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Shared Meaning Questionnaire

Pair this exercise with Gottman Date 7. Both of you have goals for yourself and for your relationship. Goals can be indicators of how you might change. Goals can be practical or deeply spiritual. Goals can sometimes cross over into life dreams. For now, you're going to explore the meaning of goals in your individual lives and in your relationship. Please answer the following True or False questions. If a question doesn't apply to you, skip it, modify it to your particular situation, or keep it in mind for future discussion.

Your Goals

We share many of the same goals in our life together.

T F

If I were to look back on my life in very old age, I think I would see that our paths meshed very well.

T F

My partner values my accomplishments.

T F

My partner honors the personal goals I have that are unrelated to our relationship.

T F

We share many of the same goals for others who are important to us (children, relatives, friends, and community).

T F

We have very similar financial goals.

T F

We tend to have compatible worries about potential financial disasters.

T F

Our life dreams tend to be similar or compatible.

T F

Our hopes and aspirations, as individuals and together, for our children, for our life in general, and for our old age, are compatible.

T F

Even when they are different, we have been able to find a way to honor our life dreams.

T F

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After answering the questions above, especially if you had very few “True” answers, please explore your goals and their meanings by discussing the following questions.

- Write your own eulogy. What would you like it to say? What qualities or accomplishments would you most like to be remembered for at the time of your death?
- What goals do you have in life, for yourself, for your partner, for your children (if you have children)? What do you want to accomplish in the next five to ten years?
- We often fill our time with things that demand immediate attention—putting out fires, so to speak. But what are the important things in your life that are truly great sources of energy and pleasure that you really need to block out time for, the important things that keep getting postponed or crowded out?
- What is the role of spirituality or religion in your lives? What was this role in your families growing up? What would you like it to be now or in the future?

As individuals, you will grow and change over the course of your relationship. Your individual beliefs and practices about spirituality and religion aren't as important as viewing your relationship and the rituals and goals you create together as sacred, spiritual, and meaningful.

Adapted from: *Eight Dates: Essential Conversations for a Lifetime of Love*. By: John Gottman, Julie Schwartz Gottman, Doug Abrams, and Rachel Carlton Abrams