

connection we call our “annual honeymoon.” Once a week for the past fifteen years we have stayed in the same room at the same bed-and-breakfast in a beautiful area one hundred miles from our home. We bring along our kayak, visit art galleries and artists’ studios, and hike the trails. We spend the week catching up, dreaming together, and, yes, sometimes fighting and clearing the air over any issues we had ignored due to busy-ness. It is always romantic, magical, and special.

Many couples could also benefit from developing rituals around lovemaking and talking about it. People often think that sex should be spontaneous and is best if it isn’t planned. But if you ask couples when sex was best, they usually say it was early in their relationship, during courtship. Back then, romantic dates were planned, thought was devoted to what to wear, what perfume or cologne to use, the music and wine, etc. Returning to those rituals of planning for romance and sex can heighten the experience for both partners.

To get a sense of how well you create a sense of shared meaning through rituals, answer the following questions. If you find that you don’t see things the same way, consider this discovery an opportunity to create a ritual of connection that will be deeply meaningful to both of you.

## RITUALS OF CONNECTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Read each statement and circle T for “true” or F for “false.”

1. We see eye to eye about the rituals that involve family dinnertimes in our home. **T F**
2. Holiday meals (like Thanksgiving, Christmas, Passover) are very special and happy times for us (or we both hate them). **T F**
3. End-of-the-day reunions in our home are generally special times. **T F**
4. We see eye to eye about the role of TV in our home. **T F**
5. Bedtimes are generally good times for being close. **T F**

6. During the weekends, we do a lot of things together that we enjoy and value. **TF**
7. We have the same values about entertaining in our home (having friends over, parties, and so on). **TF**
8. We both value, or both dislike, special celebrations (like birthdays, anniversaries, family reunions). **TF**
9. When I become sick, I feel taken care of and loved by my spouse. **TF**
10. I really look forward to and enjoy our vacations and the travel we do together. **TF**
11. Spending our morning time together is special to us. **TF**
12. When we do errands together, we generally have a good time. **TF**
13. We have ways of becoming renewed and refreshed when we are burned out or fatigued. **TF**

**Scoring:** Give yourself 1 point for each “true” answer. If you score below 3, your relationship could stand some improvement in this area. Turn to the shared-meaning exercise that begins on page 272, and focus on the “rituals” section.

## **PILLAR TWO: SUPPORT FOR EACH OTHER’S ROLES**

Our sense of our place in the world is based to a great extent on the various roles we play—we are spouses, perhaps children and/or parents, and workers of one kind or another. From the standpoint of marriage, our perspective on our own roles and our mate’s can either add to the meaningfulness and harmony between us or create tension.

Your marriage will feel more profound to the degree that your expectations of each other—what you feel your partner’s place in your family ought to be—are similar. We’re not talking here about seemingly superficial issues like who washes the dishes; we’re talking about your deep expectations of yourself and your spouse. For example, both Ian and Hilary believed that a husband should be a protector and provider and the wife more of a nurturer. Chloe and