

## *Your Relationship Vision*

This exercise will help you focus on your hopes and strengths as a couple.

Do this exercise together.

1. Take out two sheets of paper, one for each of you. Working separately, write a series of short sentences that describe your personal vision of a deeply satisfying love relationship. Include qualities you already have that you want to keep and qualities you wish you had. Write each sentence in the *present tense*, as if it were already happening. For example: "We have fun together," "We have great sex," "We are loving parents," "We are affectionate with each other." Make all your descriptions positive and affirmative. For example, write: "We settle our differences peacefully" rather than "We don't fight."
2. Share your sentences with each other. Note the items that you have in common and underline them. (It doesn't matter if you have used different words, as long as the general idea is the same.) If your partner has written sentences that you agree with but did not think of yourself, add them to your list. For the moment, ignore items that are not shared.
3. Now each of you turn to your own expanded list and rank each sentence (including the ones that are not shared) with a number from 1 to 5 according to its importance to you, with 1 indicating "very important and 5 indicating "not so important."
4. Circle the two items that are most important to you.
5. Put a check mark beside those items that you think would be most difficult for the two of you to achieve.
6. Now begin to design a mutual relationship vision together (see example below). At the top of the list are the items that you both agree are most important. Put a check mark by those items that you both agree would be difficult to achieve. At the bottom of the list, write items that are relatively unimportant. If you have items that are a source of conflict between you, see if you can come up with a compromise statement that satisfies both of you. If not, leave the item off your combined list.

### **Our Relationship Vision**

Bill		Jenny
1	We have fun together.	1
1	We settle our differences peacefully.	1
1	We have satisfying and intimate sex.	1
1	We are healthy and physically active.	1
1	We communicate openly.	1
1	We worship together.	1
1	We are each other's best friends.	1
1	We have secure and happy children.	1
2	We trust each other.	1
1	We are sexually faithful.	1
2	We both have satisfying careers.	2
2	We work well together as parents.	1
2	We share important decisions.	2
3	We have daily private time.	4
3	We feel safe with each other.	2
3	We are financially secure.	4
4	We live close to our parents.	5

7. Post this list where you can see it daily. At least once a week, read the list together. Note if you are having difficulty with an item you thought would be easy or whether an item you thought would be difficult occurred with little effort. Make changes on your list to note this. If you have written and saved your list on the computer, you can print a new one with the changes.

8. In our initial sessions, I will be asking you about this list with the goal to help you to make your relationship vision an active part of your lives with each other.