



# The Marriage Checkup

Nearly everyone experiences difficulties in their marriage or committed relationship from time to time, but some people seem more prepared to anticipate these hard times and respond to them more skillfully than others.

The Relationship Checkup is a list of 11 points that will help you evaluate your relationship. Check off the statements that apply to your relationship. You will quickly gain a sense of the strengths and the opportunities for improvement. **The items in red are problem areas or issues needing improvement.**

1. **Couples in successful, lasting marriages invest themselves fully in the relationship.** While they have positive relationships with their parents, siblings, and other relatives, they are not overly involved with them.

- Your families visit when invited.
- Their visits are short but satisfying.
- You speak with family members by phone, but not too often.
- Family members give advice when they are asked.
- Your family members visit too often.**
- They stay too long.**
- They telephone frequently.**
- They give unsolicited advice.**
- They drop in unannounced.**

2. **People in successful marriages have their own identity as a couple.** There is a feeling of togetherness and independence in the relationship.

- You feel loyal toward each other.
- You listen carefully to each other.
- You know each other's histories.
- You pay attention to each other's moods and body language.
- You share your thoughts and feelings.
- You allow each other a private space and not intrude.
- You respect each other.
- You are sometimes disloyal toward each other.**
- You don't listen carefully to each other.**
- You don't know very much about each other's pasts.**
- You ignore each other's moods and body language.**
- You keep your thoughts and feelings to yourselves.**
- You sometimes invade each other's private space.**
- You feel you and your spouse are living parallel lives.**

3. **In strong marriages, couples can successfully integrate their children into their relationship.**

- You accept that there are times when you must place the needs of your child before your own.
- You do your best to stay in touch with each other

emotionally and nurture your relationship.

- You set aside time every week for the two of you to spend time alone together.
- You resent the times when you must put your child's needs ahead of your own.**
- You are overly focused on your child.**
- You have lost touch with each other emotionally.**
- You hardly find time to be alone with your spouse.**

4. **A strong marriage can withstand the challenge of crises and life transitions.** Losing a job, a death in the family, a serious accident, caring for a child with a serious illness, or other significant event can test any relationship.

- You never blame each other for the stress that comes with the crisis.
- You face difficult times as a team.
- You look for ways to support each other emotionally.
- You help each other keep perspective during a crisis.
- You seek outside support during times of crisis (talking to friends, family, or therapist, etc.).
- One spouse seems to emotionally abandon the other.**
- One spouse blames the other.**
- One spouse becomes angry, worried, or anxious.**
- You don't seek support from people who can help you.**

5. **Loving marriages are safe places where anger, conflict, and differences may safely be expressed.** Each spouse is allowed to have and express their own views.

- You have had serious conflicts, but you have not allowed them to damage your relationship.
- You respect your spouse's opinion and perspective.
- You may find anger uncomfortable, but you accept that it is a part of life.
- Your conflicts have harmed your relationship.**
- You avoid bringing up or talking about problems.**
- You both try to intimidate the other into agreeing with your point of view.**



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- Anger is so uncomfortable that you avoid it.
- You become so angry that you lose control.

6. **Successful marriages maintain a healthy physical intimacy.** Spouses take care to protect their intimate relationship from the demands of work and family.

- You sometimes have different levels of need, but you make room for each other's changing levels of desire.
- You are honest with each other about your changing desires and feelings.
- You set aside time for intimacy.
- You find it hard to talk about intimacy.
- Physical intimacy is like a battlefield.
- You never have time for physical intimacy.

7. **Couples in successful marriages share laughter and fun times, and work to maintain their mutual interests.**

- You have fun together.
- You make each other laugh.
- You find each other interesting.
- You also have individual interests you pursue.
- You rarely have fun together anymore.
- You don't laugh much when you are together.
- You are bored with each other.
- You avoid spending time together.
- You have few shared interests.

8. **Loving marriages are safe places where you can let down your guard and be vulnerable.** You know you can count on your spouse to comfort and encourage you.

- It is okay to be vulnerable with your spouse.
- You understand each other.
- You encourage each other.
- You pay attention to each other's moods and respond when the other seems needy.
- It is not safe to be needy and vulnerable in your relationship.
- You exhaust each other's emotional reserves.
- You don't pay attention to each other's moods.
- You avoid telling your spouse your worries.
- You feel worse about yourself with your spouse.

9. **Loving spouses stay romantic and idealistic about each other, even though they are growing older.**

- You have good memories of falling in love.

- You are glad to be growing older with your spouse.
- You can hardly remember the days when the two of you first fell in love.
- Seeing your spouse grow older makes you feel badly because it reminds you that you are growing older.

10. **You have far more positive moments in your marriage than negative ones.**

- You show affection for each other.
- You apologize for the hurtful things you say or do.
- You show each other empathy.
- You are polite to each other.
- Your discussions often leave you feeling frustrated.
- You often pick on each other.
- Many of your conversations turn into arguments.
- You behave disrespectfully toward each other.
- You are physically violent with each other.

11. **Couples in successful marriages are able to manage conflict productively.** They are skilled at keeping times of discord from getting out of control.

- You call a time-out when your emotions escalate.
- You know how to calm yourselves down.
- You take care to speak and listen non-defensively.
- You take care to validate the other person's point of view, even when you disagree with it.
- You blame each other.
- You treat each other disrespectfully.
- You deny responsibility for your own actions.
- You become so angry that you leave or emotionally withdraw.

If you checked more than five items in red, you have some opportunities to improve your relationship. You may also wish to make an appointment for a free consultation at **The Marriage Clinic** for marriage enhancement skills.



**The Marriage Clinic** is your place for support, guidance, and information to help you create a healthy, loving, and lasting marriage.

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For more information, please call **216-292-4500**



**Dr. Jonathan Isaacson** is a licensed clinical psychologist, specializing in pre-marital and marriage counseling. He also specializes in helping singles choose healthy partners and loving relationships. With proven and timeless principles and strategies, you can create a loving marriage that will last a lifetime. Dr. Isaacson guides his clients to resolve couples distress and overcome challenges. He offers programs on marriage/relationship enhancement that includes a couple's personality and relationship profiles. Dr. Isaacson helps individuals overcome psychological and emotional problems which only become exacerbated in a relationship. He is the Director of **The Marriage Clinic** in Beachwood, Ohio and can be reached at **216-292-4500**.