YOUR PERSONALITY PROFILE

Dr. Love's 32 Personality Keys for Deeper Self-Awareness & Happier Relationships

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TILL DEATH DO US PART (UNLESS I KILL YOU FIRST)

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Your Personality Profile

This little e-Book has the potential to help you revolutionize your life. However, you have to be prepared to let it, to be open to the level of self analysis and self awareness that it can take you to. This journey is not always comfortable at first, but in the end is always rewarding. To help you get warmed up to the kind of work we're going to be doing here, answer the following questions to yourself:

- Do you find yourself falling for the wrong kind of person over and over again?
- Do you avoid becoming close to others?
- Do you fear commitment?
- Do you find it hard to end a relationship, even when you know it's bad for you?
- Do you find yourself pulling away from your partners, but don't know why?
- Do you have temper outbursts?
- Does fear of rejection become an issue in every relationship you're in?
- Are you sad much of the time?
- Are you afraid of being alone?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then childhood baggage is making you fall for the wrong partners and is also affecting your ability to form a satisfying relationship.

Emotional health and relationship satisfaction go hand in hand. This means that the healthier you are, the better your relationships will be.

Just as your physical body can become healthier, so can your emotional self.

The first step to becoming healthier is finding out the areas within your self that need to heal and grow.

Your Personality Profile is really a kind of psychological check-up, a thorough examination of how well you're functioning as an individual and how you act and react in relationships.

My assessment doesn't consist of thermometers, stethoscopes or needles; instead, my diagnostic tools are the specific questions that I will be asking you. Don't tell me what you think I want to hear or what you think is the "right" answer. Just answer as honestly as you can. The more honest you are, the better I'll be able to assess your emotional health.

The questions I ask are broken into categories. The correct answers for the questions are given with each question, so you must be honest with yourself. If you answered any of the questions in a given section incorrectly, then read my discussion that follows that section, which contains information on how to heal the problems uncovered.

Mood

- 1) I am often depressed. F
- 2) I am rarely moody. T
- 3) I am often frightened or anxious. F
- 4) My moods never go up and down like a rollercoaster. T
- 5) I feel emotionally dead. F
- 6) I am not usually too hyper. T
- 7) I am angry much of the time. F
- 8) I often feel hurt. F

If you answered any of the above set of questions incorrectly, you are having issues with your mood. It's important to identify what's setting off your moods and do what you can to resolve the factors that are making you upset. For example, if you feel frightened and anxious, figure out why, and then do what you can to gain control over the situations or factors that are triggering your anxiety. Likewise, if you often feel hurt, find out why. Perhaps you aren't assertive enough and are allowing other people to mistreat or hurt you. If you're angry much of the time, you also may be allowing people to mistreat you, which would lead you to feel angry. You also may be feeling angry because you are carrying resentment that stems way back to childhood. The bottom line is, your mood problem is your soul's way of crying out to be heard and helped. You deserve to feel peaceful and in your comfort zone in your relationships. So listen to your heart and care for the part of yourself that's crying out by making the changes in your life that will make you feel more comfortable and at peace.

Addictions

- 1) I rarely work too many hours per day. T
- 2) I drink excessively. F

- 3) I don't smoke. T
- 4) I abuse drugs. F
- 5) I rarely overeat. T
- 6) I don't spend to excess. T
- 7) I rarely gamble. T
- 8) I exercise too much. F
- 9) I'm a sexaholic. F

Any wrong answers in the above section mean that you are dealing with addictive behaviors. Addictive behaviors are an unconscious way of pushing away frightening, painful or unacceptable feelings such as intense anxiety or anger. Drinking, smoking, doing drugs or engaging in other addictive behaviors is the way that the unconscious mind attempts to numb feelings. While the addictive behaviors make you feel better temporarily--trust methey will ruin your life in the long run. To free yourself from your addictive behavior or behaviors, ask yourself, "What would I feel if I didn't engage in the addictive behavior?" Resist giving in to the addiction and allow yourself to feel your feelings instead. It's uncomfortable--kind of like growing pains--but the discipline is well worth it. With practice, you will become emotionally stronger and more and more comfortable tolerating strong feelings. When you can tolerate your feelings, the addictions will be easier to cast aside.

Personality Traits

- 1) I feel joyful much of the time. T
- 2) I am usually too preoccupied to live in the moment. F
- 3) I don't feel that people are out to get me. T
- 4) I worry about "what if" scenarios. F
- 5) I am not stubborn and inflexible. T
- 6) I find it hard to compromise. F
- 7) I do what I say I'm going to do. T
- 8) I don't generally achieve most of the goals I set for myself. F
- 9) I rarely procrastinate. T
- 10) I get hysterical over little things. F
- 11) I am not overly dramatic. T
- 12) I have been told that I bully and intimidate people. F
- 13) I rarely arrive late to appointments. T
- 14) I don't have a problem following through on promises. T
- 15) I am irresponsible (pay bills late, miss appointments, etc). F
- 16) I have never been in trouble with the law. T
- 17) I break appointments at the last minute. F
- 18) I'm rarely bossy. T
- 19) I worry a lot. F
- 20) I feel guilty a lot of the time. F

Any wrong answers in the last section indicate that your personality could use a little tweaking. The human personality is a complex tapestry of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that is partly genetic and partly unconsciously absorbed from our parents. If your mom is a Nervous Nelly, odds are you're going to be a worrywart yourself. If dad's a screamer, you're likely to have a short fuse like him. If you're thinking, "but my personality is the exact opposite of my parent, you need to know that the reason for this is because your unconscious mind made a decision to be the opposite of your parent, whose behavior you didn't like. In either case, you aren't fully you when your personality is a cloned version of your parent(s) or just an escape from your role model. An important aspect of fully growing up consists of consciously deciding whom you want to be, what parts of your parents' personalities you want to keep, and what parts you would do well to lose.

Many people believe that personality traits are as indelible as a leopard's spots--meaning that you have as much chance of changing your personality as a leopard has of rearranging his spots. I'm here to tell you that this isn't true. You can change if you want to. If you're ready for the change, then study the list of non-ideal traits listed above and commit to modifying your ways. The way to change is to begin by observing the traits that you don't approve of. Don't try to force yourself to act differently. Trying to force change on yourself will create a lot of anxiety and will only lead to failure. Instead, accept that you are the way you are--for now--and just observe yourself behaving in a way that isn't ideal. Next, try to catch yourself just before you fall into your old ways. When you can stop yourself before you act in the old ways, you will no longer be on automatic pilot. Then and only then will you be free to make a choice to either stay the way you are or to change how you act.

Jealousy

- 1) I often feel jealous over my partner's past relationships. F
- 2) I feel jealous when my partner has what I know are innocent conversations with others. F
- 3) I don't feel jealous when my partner spends time with other people. T

If you answered any of the above three questions incorrectly, then we know that jealousy is a problem for you. The cause of your jealousy likely dates back to your childhood. Think about the first time you felt jealous as a kid. What was happening back then? Did mom or dad favor your brother or sister? Did mom or dad ignore you and pay attention to someone or something other than you? When you figure out the origin of your jealousy, you're on the path to healing it. The next time you feel jealous of your partner's past or present activities or involvements, take a hard look at reality. Is your reaction a ghost from the past, in which case, remind yourself that your past doesn't equal your present. If you determine that you have a legitimate reason to be jealous of your partner, then talk to your partner and explain what's upsetting you. If your partner continues to behave in ways that provoke your jealousy, then read my book Till Death Do Us Part (Unless I Kill You First) in order to

understand why you're drawn to someone who revives your childhood pain. My book will help you learn how to set yourself free. When you're free, use my Create a Mate guide to define your ideal partner.

Need for Space

- 1) I have been told that I am a loner. F
- 2) My partner complains that I spend too much time with my friends, family, work, hobbies or activities that don't involve him/her. F
- 3) My partners never complain that I need too much time alone. T

If you answered any of the above three questions incorrectly, you have a great need for space. There are a couple of reasons why you need so much space. One possibility is that your parent or parents smothered and/or controlled you, which would result in your wanting a lot of space and freedom. You also may need a lot of space because you are afraid to become too close to another person. The fear of closeness can be a mask for the deeper fear of loving and losing a loved one through death, abandonment or rejection. If loving and losing is your issue, trace the problem back to its childhood source and work on healing that wound. My book Till Death Do Us Part (Unless I Kill You First) will show you how to do this.

Possessiveness

- 1) I have been told that I'm too clingy. F
- 2) I want my partner all to myself. F
- 3) I am comfortable with my partner spending time with friends, family, or engaging in work, hobbies or activities that don't involve me. T

Any wrong answers in this last section tell us that you are feeling fearful and emotionally empty. There are several causes of possessive or clingy behavior. One possibility is that you were emotionally neglected as a child. Early deprivation causes you to be like an empty well waiting to be filled, in which case you will cling to your partner hoping that the connection will fill the void inside yourself. Another cause of possessive and clingy behavior is fear of separation from your beloved; specifically, fear that your partner won't actually return to you following the period of separation. This type of fear traces back to an emotional injury that you suffered at about two years of age, the normal age when a young child begins to separate physically from mom. If your mother became hurt or angry when you pulled away and punished you by turning away when you came back to her for emotional refueling, her cold shoulder treatment left you terrified of separation, a problem that persists into adulthood and explains why you become clingy, possessive, and anxious when your partner tries to separate from you. Paradoxically, the more you cling, the more your partner tries to

shake loose, which only makes you feel more anxious and clingy. To free yourself from the pattern, we need to give comfort to the terrified child inside yourself. To do this, visualize yourself as a small child and see yourself, the adult, comforting yourself. Whenever your partner separates from you, resist the urge to cling to your partner. Instead cling to yourself and become the consistently loving parent that you always needed. As you heal the wounded child inside yourself, your clinginess will fade.

Sexuality

- 1) I am uncomfortable with my sexuality. F
- 2) I like giving and receiving physical pleasure. T
- 3) I am ashamed of my body. F
- 4) I dislike touching and/or being touched. F
- 5) I am comfortable being naked. T
- 6) I have been sexually molested. F

Any wrong answers in this last section indicate unresolved sexual issues. The best way to work these issues through is by talking about your feelings, preferably in a therapeutic setting. If you have been molested, I recommend that you see a trauma specialist, so that you can put the past to rest and move on to a healthy sexual connection.

Obsessive/Compulsive

- 1) I have persistent, recurring ideas, thoughts or images that I know are senseless, intrusive or difficult to control. F
- 2) I make attempts to ignore or suppress these thoughts or to neutralize them with another thought or action. F
- 3) My thoughts are accompanied by compulsive behaviors and actions, often designed to ward off the obsessive thoughts. F
- 4) I engage in repetitive behavior such as constant rewashing of my hands, constant rearrangement of objects or constantly checking my actions (e.g., relocking doors). F
- 5) The obsessions or compulsions cause a great deal of distress and anxiety, are time consuming (take more than an hour a day) or significantly interfere with my health, social or occupational functioning. F
- 6) I am secretive and attempt to conceal the compulsive thoughts and behaviors. F

Wrong answers in the previous section indicate that you have obsessive/compulsive

tendencies. Obsessive thoughts and compulsive actions are caused by unconscious mechanisms that are designed to beat back anxiety. By focusing on an obsessive thought or engaging in compulsive actions, you're actually discharging the anxiety before you ever feel it. To break free, you need to gradually allow yourself to feel your anxiety. Anxiety is unpleasant, but it won't harm you. As you allow yourself to feel your anxiety (or whatever feeling you are attempting to ward off) you will become more and more able to tolerate the feelings. When the feelings are on the table rather than being discharged by obsessive/compulsive thoughts and actions, you will finally be able to address and resolve the issues that are triggering the feelings. In addition, when you aren't so caught up in your obsessive/compulsive ways, you will find that you are more available to form a better connection with your partner.

<u>Trust</u>

- 1) I don't find it hard to trust others. T
- 2) I expect to be taken advantage of. F
- 3) I don't let my guard down with other people for fear that they will hurt me. F

Wrong answers in this last section mean you feel mistrustful of others. Basic trust is something that develops early in life. Had your primary caretakers been consistent and reliable sources of love and support, you'd have learned to trust more easily. Clearly this didn't happen for you. The best way to heal the wound is for you to establish a relationship with a therapist who is reliable and consistently caring. At first you won't trust your therapist either. That's normal and to be expected. In fact, you must respect your feelings of mistrust and don't try to fight your fear of being let down in relationships. Accept yourself where you are and simply talk about the fear. When you feel held and accepted by your therapist, no matter what you feel, you will experience the loving and consistent relationship that you needed as a child. Gradually this loving connection will ease your fears and enable you to form a trusting relationship with a life partner.

Control Issues

- 1) Things have to be done my way. F
- 2) I expect the people I'm close with to think and feel the way I do. F
- 3) I can't allow other people to do things for me (like chores or cleaning) because I know they won't do the task the way I think it should be done. F
- 4) I can accept the fact that there are things in this life that are beyond my control. T

You definitely have control issues if you answered incorrectly to one or more of the four statements above. The need to control every aspect of your environment and those in it is a symptom of anxiety. When you behave in a controlling way, your unconscious mind is

temporarily lulled into believing that you are in control, rather than out of control. In short, your controlling behaviors are designed to extinguish the anxiety over being out of control. The next question I must ask you is, "Why is being out of control so scary?" The likely response to my question is that you resist letting down your guard because you know on some level that your impulses and feelings will come leaping out if you let go of your control. Perhaps you will find lurking within a bundle of rage or wild sexual urges. Join the club. All of us humans are untamed beasts! The key here is impulse control. The only way you can be free to think and feel whatever you want is when you know that you have the ability to not act of your thoughts and feelings. When you can separate your thoughts and feelings from actions, you are free to feel all your feelings. When you are free to feel, you will be liberated from the need to control every aspect of your universe.

Decision Making

- 1) I don't find it hard to make a decision. T
- 2) I rarely change my mind. T
- 3) I am afraid to make the wrong decision, so I don't make any decision. F

If you answered incorrectly to any or all of the above three questions, decision making is an area of difficulty for you. There are several causes for such a problem. Your reluctance to make a decision can be a sign of lack of confidence (low self-esteem, see that section, which appears later in this consultation), a sign that you're afraid of getting into trouble if you make a wrong choice or a sign that you haven't completely defined who you are and what you want. When you identify which of the above options fit, then you can take steps to heal the underlying problem.

Honesty

- 1) I don't lie. T
- 2) I bend the truth. F
- 3) I don't conceal the truth by keeping secrets. T
- 3) I conceal the truth by not revealing information that I know I should reveal. F

Wrong answers in the above section mean that you have problems being honest. This is a pattern that probably originated in childhood. Let me explain why. As a child, you likely had a parent or parents who were very harsh and punishing. When your parents interrogated you, your natural instinct for self-preservation led you to deny the charges that they fired at you. In other words, the lying was merely an attempt to avoid the pain of punishment. Of course, the avoidance defense--as is the case for all defense mechanisms--actually burned you, rather than protected you. When your parents found out that you lied, they punished you all

the more. Unfortunately, the lying pattern has continued into adulthood and it doesn't protect you any better now than it did way back when. To break the pattern, you must become aware of the urge to lie before you launch into a lie. Next, become aware of the fact that your urge to lie is an attempt to avoid punishment. Remind yourself that you are going to be punished all the more if you do lie. Then choose to deal more directly with your issue. If you're afraid to tell your partner the truth, say that, but don't lie.

Emotional Emptiness

- 1) I'm afraid to be alone. F
- 2) I don't need my partner to spend every minute with me. T
- 3) I don't feel empty inside. T
- 4) No matter how much attention I'm given, it never seems to be enough. F
- 5) I want my partner all to myself. F
- 6) I don't like it when my partner is away from me for any reason including hobbies, work, friends, or family. F
- 7) I have never been called clingy. T

Wrong answers in this last section mean that you are suffering from emotional emptiness. The emptiness dates back to childhood, when your needs were clearly not properly met. You were either emotionally or physically neglected, rejected or abandoned and now you're suffering from what I call the Empty Well Syndrome. Expecting your partner to make up for your losses is completely unrealistic and not included in your partner's "job description." I know it's hard to accept that your partner is your lover, not your surrogate parent! But you need to accept this truth as well as the fact that only you can heal your hollow heart. The only way for you to do this is by becoming a loving parent to yourself. Create a clear picture in your mind of the hurting and lonely child that you were and visualize yourself comforting that child. See yourself at various phases of your childhood. Each day visualize a painful childhood experience, and then imagine yourself holding that child, talking kindly, and saying and doing exactly what you'd hoped your parents would have done. As you love yourself in this way, you will be filling your own emotional well. This way you won't expect the impossible from your relationships with others.

Self-Esteem

- 1) I like myself. T
- 2) I don't mistreat myself (by abusing drugs, alcohol, food, etc). T
- 3) I feel that I deserve to be loved. T
- 4) I allow myself to be mistreated in relationships. F
- 5) I put myself down. F
- 6) I try to eat properly. T

- 7) I exercise regularly. T
- 8) I don't give myself the proper amount of sleep. F
- 9) I try to take care of myself. T
- 10) I say kind things to myself regularly. T

Any wrong answers in this last section indicate that your self-esteem could use some boosting. In order to repair your self-esteem, we need to understand why it's low. Here are some possibilities. The first is that you were put down as a kid. If this is the case, then there's a strong chance that the voice of your critical parent still lives on inside your head, putting you down on a daily basis. Another common cause of low self-esteem is turning anger that's really meant for others against yourself in the form of self-attack and put-downs, both of which hammer your self-esteem into the ground.

If you were put down as a kid, be sure to surround yourself with people who love and appreciate you. This love can repair your bruised sense of self. If the voice of the parent who used to put you down still lives on in your head, your self-esteem will never repair until you become the master of that voice. Here's how. First, whenever you hear yourself putting yourself down, say to yourself, "Who's really talking to me? Is it mom or dad?" Then say, "Hi mom or hi dad. There you go, putting me down again." Don't try to shut the voice up, just recognize the voice as not being yours. Being able to step back and realize that it's them, not you, gives you some breathing room and this is what you need to heal. Gradually, the simple of act of recognizing who's really putting you down will make the voice of the critical parent fade away.

If misdirected anger is causing your low self-esteem, then each and every time you engage in self-attack you must ask yourself, "Who am I really mad at?" When you identify whom you're really angry with, you will be able to stop turning the rage back on your self, which will heal your broken self- esteem.

Fear of Rejection

- 1) I fear that my partner will dump me, even though I have no reason to suspect that a rejection is coming. F
- 2) I don't choose people who reject me. T
- 3) I was rejected as a child by a significant other. F

Wrong answers in this last section mean that you fear rejection because you have been rejected in your life. Because you have been traumatized you are braced for the same disaster to occur again. To free yourself, you need to talk about how you were rejected and work through the painful feelings associated with the rejection. As for the fear of rejection that's being stirred in your adult relationships, you need to clarify whether you have real reason to fear or not. If your partner gives you no reason to fear rejection, then the healing

work I describe above will help you to feel less afraid with your partner. If you have, in fact, chosen a partner who is like the parent or parents who rejected you, then you have good reason to fear. Read my Advice Archives on unfinished business and my book <u>Till Death Do Us Part (Unless I Kill You First)</u> to set yourself free from a destructive relationship. Then use my Create a Mate guide to manifest a better partner for yourself in the future.

Abandonment Issues

- 1) I was abandoned as a child by mom, dad or a significant other. F
- 2) I am afraid to be dropped by my partners even though I have no reason to suspect that I will actually be abandoned. F
- 3) I don't choose partners who walk out on me. T
- 4) I am afraid to be alone. F

Incorrect answers in this last section mean that you suffer from abandonment issues. Having been abandoned as a child has resulted in your being terrified to be abandoned again. Your early abandonment may also lead you to choose partners who abandon you the way you were abandoned as a child, not because you're a glutton for punishment, but because--when left to its own devices--the psyche only knows one way to heal itself: to keep replaying your trauma in order to work through the feelings and to hopefully achieve what I call a "Happy Ending" or healing of the original wound. This is what is called the repetition compulsion, which is the unconscious drive to replay childhood traumas. The problem with the repetition compulsion is that it never does heal. Why? Because we choose partners who are carbon copies of the parent who let us down. Choosing a carbon copy of mom or dad makes sense on the surface. If you want to replay your childhood, who better to do it with than someone like mom or dad. Then if you can succeed in getting your partner to love you the way mom or dad didn't, you will feel like you received the love from your parents themselves. Unfortunately, this plan never works out, precisely because the people we choose are damaged in the exact same way that mom and dad were; so they only harm instead of heal you. The only way to heal your wound is to work through all the feelings associated with your abandonment. This will free you from the old wounds, so that you won't need to replay your past in your present.

Limit Setting/Self Assertion

- 1) I set limits for myself. T
- 2) I don't allow myself to be walked on. T
- 3) I allow myself to be taken over or controlled by my partner. F
- 4) I feel afraid to put my foot down. F
- 5) I often say and do what others want and resent it later. F
- 6) I don't feel guilty when I set limits for myself. T

Wrong answers in the last section indicate problem with setting limits and asserting yourself. Here are some reasons why you may find it hard to put your foot down: Your role model (mom or dad) was a doormat who never showed you how to take care of yourself; you have a twisted sense of what it means to be a good Christian and have taken the concept of turning the other cheek to an unhealthy extreme; or you were punished as a child for trying to stick up for yourself. Figure out which of my theories applies and then work on resolving the problem that fits your case.

Boundaries

- 1) I expect my partners to think and feel the way I do. F
- 2) I accept that my partner is different from me. T
- 3) I think my partner should be able to read my mind. F
- 4) I don't think that I should be able to read my partner's mind. T
- 5) I expect my partner to know what I want without my having to say it. F

Wrong answers in this last section mean you have boundary issues. To have a happy relationship, it's vital that you are clear on the distinction between you and other people. Separation of self and other is a normal part of growing up. Infants are one with their mothers, then by around age two, they begin to physically and emotionally separate. If something goes wrong with the separation process, a person doesn't develop clear ego boundaries. Sometimes a person may not completely separate because of a strong unconscious wish to return to a state of infancy and symbolically merge with mother. The wish to merge with mother is usually the result of profound emotional deprivation--a feeling of never having had a strong connection with mom during infancy. The wish to remain merged can also come from having had a smothering parent who never allowed you to separate. Symptoms of blurred ego boundaries include: treating people like they are an extension of yourself by expecting them to read your mind and/or assuming or expecting others to read your mind or think and feel the way you do. Blurring the boundaries between self and other leads to all kinds of relationship disturbances, including confusion, arguments, and so on. To heal this problem, you need to cultivate your boundaries. To do this, observe yourself when you're relating to your partner. Keep checking in with yourself to make sure that you aren't assuming that you know how the other person feels and/or assuming that the other person knows how you feel.

Self-Control

- 1) When I'm upset, I say and do things that I can't seem to control. F
- 2) I don't say and do things that I later regret. T
- 3) When I am angry, I become physically abusive with my partner. F

- 4) I don't get into physical fights. T
- 5) When I'm angry, I kick objects or break things. F
- 6) I do not become verbally abusive and put down, attack, or criticize my partner. T
- 7) I have trouble controlling my sexual urges and behave in ways that I later regret. F
- 8) I don't abuse food, drugs or alcohol. T
- 9) I can control my spending. T
- 10) My gambling is out of control. F
- 11) I say what's on my mind no matter what the consequences. F
- 12) I have received a DWI or DWAI (driving while intoxicated or while under the influence of alcohol). F
- 13) I don't engage in risky activities that could put others or me in danger. T
- 14) I try to think before I speak. T

Any wrong answers in the last section indicate a lack of control over your urges. A major component of the mature psyche is the ability to control one's impulses. When we begin life, no impulse control exists at all. If a baby is angry, he or she kicks and punches. As we mature, we are supposed to learn how to manage our impulses so that they are under our conscious control. The ideal to which we all must strive is to gain control over our urges. This means that when we are upset, we don't say or do anything unless it is consciously chosen. Instead of acting out, flying off the handle, or engaging in other impulsive acts, you want to develop the ability to consider the effect of your intended action and ask yourself whether it will benefit you and the relationship. If the intended action is good for you and bad for your partner, then the intended action needs to be resisted, since hurting your partner hurts you in the end. The rule of thumb is only say or do what you know will benefit your relationship. Controlling your impulses takes tremendous self-discipline, but like a muscle, discipline grows stronger with practice. The better you get at controlling yourself, the better your life and relationships will become.

<u>Anger</u>

- 1) I feel angry a lot of the time. F
- 2) I don't have temper tantrums. T
- 3) I hold grudges. F
- 4) I don't have a lot of enemies. T
- 5) I find myself picking fights. F
- 6) I have been told that I lay guilt trips on people. F
- 7) I don't often feel like a victim. T
- 8) I lay blame on my partner. F

Wrong answers in the last section tell us that the way you handle your anger is a problem. When used constructively, anger is a potent force that can be channeled into productive activity and assertive actions. Unfortunately, most of us mishandle our anger and allow it to

become a destructive force, such as when raw anger is directed at a loved one in the form of physical or verbal attacks. Other forms of mismanaged anger include grudge keeping, which is so destructive of a relationship; laying guilt trips and playing the blame game, which are indirect ways of releasing anger that are sure to drive people away from you. Playing the victim is yet another indirect way of releasing anger. Under the guise of the sufferer, the victim's "woe is me" plea is actually a way of pointing the finger and saying, "Look, you bastard, see how I'm suffering, and it's all your fault!" The receiver of the victim's pleas actually registers the accusation and feels guilty and then enraged, which doesn't foster a connection. Anger directed back at the self in the form of self-attack, self-destructive actions, accidents, depression, and anxiety are equally destructive and make life a living hell. The only way out of this mess is to become the master of your angry feelings so that you can transform them into communications that benefit you and your relationships. To become a master of your anger, you must first identify all the ways in which you aren't handling your anger well. Do a self-analysis and identify how you are destructive to yourself or to your partner. Next, observe yourself in action so that you catch yourself just before you start to mismanage your anger. Then stop and say to yourself. "I'm angry now. Let me understand what was said or done to trigger my anger." When you understand why you feel as you do, make a conscious choice regarding the most constructive use for the feeling. If you decide that it would benefit you and the relationship to speak about your feeling, then here's how:

Ice Breaker: Start with an Ice Breaker, so you're not seen as a you-know-what breaker. The Ice Breaker enables you to test the waters to see if your partner is ready to talk with you. Here's a good Ice Breaker: "I need your input on a problem I'm having. Do you have a couple of minutes to talk with me now?" If the answer is no, make a date to talk later that day.

Lead-In: A statement that recognizes your partner's positive traits, especially those traits that will come in handy during your discussion. For example, you could say, "I admire your creativity when it comes to solving a problem and that skill will be invaluable for our talk."

Disclaimer: The Disclaimer is a positive statement that puts your partner at ease by lowering defenses rather than raising them. The Disclaimer says, "I'm not here to deprive you of vital bodily parts! I'm friend, not foe." A Disclaimer sounds like, "I'm sure you didn't mean to offend me...or I'm sure you didn't realize that..."

X,Y Formula (Problem Statement): When talking about what made you angry, be calm and concise. Above all, word your Problem Statement so that you don't use the word YOU, so that your partner's ego won't get bruised. For example, "I felt X, when Y was said or done."

Suggestion for the Future: End your statement with a Suggestion for the Future so your partner knows how to avoid making the same mistake in the future.

Putting the Steps Together.

Ice Breaker: "Honey, Do you have a minute to talk?"

Partner says yes.

Lead In: "You're such a good problem solver, and I can use your skill with a problem that I'm

having."

Disclaimer: "I know that you care for me and would never hurt me on purpose..."

X,Y Formula: "But, when X is said or done, I feel Y."

Suggestion for the Future: "And in the future, I'd feel so much more connected if you said or did..."

Tip: If your partner becomes defensive, apply First Aid right away by asking your partner to explain what you said or did that landed wrong. When your partner explains, listen, repeat what your partner said and ask if you have understood, then ask if you can try again using different words.

I know the steps seem overwhelming at first, but with practice the process will become second nature and you will soon find it easy to dialogue about your anger in a way that benefits you and the relationship.

Fidelity

- 1) I have a habit of cheating on my partners. F
- 2) I find it easy to stay faithful to one person. T

Wrong answers in the last section mean that you have a resistance to remaining faithful to one person. There are several reasons why this may be an issue for you. Since intimate relationships bring up strong feelings of all kinds, you may find yourself exiting the relationship in order to escape your feelings. If this sounds like your case, see the section on self- control to learn how you can develop more ability to tolerate strong feelings. You may also be exiting because you are afraid of intimacy and commitment. If this applies to you, read that section for help with this type of problem. It is also possible that you leave relationships before you get left. If this is your issue, then you are suffering from a fear of rejection or abandonment. If this is your issue, see that section for more information on how to heal your problem.

Past Relationships

1) I was burned by a past relationship and can't seem to let it go. F

- 2) I was involved in a previously abusive relationship that 3) I am afraid will interfere with future relationships. F
- 4) I lost a spouse (or lover) to death and can't seem to get over it. F

Wrong answers in this last section tell us that you have some unfinished business from a previous relationship that's preventing you from being fully connected in present day relationships. The fact that you still have one foot stuck in the past says that you were traumatized by what happened to you. The mind reacts to trauma by holding on to it and reliving it until it's worked through. You haven't moved on because you haven't healed yet. Time doesn't heal. Talking does. So start talking about what happened and allow yourself to feel all the feelings associated with the experience. If you still find that you can't let go, then that's a sign that your recent loss has triggered an even earlier trauma from childhood. The mind works by unconscious association and even though you may not be aware of it, your mind may be holding on to the more recent trauma in order to force you to pay attention and focus on healing the wound you suffered as a child. When you have healed the recent and remote traumas, you will finally be able to put the past to rest and live more fully in the present.

Communication Skills

- 1) I make one-sided decisions that affect my partner without talking it over first. F
- 2) I know how I feel. T
- 3) I am comfortable saying how I feel. T
- 4) I don't let my partner in when I'm upset. F
- 5) I am a good listener. T
- 6) When I'm angry with someone else, I take it out on my partner. F
- 7) After a disagreement, I give my partner the silent treatment for days. F
- 8) When I'm upset, I don't blurt out what's bugging me without considering the consequences. T
- 9) I keep my feelings to myself and then blow up later. F
- 10) I don't pay back my partner when I'm mad. T
- 11) I become defensive when my partners tell me what I did or said that upset them. F
- 12) I don't brush my feelings under the rug rather than discuss them. T

Wrong answers to the questions above means that your communication skills are weak. Awareness of a deficit is the first step toward improvement. If your problem is not knowing how you feel, check in with yourself every ten minutes and ask yourself, "How am I feeling?" Just asking will teach you to tune in to yourself. You will soon begin to realize that you do know how you feel; you just weren't paying attention to yourself. If you aren't a good listener, practice listening skills (mirroring back exactly what you heard, and repeating what was said with slightly different words). Then check with your partner to make sure you have heard and understood. If your partner says you still aren't getting it, keep replaying and repeating until you do. Soon you'll be a listening pro. Remember, the bedrock of good

communication is good listening skills. If your issue is that you are afraid to share how you feel, you are probably afraid that you will be harmed or that you will do harm by opening up. Learning how to communicate correctly will ease your fear of harming another person or being harmed. Read my discussion of anger, which describes the right way to communicate all of your feelings, not just anger.

Conflict Resolution Skills

- 1) When a conflict arises, I give in to avoid trouble. F
- 2) When a conflict arises, I try to win at all costs. F
- 3) When a conflict arises, I like to resolve disagreements by talking the issue out. T
- 4) I am willing to accept hearing my partner's opinion even if it differs from mine. T

Wrong answers in this last section mean unresolved conflict erodes connection more than anything else. Whether you're a conflict avoider or somebody who tries to win at all costs, if you want a happy relationship you need to learn how to resolve your conflicts. To resolve your conflicts, you must learn to present your issues in a way that makes your partner want to hear you and to work with you to achieve a resolution. See my section on anger for a full discussion of how to do this.

<u>Humility</u>

- 1) I am able to admit when I've made a mistake. T
- 2) I accept that I don't know everything. T
- 3) I am not willing to learn from my mistakes. F
- 4) I am willing to have my shortcomings or mistakes pointed out to me. T

Wrong answers in this last section mean that you have difficulty accepting that you make mistakes. Admitting to your mistakes and accepting responsibility for your own errors is a necessary relationship skill. Why? If your partner tries to tell you something that you said or did that was upsetting and you can't hear what you're being told, and if you become defensive and self-justifying, your partner is going to feel frustrated and angry with you, which will cause more heated accusations, more refusal to accept responsibility, and in no time you'll find yourself caught in chronic fighting. To avoid this downward spiral, you need to accept responsibility for your own errors. Keep in mind that accepting that you have made mistakes can only happen if your ego is strong. If you have a strong ego, your self doesn't totally fall to bits in the face of failure, small or large. If, however, your self is weak, you can't allow yourself to admit that you might be wrong--that would be too crushing for your fragile self. The real question is how can you shore up your ego. One good way is to surround yourself with loving and supportive people; you also need to stop tearing your self down with misdirected anger and negative self-talk. When you are stronger, you will find it easier

to admit your mistakes.

By the way, you may find it easier to accept responsibility for your mistakes when I remind you that your partner's feelings aren't wrong or right, they just need to be accepted and understood (the same is true of your feelings). When your partner tells you that you said or did something that felt hurtful, all you need do is accept your partner's feelings. Accepting that what you said or did had a negative impact on your partner doesn't mean that you're bad; it just means that what you said or did landed badly. The issue isn't whether you intended to do harm. Given your partner's history and unique sensitivities that arise from that history, what you said or did plucked a painful chord. I often say to my patients, imagine we're walking down the street and I trip by accident and fall on your foot and break it. Your foot still hurts and you're mad that it's broken. I didn't mean to do it, but that has nothing to do with how you feel. Understand that your partner's feelings aren't wrong or right, they aren't to be judged, but simply need to be understood. When your partner feels that you are willing to accept responsibility for the impact that your words and actions had, you will be eliminating a huge source of conflict and heightening your level of connection.

Intimacy Issues

- 1) I am afraid to get too close to others. F
- 2) When I get close to others, I have a pattern of pulling away or taking a break from the relationship. F
- 3) I feel emotionally connected to the people in my life. T
- 4) I have a good support system of friends and/or family. T
- 5) I am afraid to love others. F
- 6) I run from people who try to love me. F

Wrong answers in the last section mean that you are struggling with a fear of intimacy. Fear of intimacy is usually a symptom of other issues such as fear of being rejected or abandoned. By avoiding becoming too close, your unconscious mind thinks that it's protecting you from an even worse pain--the pain you'll suffer when your loved one leaves you. See my discussion of Fear of Rejection and Fear of Abandonment to understand more about how to resolve these problems. Another cause of fear of intimacy comes from having had an overbearing parent who smothered you when you were young. The result of this kind of early experience is a terror of becoming too close because you're afraid of being swallowed up or taken over. To heal this type of problem, keep talking about the fear of being taken over and have your partner encourage you to say what you need for yourself from moment to moment. Obviously, you can't have all the space you want at every moment and still remain in a relationship, but what you can do is put the problem on the table so that you and your partner are conscious of your issue and working together to compromise so that both your needs are answered as much as possible. The goal is for you to learn that you can be close without being taken over. Having the right partner to work this out with will help you

to heal the fear, and you will soon be more comfortable with intimacy.

Commitment Issues

- 1) I resist getting married. F
- 2) I choose partners who won't commit to me. F
- 3) I have been in more than two relationships that didn't work out. F

Wrong answers in the last section mean that you're conflicted about committing. You avoid tying the knot by either choosing partners who won't commit to you or by avoiding commitment yourself. The resistance to commit is similar to fear of intimacy, which itself is often caused by a fear of being rejected or abandoned. As I explain in my fear of intimacy discussion, by avoiding becoming too close, your unconscious mind thinks that it's protecting you from an even worse pain--the pain you'll suffer when your loved one leaves you. See my discussion of Fear of Abandonment and Intimacy Issues to understand more about how to resolve these problems. Another cause of fear of commitment comes from having had an overbearing parent, who smothered your self. The result of this kind of early experience is a fear of becoming too close, for fear of being swallowed up or taken over. To the unconscious mind, marriage is seen as a total loss of self. To heal this problem work on telling your partner what you need for yourself from moment to moment. Obviously, you can't have all the space you want at every moment and still remain in a relationship, but what you can do is put the issue on the table so that you and your partner are working at all times to help you make room for yourself (while not annihilating your partner). The goal is for you to learn that you can be close without being taken over. Having the right partner to work this out with will help you to heal your fear, and you will soon be more comfortable to commit.

Childhood Wounds/ Repetition Compulsion

- 1) I repeatedly choose people who are wrong for me. F
- 2) No matter how much a relationship hurts me, I find it hard to let it go. F
- 3) I seek out relationships with people who treat me nicely. T
- 4) I choose partners who won't give me what I want (commitment, etc). F
- 5) I choose people who won't allow me to get close to them. F
- 6) I choose partners who are jealous and suspicious. F
- 7) I choose the same type of person over and over again. F
- 8) I choose control freaks for partners. F
- 9) I still feel upset over how I was treated as a child. F
- 10) I expect my partners to treat me in the same harmful way that my parents did. F
- 11) I choose people who bully and intimidate me. F
- 12) I choose partners who hit me. F
- 13) I'm afraid my partners will hit me. F

- 14) I choose partners who won't commit to me. F
- 15) I choose partners who cheat on me. F
- 16) I choose partners who are irresponsible. F
- 17) I choose partners who behave recklessly (e.g. drive too fast). F
- 18) I choose partners who are in trouble with the law. F
- 19) I choose partners who have received a DWI or DWAI (driving while intoxicated or while under the influence of alcohol) F
- 20) I choose partners who have had two or more previous relationships that didn't work out.

 F
- 21) I choose partners who don't respect me. F
- 22) I choose partners who have bad tempers. F
- 23) I choose partners who emotionally hurt me or let me down. F
- 24) I'm ready to settle down, but I always seem to find people who don't want commitment or marriage. F
- 25) My partners lay guilt trips on me. F
- 26) I choose partners who don't work. F
- 27) I choose partners who use me. F
- 28) I have a good relationship with my mother. (If mother is deceased, I had a good relationship with my mother). T
- 29) I have a good relationship with my father (If father is deceased, I had a good relationship with my father). T

Any wrong answers to the last section mean that you are suffering from a Repetition Compulsion, which refers to the unconscious compulsion to recreate or repeat the most painful aspects of your childhood. Freud was the first to notice that the human psyche tries to relive traumatic events in order to work through the feelings associated with the trauma. We also relive the past in an attempt to achieve what I call a "Happy Ending" this time around. Here's what happens. First you choose a partner who emotionally resembles the parent or parents who let you down (I call this Setting the Stage). Because your partner is similar to your parent(s) you are soon replaying the worst aspect of your childhood. If, for example, your dad neglected you, you will choose a cold lover or spouse. Soon you're feeling the same hurt that you did as a child, but because you live under the fantasy that this time around you're going to succeed in getting your lover or spouse to give you the attention that dad never did, so you don't give up. No matter how much your partner disappoints, hurts or harms you, you hang in there and try even harder to be good, kind, giving, and loving, hoping that you will finally be rewarded with your Happy Ending. But the Happy Ending never comes, precisely because your partner is as damaged and limited as your parent was. But still you don't give up because giving up on your partner feels like giving up the hope of healing your childhood wound. The only way out of this tail chasing scenario is to realize that you are never going to get what you want so long as you keep choosing partners (or choose to stay with a partner) who resemble the parent or parents who let you down. Next, you need to learn how to give yourself the kind of love and care you lacked as a kid. If you find it impossible to do this for yourself, then you need a good therapist who can help you to heal.

When your well is filled, you will no longer feel compelled to choose partners who don't care for you properly. Then and only then will you be free of the Repetition Compulsion and ready for a healthy, give and take relationship.

Productivity

- 1) I feel fulfilled by what I do in life. T
- 2) I need an income but have no intention of working. F
- 3) I have been out of work for some time. F
- 4) I have been fired from more than one job. F
- 5) I have a purpose in life. T

Wrong answers in the last section indicate that lack of productivity is an issue for you. If you choose not to work, but need an income, you may unconsciously be looking for someone to take care of you. The cause of this expectation can be traced back to childhood, when you were either not taken care of properly or you were overindulged. If your issue is not having been taken care of properly, you need to do inner child healing so that you yourself care for the abandoned child inside. If you were overindulged and never learned to do for yourself, then there's no time like the present to begin to grow up. Yes, it's frustrating to do for yourself, but the pay offs are enormous, including maturing to the point that you're ready to establish a healthy relationship. If you've been fired more than once, you need to figure out why. Do you have a problem tolerating the frustration that arises at any job? Do you have an impulse problem that leads you to say and/or do whatever comes into your head without considering the consequences? Has your impulsiveness angered the boss and been the cause of your getting fired? Do you get fired because you don't put out enough effort? Is lack of effort a sign that you are depressed or an indication that you aren't accustomed to tolerating the frustration that goes along with doing a job really well? If you said that you have no purpose in life, make sure that your lack of purpose isn't a cover for being depressed. When you identify the cause or causes of your lack of productivity and then take steps to solve the underlying problem. Becoming more productive will have a positive impact on all your relationships.

Charity

- 1) I enjoy giving to others. T
- 2) I like engaging in charitable acts. T
- 3) I contribute to society. T

Wrong answers in this section mean that charity is not a sufficient part of your life. People who engage in charitable acts enjoy better health and greater self-esteem. You need to engage in more charitable activities in order to feel more whole.

<u>Leisure</u>

- 1) I have hobbies that I enjoy. T
- 2) I have non-work related activities that I enjoy. T

Wrong answers in the last section mean that you don't have enough leisure pursuits in your life. It has been said that in order to be a happy adult, you need to engage in the activities that you enjoyed as a child. Play more and enjoy your now moments. Becoming more playful and having fun will make you a more enjoyable person to be around, which will draw people to you and make you a relationship magnet.