

Quiz: Are You Open to Your Partner's Influence?

Another problem we perceived in Beth and Craig's marriage was Craig's unwillingness to accept influence from Beth. Our research shows that this problem—which is most common among husbands—can be harmful to a relationship. That's because it leads wives to become frustrated and angry, increasing the chances that they'll become highly critical and contemptuous—behaviors proven to be quite destructive in a marriage.

To find out if accepting influence is a challenge in your marriage, answer the following questions:

PARTNER A

T/F

- _____ 1. I am really interested in my partner's opinions on our basic conflicts.
- _____ 2. I usually learn a lot from my partner, even when we disagree.

PARTNER B

T/F

PARTNER A

T/F

PARTNER B

T/F

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| _____ | 3. I want my partner to feel that what he or she says really matters to me. | _____ |
| _____ | 4. I generally want my partner to feel influential in this marriage. | _____ |
| _____ | 5. I can listen to my partner. | _____ |
| _____ | 6. My partner has a lot of basic common sense. | _____ |
| _____ | 7. I try to communicate respect, even during our disagreements. | _____ |
| _____ | 8. If I keep trying to convince my partner, I will eventually succeed. | _____ |
| _____ | 9. I don't reject my partner's opinions out of hand. | _____ |
| _____ | 10. My partner is not rational enough to take seriously when we discuss our conflicts. | _____ |
| _____ | 11. I believe in lots of give and take in our discussions. | _____ |
| _____ | 12. I am very persuasive, and usually can win arguments with my partner. | _____ |
| _____ | 13. I feel I have an important say when we make decisions. | _____ |
| _____ | 14. My partner usually has good ideas. | _____ |
| _____ | 15. My partner is basically a great help as a problem solver. | _____ |
| _____ | 16. I try to listen respectfully, even when I disagree. | _____ |
| _____ | 17. My ideas for solutions are usually much better than my partner's ideas. | _____ |
| _____ | 18. I can usually find something to agree with in my partner's position. | _____ |
| _____ | 19. My partner is usually too emotional. | _____ |
| _____ | 20. I am the one who needs to make the major decisions in this relationship. | _____ |

SCORING: Give yourself one point for each “true” answer, except for items 8, 10, 12, 17, 19, 20. Then subtract one point for each “true” answer to items 8, 10, 12, 17, 19, 20. If you scored 6 or above, accepting influence is an area of strength in your marriage. If you scored below 6, you and your partner need to make improvements in your willingness to accept influence from each other.