

# Romantic Make-Over

*By Barrington H. BRennen, February 2, 2005*

Do you feel that your relationship needs a romantic make-over? Or do you just need a romantic brushup? Then this is the time of the year for a romantic checkup, and the romantic doctor is here to help you. To have a romantic make-over or brushup, a couple must be willing to listen and adjust and invest the time and energy to do so. I am hoping that the information in this article will help couples to start on that journey of renewal and growth.

## QUESTIONS TO PONDER

Is your relationship what you want it to be? Is it hot and spicy or dull and boring? Is it vibrant or mediocre? On a scale of "1" to "10" ("1" being extremely bad and "10" being excellent), how would you rate the health of your marriage? The happiest couples are not problem-free but pain free. The happiest couples are happy because they recognize their weaknesses and vulnerability and invest time, money, and energy to enrich their relationships. They are flexible, open-minded, and do not take for granted each other's needs. During the past twelve months, how much time did you invest in your relationship? Did you have weekly dates? Compared to other financial investments, how much money did you spend to buy books, videos, go to seminars, dates, or even purchase gifts or cards? Did you spend time passionately kissing without sex on the agenda? Did you spend time cuddling and caressing each other? Unfortunately, too many couples are romantically starved. They have drifted apart over the years. Some couples are emotionally divorced. They live together and perhaps sleep in the same bed, but there is a thick emotional wall that separates them. Sex is sporadic, if any at all. Spontaneous, interactive conversation is nil. Voices of laughter are seldom if ever heard in the house. Some couples are only "sticking together for the children," but there is no "glue" holding them.

## YOUR RELATIONSHIP CAN CHANGE

Dear friend if your marriage is hurting, you can choose to have a romantic make-over. Your marriage can move from the parched desert of indifference to the cool flowing waters of romantic love and caring. You can climb out of the deep valley of stubbornness and rigidity to the high mountain of passionate love where you can feel the cool breezes of mutuality, harmony, and companionship. You can learn how to feed your romantically starved relationship with the daily diet of gentle conversation, affirmation, kissing, holding hands, and prayer.

Below is a questionnaire for couples that you and your partner can answer. Answer them alone. Meditate on them with an open heart then share, non-judgmentally, your answers with your spouse. Commit yourself to adjusting or enriching where appropriate. The questionnaire is adopted from the book "If Only He Knew" by Dr. Gary Smalley.

## Questionnaire for Couples

*Answer YES or NO each question, then check your score below*

1. Do you make your spouse feel good about himself/herself? [ ] Yes [ ] No
2. Do you value the same things in your spouse that you value in yourself? [ ] Yes [ ] No
3. Does your face spontaneously break into a smile when you see your spouse? [ ] Yes [ ] No
4. When you leave home, does your spouse have a sense of well-being, having been nourished by your company? [ ] Yes [ ] No

5. Can you and your spouse tell each other honestly what you really want instead of using manipulation or games? [  ]Yes [  ]No
6. Can your spouse get angry at you with your thinking less of him/her? [  ]Yes [  ]No
7. Can you accept your spouse as she/he is instead of having several plans to redo him/her? [  ]Yes [  ]No
8. Do your actions show you really care for your spouse? [  ]Yes [  ]No
9. Do you enjoy introducing your spouse to your friends or acquaintances? [  ]Yes [  ]No
10. Are you able to share with your spouse your moments of weakness, failure, disappointment? [  ]Yes [  ]No
11. Would your spouse say you are a good listener? [  ]Yes [  ]No
12. Do you trust your spouse to solve his/her own problems? [  ]Yes [  ]No
13. Do you admit to your spouse you have problems and need his/her comfort? [  ]Yes [  ]No
14. Do you encourage your spouse to develop his/her full potential? [  ]Yes [  ]No
15. Do you believe that you could live a full and happy life without your spouse? [  ]Yes [  ]No
16. Are you able to learn from your spouse and value what she/he says? [  ]Yes [  ]No
17. If your spouse should die tomorrow, would you be very happy you had a chance to meet him/her and to marry him/her? [  ]Yes [  ]No
18. Does your spouse feel she's more important than anyone or anything else in your life? [  ]Yes [  ]No
19. Do you believe you know at least five of your spouse's major needs and how to meet those needs in a skillful way? [  ]Yes [  ]No
20. Do you know what your spouse needs when he's/she's under stress or when he's/she's discouraged? [  ]Yes [  ]No
21. When you offend your spouse, do you usually admit you were wrong and seek his/her forgiveness? [  ]Yes [  ]No
22. Would your spouse say you praise him/her at least once a day? [  ]Yes [  ]No
23. Would your spouse say you are open to his/her corrections? [  ]Yes [  ]No
24. Would your spouse say you are a protector, that you know what his/her limitations are as a man/woman? [  ]Yes [  ]No
25. Would your spouse say you enjoy being with him/her and sharing many of life's experiences with him/her? [  ]Yes [  ]No
26. Would your spouse say you are a good example of what you would like him/her to be? [  ]Yes [  ]No
27. Would your spouse say you create interest in her/him when you share things you consider important? [  ]Yes [  ]No

If your answer is Yes to 10 or less of the questions, then your relationship is in a major need of an overhaul.  
 If your answer is Yes to 11 to 19 of the questions, then your relationship needs improvement.  
 If your answer is Yes to 20 or more of the questions, then you're probably on your way to a good, lasting relationship.

### **TIPS FOR ROMANTIC MAKE-OVER OR ENRICHMENT**

Dear reader, I hope these questions caused you to think. If it did, put down the paper and get to work? If the sum total of your answers was 0 and 19, you may need to see a counselor, buy a book, watch a video,

or attend a seminar to save your marriage. One of the best ways to help you learn more about yourself, your partner and your relationship is to take the scientific inventory called **ENRICH**. It is designed to identify strengths in your relationship and problematic issues for you to discuss with your partner. It is the world's best inventory for couples written by Dr. David Olsen of Minnesota. To find out how you can take **ENRICH** call Barrington Brennen at 323 8772.

Here are two books I recommend highly for all couples: 1) "His Needs Her Needs" by Dr. Willard Harley, available at all Christian book stores in the Bahamas. 2) "Empowering Couples" by Dr. David Olsen, available at The Vestry Book Store and the Adventist Book and Nutrition Center. Here are two videos I recommend for each couple to watch: 1) "A Vow to Cherish" available at most Christian books stores in the Bahamas. 2) "Preacher's Wife" available on the internet or can be rented at most video stores.

Here are more practical things you can do to better your relationship. 1) Select one day of the week as your date night. Let nothing interfere with it. Be creative in your nights/dates together. By the end of the year you should have had at least 52 dates of intense romantic times together. 2) Spend fifteen to thirty-seconds in passionate kissing each day. 3) Spend ten to twenty minutes engaged in active conversation each day. Share what occurred in each other's lives during the day, on the job, at home, etc. 4) Sit closely together (cuddly manner) while at home for at least ten to fifteen minutes each day. 5) Sit together in church each week. 6) Hold hands while together in public. 7) Use romantic terms to refer to each other, even while in public. For example "honey," "dear," "sweetie." 8) Make sure you go to bed (at night) at the same time at least once or twice a week, even if you remain awake for a while watching a movie or reading a book together. Let it be something done together. 9) Take the time to pray and have devotions as a couple each day. 10) Find something special or motivational to say to your spouse at least once every day.

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