

## Relationship Inventory and Contract

Reprinted and slightly revised with permission from Joseph Ferrandino, Ph.D.

Source: Ferrandino, J.J. (2010). [The Technology of Love: Successful Strategies for Low Maintenance Relationships](#).

There are several goals of this exercise:

1. To bring to the partners an awareness of both similarity and difference,
2. To indicate both to oneself and the other the highest priority items in a relationship,
3. To practice “good form” communication skills at the process level (the How) in the attempt to address and resolve the differences at the content level (the What), thereby creating an awareness of the couples’ capacity for Adult communication and compromise, and
4. To actually create concrete negotiated agreements (contracts) around areas of difference that are specific, observable, and behavioral which can become the basis for the creation of healthy negotiated ongoing “win/win” patterns.

### Name

If this is a martial commitment, should one partner take on the other partner’s last name? If not, does each partner retain his or her own name, create a hyphenated name, or does the couple create a new name?

---

### Household Duties

Who does what in terms of inside and outside household chores and responsibilities?

---

---

---

---

Errands: Food shopping, the dry cleaners, the post office, etc. Who does what and how will it be determined?

---

---

---

---

If outside help is utilized, who does the hiring, firing, and supervising?

---

---

Are you very particular about organization and keeping things in order (“Everything has a place, everything in its place.”)?

---

---

What is your sense of your partner’s household organizational style?

---

---

How do you plan to merge these differences (if there are any)?

---

---

---

---

**Leisure Time**

How often will you be together during leisure time?

---

Should evenings and weekends be spent together?

---

---

---

Who decides what to do?

---

---

Should vacations be spent together? (With or without children, if they are involved)?

---

---

How do you negotiate time apart?

---

---

---

---

**Living Arrangements**

Where will you live residentially (house, apartment, or condo)?

---

---

Where will you live geographically?

---

---

How will that be determined?

---

---

What kind of privacy do you want while living together (e.g., a separate room or study, if that is feasible)?

---

---

---

---

---

**Money and Finances**

Will both partners be wage earners?

---

If so, will you pool your income or each keep their own salary?

---

---

---

How will living expenses be covered?

---

---

Who pays for what?

---

---

---

How is that determined?

---

---

How do you get your personal spending money? An "allowance?"

---

---

---

How do you decide about the purchase of "big ticket" items (the new car, the television set)?

---

---

How do you feel about a budget for expenses?

---

---

How would you assess your personal spending “style?” (Reflect on your spending over the last month—do you know how much has gone to living expenses, savings, shopping, and entertainment?)

---

---

---

Would you consider yourself a “spender” or a “saver?”

---

What is your attitude about a retirement plan and a savings plan for the future?

---

---

Would you require any form of a pre-nuptial agreement?

---

Who manages the checkbook and finances?

---

### **Sexuality and Physical Contact**

Do you like non-sexual physical contact (hugging, touching, holding) a lot? A little? Your sense of your partner’s attitude on this?

---

---

---

Do you talk about sex?

---

How do you as a couple determine and communicate your and your partner’s sexual needs and desires?

---

---

Do you think that your desires for sexual frequency are in line with your partner's?

---

If birth control is an issue, who takes responsibility for it?

---

Who initiates sex? Is either partner free not to respond?

---

---

Are there any areas or issues of concern around sexuality that might impact your sexual relationship which would need to be communicated? (STDs? Historical issues such as abuse or trauma? Other concerns?)

---

---

---

### **Children**

How many, if any? \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you consider adoption? \_\_\_\_\_

Who will take primary responsibility for raising the children?

---

If shared, what would that mean specifically?

---

---

Will one partner have to quit a job or take a leave?

---

How would you manage stepchildren if they were part of the picture?

---

---

What about rules, consequences, and discipline for raising the children?

---

---

---

---

**Other Relationships**

Are you and your partner free to develop and maintain friendship relationships in terms of time away from the primary relationship?

---

---

What is the general extent of those other relationships in terms of time away from the primary relationship?

---

---

---

Do you include each other in those relationships?

---

---

What is the amount of socializing (getting together with friends/relatives) that you would like to do?

---

---

Your sense of your partner's interest in social activities?

---

---

What are your and your partner's beliefs about monogamy? What are your rules and boundaries about this?

---

---

---

---

---

**In-Laws and Parents**

In a general sense, how do you feel about your in-laws, parents, family, and extended family?

---

---

---

---

What kind of relationship would you like to have with them on an ongoing basis?

---

---

---

---

Do you want to live near them (if possible)?

---

Do you want to spend time with them on a regular basis?

---

If children are in the picture, how much time would you like your in-laws/parents to be spending with them?

---

---



**Previous Marriage/Previous Relationships**

If you have been previously married (or in a long-term, committed relationship), what is the extent of your contact with your ex?

---

---

---

With your children from that relationship (if any)?

---

---

---

What kind of contact will there be on a continuing basis?

---

---

---

**Spirituality**

Do you individually have what might be called a spiritual or religious “program” (a certain outlook on life, a regular practice of meditation, prayer, church involvement, or service commitment)?

---

---

Do you think one is necessary for your life?

---

---

How does your spiritual/religious program (if you have one) compare, contrast, or coincide with your partner’s?

---

---

---

If there are significant differences in this area, how would you compromise those differences?

---

---

---

---

How would the children be raised regarding religion?

---

---

---

---

**Communication**

How would you gauge your capacity for communication (self-disclosure and listening skills)?

---

---

---

---

How would you gauge your partner's?

---

---

---

---

Are you aware of your own feelings and are you able to label them as such (i.e., mad, sad, glad, scared)?

---

---

---

Do you and your partner share feelings?

---

---

---

---

Do you express yourself assertively (stating clearly what you want while taking into account the need for the other)?

---

---

Are you and your partner able to compromise appropriately (maintaining your won boundaries while respecting the boundaries of the other)?

---

---

Are there any particular areas where you and/or you and your partner have difficulty communicating?

---

---

---

---

### **Compatible Styles**

A “style” has to do with *how* a person, in general, manages, or conducts his/her life. For example, one person might be a “morning person,” meaning that they are early risers and tend to feel a lot of energy in the morning. Another might be a “night or evening person” and want to sleep as late as they can in the morning because they feel more energy at night. One might be a planner, organizer, and schedule person, while the other not so or less so.

Would you describe yourself as a “morning person,” “evening person,” or neither? How would you describe your partner?

---

---

---

How do you feel about time commitments—being ready on time, getting to appointments on time, scheduling time?

---

---

---

---

What is your sense of how introverted you are (i.e., feeling energized and refreshed by down-time or by solitary time) vs. how extroverted you are (i.e., feeling energized and refreshed by social interactions or by meeting new people)? How about your partner?

---

---

---

---

How would you compare your style with your partner's?

### Other Areas

Are there any other areas not mentioned in this assessment that are cause for concern and therefore requiring discussion? For example, food preferences (one person leans toward health food or vegetarianism and the other does not)? Pets? Degree of involvement with alcohol or tobacco? Types of entertainment (one like the cinema or television and the other does not)? Other activities like exercise, travel, clubs, hobbies or volunteer work you might like to do but your partner does not? Physical concerns that might be significant (allergies, medications, snoring, any type of impairment)?

