The Gottman 19 Areas Checklist for Solvable and Perpetual Problems

Instructions. Please think about how things are **RIGHT NOW** in each of the following areas of your relationship. Think about each area of your life together, and decide if this area is fine or if it needs improvement. For each of the statements below, check the box that best describes your relationship.

1. **We are □ staying emotionally connected, or □ becoming emotionally distant.**
   Check all the specific items below:
   - Just simply talking to each other.
   - Staying emotionally in touch with each other.
   - Feeling taken for granted.
   - Don’t feel my partner knows me very well right now.
   - Partner is (or I am) emotionally disengaged.
   - Spending time together.

   Not a problem □ Is a problem □

   Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.

2. **We are □ handling job and other stresses effectively, or □ experiencing the “spill-over” of other stresses.**
   Check all the specific items below:
   - Helping each other reduce daily stresses.
   - Talking about these stresses together.
   - Talking together about stress in a helpful manner.
   - Partner listening with understanding about my stresses and worries.
   - Partner takes job or other stresses out on me.
   - Partner takes job or other stresses out on others in our life.

   Not a problem □ Is a problem □

   Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.
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- Partner takes job or other stresses out on me.
- Partner takes job or other stresses out on others in our life.

Not a problem □ Is a problem □

Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.
3. **We are □ handling issues or disagreements well, or □ gridlocking on one or more issues.**

   *Check all the specific items below:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not a problem</th>
<th>Is a problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Differences have arisen between us that feel very basic.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These differences seem unresolvable.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are living day-to-day with hurts.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our positions are getting entrenched.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It looks like I will never get what I hope for.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am very worried that these issues may damage our relationship.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   *Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.*

4. **Our relationship □ is romantic and passionate, or □ is becoming passionless; the fire is going out.**

   *Check all the specific items below:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not a problem</th>
<th>Is a problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My partner has stopped being verbally affectionate.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner expresses love or admiration less frequently.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We rarely touch each other.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner (or I) have stopped feeling very romantic.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We rarely cuddle.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have few tender or passionate moments.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   *Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.*

5. **□ Our sex life is fine, or □ There are problems in this area.**

   *Check all the specific items below:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not a problem</th>
<th>Is a problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The frequency of sex.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The satisfaction I (or my partner) get from sex.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being able to talk about sexual problems.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The two of us wanting different things sexually.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems of desire.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The amount of love in our lovemaking.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   *Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.*
6. An important event (e.g., changes in job or residence, the loss of a job or loved one, an illness) has occurred in our lives. □ Yes □ No

The relationship □ is dealing with this well or □ is not dealing with this well

Check all the specific items below:

- We have very different points of view on how to handle things.
- This event has led my partner to be very distant.
- This event has made us both irritable.
- This event has led to a lot of fighting.
- I’m worried about how this will all turn out.
- We are now taking up very different positions.

Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.

7. Major issues about children have arisen (this could be about whether to be parents). □ Yes □ No

The relationship □ is dealing with this well or □ is not dealing with this well

Check all the specific items below:

- We have very different points of view on goals for children.
- We have different positions on what to discipline children for.
- We have different positions on how to discipline children.
- We have issues about how to be close to our children.
- We are not talking about these issues very well.
- There is a lot of tension or anger about these differences.

Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.

8. Major issues/events have arisen about in-laws, a relative, or relatives.

□ Yes □ No

The relationship □ is dealing with this well or □ is not dealing with this well

Check all the specific items below:

- I feel unaccepted by my partner’s family.
- I sometimes wonder which family my partner is in.
- I feel unaccepted by my own family.
- There is tension between us about what might happen.
- This issue has generated a lot of irritability.
- I am worried about how this is going to turn out.

Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.
9. □ Being attracted to other people or jealousy is not an issue, or □ My partner is flirtatious or there may be a recent extra-relationship affair

Check all the specific items below:

- This area is a source of a lot of hurt.
- This is an area that creates insecurity.
- I can’t deal with the lies.
- It is hard to re-establish trust.
- There is a feeling of betrayal.
- It’s hard to know how to heal this.

Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.

10. □ There has been a recent extra-relationship affair (or I suspect there is one), or □ This is not an issue

Check all the specific items below:

- This is a source of a lot of pain.
- This has created insecurity.
- I can’t deal with the deception and lying.
- I can’t stop being angry.
- I can’t deal with my partner’s anger.
- I want this to be over but it seems to never end.
- I am tired of apologizing.
- It’s hard to trust again.
- I feel that our relationship has been violated.
- It is hard to know how to heal this.

Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.

11. When disagreements arise, □ we resolve issues well, or □ unpleasant fights have occurred

Check all the specific items below:

- There are more fights now.
- The fights seem to come out of nowhere.
- Anger and irritability have crept into our relationship.
- We get into muddles where we are hurting each other.
- I don’t feel very respected lately.
- I feel criticized.

Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.
12. ☐ We are in synchrony on basic values and goals, or ☐ Differences between us in these areas or in desired lifestyle are emerging.

Check all the specific items below:

Not a problem | Is a problem
---|---
Differences have arisen in life goals. | ☐ ☐
Differences have arisen about important beliefs. | ☐ ☐
Differences have arisen on leisure time interests. | ☐ ☐
We seem to be wanting different things out of life. | ☐ ☐
We are growing in different directions. | ☐ ☐
I don’t much like who I am with my partner. | ☐ ☐

Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.

13. Very hard events (for example, violence, drugs, an affair) have occurred within the relationship. ☐ Yes ☐ No

The relationship ☐ is dealing with this well or ☐ is not dealing with this well

Check all the specific items below:

Not a problem | Is a problem
---|---
There has been physical violence between us. | ☐ ☐
There is a problem with alcohol or drugs. | ☐ ☐
This is turning into a relationship I hadn’t bargained for. | ☐ ☐
The “contract” of our couple’s relationship is changing. | ☐ ☐
I find some of what my partner wants upsetting or repulsive. | ☐ ☐
I am now feeling somewhat disappointed by this relationship. | ☐ ☐

Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.

14. We ☐ work well as a team, or ☐ are not working very well as a team right now

Check all the specific items below:

Not a problem | Is a problem
---|---
We used to share more of the household’s workload. | ☐ ☐
We seem to be pulling in opposite directions. | ☐ ☐
My partner does not share in housework or family chores. | ☐ ☐
My partner is not carrying weight financially. | ☐ ☐
I feel alone in managing our family. | ☐ ☐
My partner is not being very considerate. | ☐ ☐

Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.
15. □ We are coping well with issues of power or influence, or □ We are having trouble in this area
   
   Check all the specific items below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not a problem</th>
<th>Is a problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don’t feel influential in decisions we make.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner has become more domineering.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have become more demanding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner has become passive.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner is “spacey,” not a strong force in our relationship.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am starting to care a lot more about who is running things.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.

16. □ We are handling issues of finances well, or □ We are having trouble in this area
   
   Check all the specific items below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not a problem</th>
<th>Is a problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I or my partner just doesn’t bring in enough money.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have differences about how to spend our money.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are stressed about finances.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner is financially more interested in him/herself than in us.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are not united in managing our finances.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is not enough financial planning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.

17. □ We are doing well having fun together, or □ not having very much fun together
   
   Check all the specific items below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not a problem</th>
<th>Is a problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We don’t seem to have very much time for fun.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We try, but don’t seem to enjoy our times together very much.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We are too stressed for fun.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work takes up all our time these days.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our interests are so different now that there are no fun things we like to do together.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We plan fun things to do, but they never happen.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.
18. We are □ feeling close in building/being a part of the community together, or □ not feeling close in building/being a part of the community together

Check all the specific items below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not a problem</th>
<th>Is a problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Being involved with friends and other people or groups.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring about the institutions that build communities.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting time into the institutions of community (e.g., school, agencies).</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing projects or work for charity.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing other good deeds for members of the community.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking a leadership role in the service of community.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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19. We are □ feeling very close in the area of spirituality together, or □ not doing well in that area these days

Check all the specific items below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not a problem</th>
<th>Is a problem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing the same beliefs.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeing about religious ideas and values.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues about specific house of worship (mosque, church, synagogue).</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating well about spiritual things.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues that are about spiritual growth and change.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual issues involving our family.</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments, and if things are fine, describe how you are managing this area of your lives. If things are not fine, describe the obstacles you see to improving this area of your relationship.