

Exercise: What's Your Style of Bidding and Responding to Bids?

To take this test, think about a person who's important to you—perhaps a partner, friend, child, parent, sibling, or coworker with whom you're currently having some conflict or discomfort.

If you have a high level of intimacy and trust with this person, you might ask him or her to take the test as well. That way, you can share the results, which may lead to a better shared understanding of how you can interact in ways that will strengthen your relationship.

If you don't feel that you can ask this person to take the test with you, taking it alone may still benefit your relationship—especially if it helps you to see the relationship from the other person's perspective.

Here's what you do:

1. Complete each item, indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement about yourself in this relationship. For each item, circle the alternative that best fits.

SA = strongly agree

A = agree

N = neutral

D = disagree

SD = strongly disagree

2. If you're doing this exercise with another person, talk about the results and what you've learned from them. If you're doing the exercise alone, complete each item again, this time pretending to be that other person. This can help you to see your relationship from the other person's perspective. Either way, consider what you've learned and areas in which you might want to improve your bidding and responses in the future.

Bidding

1. I sometimes get ignored when I need attention the most.
SA A N D SD
2. This person often doesn't notice me.
SA A N D SD
3. This person usually doesn't have a clue to what I am feeling.
SA A N D SD
4. I try, but am not successful in obtaining the social support I need in this relationship. **SA A N D SD**
5. I think that this person should know what I need without my saying so explicitly. **SA A N D SD**
6. I often have difficulty getting a meaningful conversation going with this person. **SA A N D SD**
7. I have trouble getting emotionally close to this person.
SA A N D SD
8. If this person can't tell what I need, I typically withdraw.
SA A N D SD
9. I often find this person too busy to be emotionally available to me.
SA A N D SD
10. It's hard for this person to tell what I need or want from him or her.
SA A N D SD
11. This person often takes the focus off me and puts it onto him- or herself. **SA A N D SD**
12. I often feel excluded by this person. **SA A N D SD**
13. My needs are neglected in this relationship. **SA A N D SD**
14. I get mad when I don't get the attention I need from this person.
SA A N D SD

15. When I feel let down by this person, I let him or her know it in no uncertain terms. **SA A N D SD**
16. I can take just so much of being ignored by this person, and then I blow up. **SA A N D SD**
17. I believe in strongly and assertively asking for what I need from this person. **SA A N D SD**
18. I often find myself becoming irritable with this person.
SA A N D SD
19. I get so frustrated because I have to demand what I need from this person. **SA A N D SD**
20. I get angry because I don't get the emotional support I need from this person. **SA A N D SD**
21. I often feel irritated that this person isn't on my side.
SA A N D SD
22. I have to let this person know that he or she isn't being a team player.
SA A N D SD
23. I just can't seem to get close to this person.
SA A N D SD
24. I have trouble getting this person to listen to me.
SA A N D SD
25. I have trouble getting this person to talk to me.
SA A N D SD
26. I have trouble getting this person to trust me. **SA A N D SD**
27. I find it difficult to get this person to open up to me.
SA A N D SD
28. This person won't share his or her true feelings with me.
SA A N D SD

SCORING

For all items, calculate your score as follows:

$$\text{SA} = 2$$

$$\text{A} = 1$$

$$\text{N} = 0$$

$$\text{D} = -1$$

$$\text{SD} = -2$$

First, consider items 1 to 12, which show how reticent you are at bidding. If you scored 6 or greater, you're bidding in a way that tends to keep your needs hidden and unknown. You have a tendency to be unclear in stating what you need from this person. This can be a problem in the relationship because the other person may feel he or she has to be a mind reader to understand what you need. A score lower than 6 means that you're more direct. This is better for your relationship, because you have the ability to state clearly what you need from this person.

Next consider items 13 to 22, which reveal how forceful you are at bidding. If you scored 6 or greater, you may be expressing so much anger in your bidding that you're pushing the other person away. This could be the result of your past frustration with this relationship, or it could be an enduring characteristic of your personality. Either way, this can be a problem in the relationship because your bids may sound more like criticism or righteous indignation. A score lower than 6 means that you are not overly forceful in expressing what you need from this person. This is better for your relationship because it's easier for the other person to hear and understand what you need.

Finally, consider items 23 to 28. These items concern the issue of trust, which can be an area of concern in any relationship, but may be particularly relevant to adult-child relationships. If you scored 4 or more on these six items, you may need to do more to win this person's trust. One of the best ways to do this is to concentrate more on responding to the other person's bids, rather than trying to get the other person to respond to you. If you scored less than 4, you probably have a high level of trust in this relationship.

Responding to Bids

1. My need for independence is such that I find this person cloying and smothering. **SA A N D SD**
2. I often feel like running away when this person asks for my attention. **SA A N D SD**
3. I really find it hard to sit and listen to this person. **SA A N D SD**
4. My mind wanders when this person talks. **SA A N D SD**
5. When this person gets overly emotional, I don't want to be with him or her. **SA A N D SD**
6. I think that if this person is feeling sad, he or she should keep it private. **SA A N D SD**
7. I wish that this person took care of his or her own needs more and relied on me less. **SA A N D SD**
8. When I am busy, I resent being interrupted by this person. **SA A N D SD**
9. I need my own personal space without this person expecting me to take care of him or her. **SA A N D SD**
10. I often resent being bothered by this person when I am trying to concentrate. **SA A N D SD**
11. I will avoid this person when he or she is overly needy. **SA A N D SD**
12. I don't usually notice what this person is feeling. **SA A N D SD**
13. I seem to be continually disappointing this person. **SA A N D SD**

14. I never seem to know what to say to this person when he or she approaches me. **SA A N D SD**
15. I have a lot of trouble emotionally supporting this person.
SA A N D SD
16. I try to notice this person's emotional state. **SA A N D SD**
17. I will often ask this person questions about how they are.
SA A N D SD
18. I generally like meeting this person's needs. **SA A N D SD**
19. I enjoy listening to this person talk. **SA A N D SD**
20. It is important for me to be there for this person.
SA A N D SD
21. I am usually responsive when this person needs my time and attention. **SA A N D SD**
22. I can tell when this person is upset and I respond to it.
SA A N D SD
23. When this person is worried or scared I am usually comforting.
SA A N D SD
24. When this person has suffered a setback or loss I am understanding and helpful. **SA A N D SD**
25. When this person wants to just talk I am usually available.
SA A N D SD
26. When this person asks for my time and attention, I tend to be annoyed. **SA A N D SD**
27. Lately I tend to feel crabby when this person is near me.
SA A N D SD
28. I get stressed out by this person's constant need for attention.
SA A N D SD
29. I often feel critical of this person's behavior. **SA A N D SD**
30. I find myself being angry when this person wants to have long conversations. **SA A N D SD**
31. This person tends to make me impatient with him or her.
SA A N D SD
32. This person needs too much from me. **SA A N D SD**

SCORING

For all items, calculate your score as follows:

SA = 2

A = 1

N = 0

D = -1

SD = -2

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For items 1 to 15, a total score of 8 or more means that you typically turn away from this person's bids. A score of 7 or lower means that you do not typically turn away from this person's bids, nor are you put off by this person's expressed needs.

For items 16 to 25, a total score of 6 or more means that you typically turn toward this person's bids. A total score of 5 or less means that you do not typically turn toward this person's bids.

For items 26 to 32, a total score of 4 or more means that you typically turn against this person's bids. A total score of 3 or less means that you do not typically turn against this person's bids.