

## **EXERCISE : DO YOU HAVE A MIDDLE GROUND?**

Attitude survey:

On a scale of one to five where five means you agree strongly and one means you strongly disagree.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

- 1) Before I speak with my partner I think about whether it is a good time to deal with the issue I want to bring up.
- 2) Couples need to resolve stressful topics efficiently. Coming back to the same topic repeatedly indicates a poor relationship.
- 3) We have a number of shared interests and activities.
- 4) If I need to speak with my partner about something important I will push them to talk even if they protest, "This isn't a good time for me to talk about this."
- 5) When we disagree a productive discussion will often help us clarify or resolve our differences.
- 6) Discontinuing conversation before an issue is resolved is equivalent to abandoning the issue.

- 7) My partner understands what I'm trying to get across a good deal of the time.
- 8) If two people love each other they should be able to agree on most important issues.
- 9) My partner listens carefully to what I say.
- 10) Agreeing to disagree is a sign of failure in the communication process.
- 11) When it comes to thinking through situations, my partner's style is very different than mine. Still we manage to get beyond style and appreciate that we have a lot in common.
- 12) When all is said and done, couples should be able to work out problems without having to "work" at it too hard.
- 13) It's natural for differences to emerge in a long-term relationship. People are complex and when you get to know somebody well, some of what you had thought was clear about them may become less so.
- 14) In my relationship with my partner, there are no surprises. We know each other too well for that.
- 15) Relationships provide a way to learn about aspects of our selves that, otherwise, would likely remain beyond our awareness.
- 16) My partner's style is no more or less than a direct reaction to my style. If I say, "Black," they insist, "White."

### **Scoring procedure**

(1) Total the number of points for even-numbered questions and for odd-numbered questions separately. (2) Subtract the largest score total from the other score total. For example, if odd-numbered questions total 20 and the even-numbered questions total is 10; subtract the even-total (10) from the odd-total (20). The score you have then is 10 with Odd-Greater. If even-questions totaled 36 and odd-questions totaled 18 the final result would be 18 Even-Greater.

### **Charting Results**

#### **For Odd-Greater scores:**

**0-9** indicates that your relationship has some strengths but is in need of healing. **10-18** indicates possibilities for creating middle ground exist but need to be nurtured with deliberation. **18 or above** indicates that a middle ground exists between you and your partner.

#### **For Even-Greater scores:**

**0-9** indicates very little good will seems to be established between you and your partner. It will take work to develop a foundation for the middle ground but you may be closer to doing it than you think. There are some relationship strengths. If the score is **between 10 and 18** a middle ground is possible but trust appears to be in short supply. If the score is **18 or above** establishing a middle ground will challenge the ongoing trends in the relationship. Relationships in this area tend to be painful and partners often feel

despairing about being able to regain a sense of hope and connection. With commitment, dialogue, patience, humility and, for many couples in this range, the help of a qualified counselor, possibilities for middle ground can develop. This can lead to a new beginning in the relationship or, where appropriate, to a disentangling of hostilities which allows both partners to clarify their thinking and examine their goals and options carefully and constructively in an emotionally safe environment.

***FOR YOUR PARTNER –***

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- 3) We have a number of shared interests and activities.
- 4) If I need to speak with my partner about something important I will push them to talk even if they protest, “This isn’t a good time for me to talk about this.”
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- 7) My partner understands what I'm trying to get across a good deal of the time.
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- 10) Agreeing to disagree is a sign of failure in the communication process.
- 11) When it comes to thinking through situations, my partner's style is very different than mine. Still we manage to get beyond style and appreciate that we have a lot in common.
- 12) When all is said and done, couples should be able to work out problems without having to "work" at it too hard.
- 13) It's natural for differences to emerge in a long-term relationship. People are complex and when you get to know somebody well, some of what you had thought was clear about them may become less so.
- 14) In my relationship with my partner, there are no surprises. We know each other too well for that.
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From *The Power of the Middle Ground: A Couple's Guide to Renewing Your Relationship* (Prometheus Books, 2008) Reprinted with permission of the publisher.