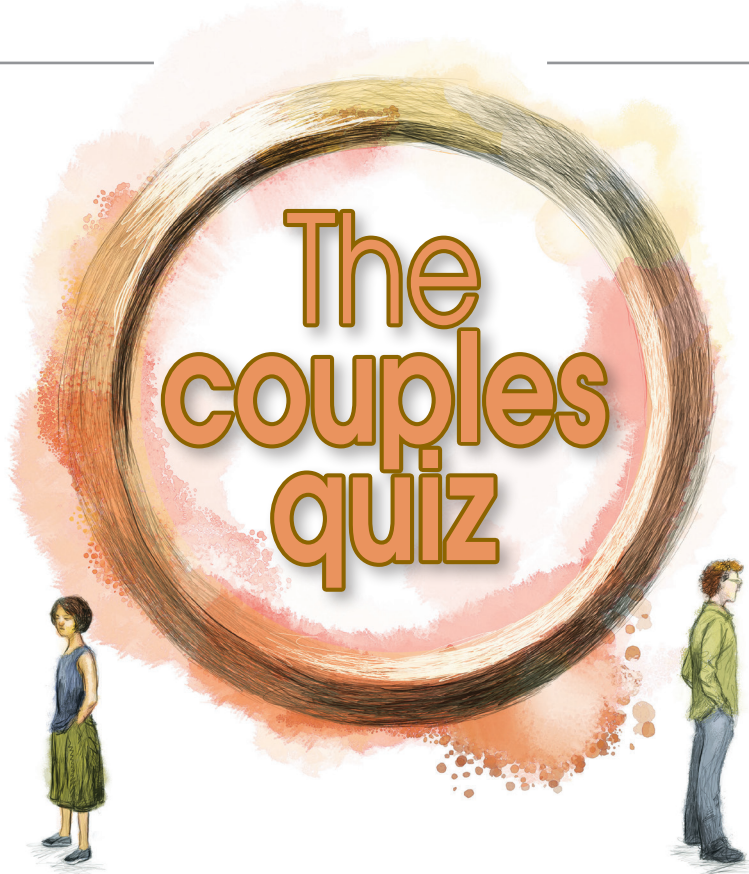


Fifty shades of intimacy:



• BATYA L. LUDMAN

While many young people in my practice are searching for their true love, my older couples come in hoping to recapture the love they once had.

Though in the past there may have been good communication in the living room and the bedroom, now their needs are no longer being met. The passion has dwindled, excitement has turned to boredom and their relationship feels stale, if not dead. Just look at how many people are online well after their children are asleep.

In celebration of my 250th column since initiating the first one at *The Jerusalem Post* 15 years ago, I've

created this short quiz. A great way to improve your relationship is by starting with a good, honest look at yourself; make two copies and ask your partner to take it as well.

Regarding how you would rate yourself over the past week, for each statement: Be honest, as you are the only one who needs to see the answers. Give yourself one point if you'd answer "never or definitely not true." Take two points if you'd answer "rarely," three if you'd answer "somewhat true or some of the time." If you'd say "mostly true or often" give yourself four points; finally, if you'd say "very true or always," take five points. Circle the points for each statement, then in the last column, jot down an example.

When you've both examined your role in main-

taining intimacy, connection and passion, perhaps you're ready to share your answers and have an honest discussion about what is working well – and what you'd like to work on.

Whether you can do it on your own or need the help of a professional, this is a great way to begin to grow as a couple and put the spark back in the relationship. I'm always happy to hear your feedback. Good luck!

The writer is a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice in Ra'anana and author of the book, Life's Journey: Exploring Relationships, Resolving Conflicts. She has written about psychology in The Jerusalem Post since 2000. ludman@netvision.net.il; www.drbatyaludman.com

This past week: 1 'never/definitely not true' • 2 'rarely' • 3 'somewhat true/some of the time' • 4 'mostly true/often' • 5 'very true/always'

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 I made my partner feel loved, valued and special. 2 I made my partner feel appreciated. 3 I made my partner feel safe and secure. 4 I showed my partner respect. 5 I gave my partner my full attention. 6 I asked for and valued my partner's opinion. 7 I listened to my partner with an open heart, not passing judgment or blame. 8 I thought about what I said before speaking, didn't blame or become angry. 9 I took my partner's feelings into account. I was considerate and understanding. 10 I gave my partner space without nagging or criticizing. 11 I complimented my partner, praising strengths and ignoring weaknesses. 12 I showed kindness and consideration to my partner. 13 I was responsive to my partner's needs and desires. 14 I was supportive of my partner. 15 I was patient and calm, and kept my tone and temper in check. 16 I was empathetic and put myself in my partner's shoes. 17 I stayed in a conversation even if it was difficult. 18 I shared my innermost thoughts and feelings. 19 I put my partner ahead of my technological gadgets. 20 I gave more than I took in our relationship. 21 I let things go that were not important in our relationship. 22 I worked to resolve issues. 23 I attempted to compromise. 24 I was flexible and open to new things. | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 25 I was honest and shared my true feelings. 26 I had realistic expectations for my partner. 27 I accepted my partner fully and was a good team member. 28 I examined my own role in our disagreements. 29 I handled disagreements appropriately. 30 I contributed to problem solving between us. 31 I took responsibility for my own behavior. 32 I put energy into my relationship. I made it a priority. 33 I initiated and helped plan a date with my partner. 34 I gave my partner hugs and kisses and showed affection. 35 I took the initiative in the bedroom. 36 I tried to satisfy my partner sexually. 37 I did something to spice up our sex life. 38 I was sexually responsive to my partner. 39 I enjoyed spending time with my partner alone. 40 I enjoyed showing my partner affection. 41 I enjoyed cuddling with my partner. 42 I was satisfied with our current level of physical intimacy. 43 I enjoyed the frequency of our physical intimacy. 44 I trusted my partner. 45 I am satisfied with the way my partner and I relate to each other. 46 I worked at staying connected and engaged in our relationship. 47 I had fun with my partner. 48 I tried to make my partner happy. 49 I saw my partner as my best friend. 50 I told my partner I loved him/her every day. | |
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