

Creating Your Relationship Vision

From: Getting the Love You Want by Harville Hendrix

Time: Approximately 60 minutes.

Purpose: This exercise will help you see the potential in your relationship.

Comments: Do this exercise together.

Directions:

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 items positive statements. Write "We settle our differences peacefully" rather than "We don't fight."
2. Share your sentences. 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 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 work together to design a mutual relationship vision similar to the following example. Start with 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

Partner 1

Partner 2

We have fun together.

We settle our differences peacefully.

We have satisfying and beautiful sex.

We are healthy and physically active.

We communicate easily and openly.

We worship together.

We are each other's best friends.

We have happy and secure children.

We trust each other.

We are sexually faithful.

We both have satisfying careers.

We work together well as parents.

We share important decisions.

We meet each other's deepest needs.

We have daily private time.

We feel safe with each other.

We are financially secure.

We live close to our parents.

We have similar political views.

Post this list where you can see it daily. Once a week, at the beginning of your work sessions, read it aloud to each other.