for physical problems.
9.6	Keep fit through physical activity, maintaining a good diet, and drinking alcohol in moderation.
10	Attraction
10.1	Show an interest in your partner and be nice to them.
10.2	Focus on the things in your partner that you find attractive and comment on them.
10.3	Make an effort to keep in shape and look good.
10.4	Tell your partner that you find them attractive/fancy them.
10.5	Say nice things about your partner's looks when they have dressed up.
10.6	Demonstrate a sense of humour and try to make your partner laugh.
11	Romance
11.1	Set aside time to be together on your own each week.
11.2	Express your love for your partner in words and in writing.
11.3	Give your partner flowers and chocolates.
11.4	Surprise your partner with unexpected treats and gifts.
11.5	Sit close to one another, kiss, cuddle, walk arm in arm etc.
11.6	Remember Valentine's day, birthdays, anniversaries, and other special occasions.
12	Affection
12.1	Make time to have fun with, show interest in, and care for your partner
12.2	Be kind, thoughtful, loving, and demonstrative.
12.3	Express spontaneously your fondness and admiration for the things you like about your partner.
12.4	Use nonsexual touch and display other signs of affection to strengthen your relationship.
12.5	Be willing to express deep feelings candidly and honestly.
12.6	When your partner shows you affection, respond with positive reinforcement.

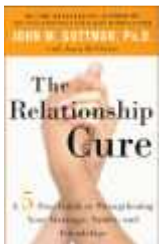
Further Reading



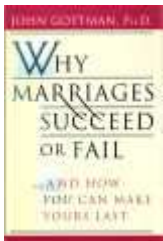
The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work by John M. Gottman and Nan Silver (Paperback - 10 May 2000)



10 Lessons to Transform Your Marriage: America's Love Lab Experts Share Their Strategies for Strengthening Your Relationship - Audio CD (4 Feb 2008) by John M. Gottman, Julie Schwartz Gottman, and Joan de Claire



The Relationship Cure: A 5 Step Guide for Building Better Connections with Family, Friends and Lovers by John M. Gottman (Paperback - 1 Aug 2002)



Why Marriages Succeed or Fail: And How You Can Make Yours Last by John Gottman (Paperback - 1 Jun 1995)

Relationship Improvement Plan

Use this to record what you and your partner are going to each do to improve the relationship.

Dimension	Actions	
Interaction and Support	What I am going to do	What my partner is going to do
Autonomy		
Control		
Conflict Resolution		
Communication		
Disagreements		
Friendship		
Responsibilities		
Commitment		
Sex and Romance		
Sex		
Attraction		
Romance		
Affection		