

## How's Your Marriage IQ?

### Quiz:

- A lot of unhappiness in marriage comes from having unrealistically high expectations.  
True / False
- The worst thing you can do for your relationship is to look down on your partner.  
True / False
- Compromise is the best way to settle arguments.  
True / False
- There is nothing wrong with getting angry with your partner.  
True / False
- A good marriage makes you healthy, wealthy, and wise!  
True / False

### Your score:

#### Answers:

1. False
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. True

**4 or 5** correct answers: Congratulations! You have a lot of insight into the complicated world of relationships. You and your fiancé will reap the benefits as you build your life together.

**3** correct answers: You are pretty well informed, but a little more knowledge would be money in the bank for the health of your marriage.

**1 or 2** correct answers: Please get some more information—soon! A little reading, a class or some counseling will save your marriage from a lot of needless stress and strain.

### Learn more about the answers:

**1.** No! Aim high! Remember the expression "self-fulfilling prophecy?" We've known for years that when parents and teachers expect great things of children, the children deliver. Likewise, when the adults expect little, the children deliver on that, too.

Recent research shows that the same is true for marriages. If you think of your spouse as your ball and chain, that's exactly what he or she will be. However, if you have high hopes for marriage, those hopes are more likely to come true.

Now, this doesn't mean that hoping is all it takes, or that by turning a blind eye to challenges you can avoid them. Your optimism must be backed up by a commitment to get the information, spend the time, and make the effort to have a wonderful marriage. Nonetheless, it all starts with your expectation that it will be wonderful.

**2.** Step one of a happy marriage is acceptance of each other's differences. It is an unfortunate

fact that we humans tend to think that "different from us" = "worse than us." This is harmful to all of our relationships. It can be fatal to our marriage. Such attitudes as "taking the high moral ground" and "my way or the highway" destroy love. If you find yourself scoffing at your partner's opinions or taking a superior tone: STOP! BREATHE! COOL DOWN! Remember who you are talking to. Take a break until you are able to speak with respect.

3. This one may surprise you. Compromise is good, but understanding is even better. When your partner disagrees with you, remember that he or she has a reason for it. There is some concern that is very important to them that their plan will address. On the flip side, there may be something they are very afraid of that their plan will prevent. Don't rush into a compromise. First, make it your job to understand what your partner's concern is. When you do, you will likely discover you had more common ground than you realized. This takes practice. Your reward will be a deeper connection and sense of unity.

4. Anger is good! Anger is a roadmap that points us in the direction of what's important to us and what needs attention. The problem is how we express it. For some reason, it is easy for most of us to overreact or under react when we are angry. We either sweep things under the carpet or we go on the attack. Avoiding issues is a recipe for growing resentment and distance. Attacking causes hurt feelings that can ultimately destroy love. Learning to express anger in an honest AND loving way (We're not kidding!) is one of the best investments you can make in your marriage.

5. Married people enjoy better health than single people. They live longer, too! Some studies have shown that married people have a death rate that is half that of single people. Not surprisingly, they also have better mental health: lower rates of depression, anxiety and other problems.

Married people also have more money. (How many times have you heard of a single wealthy person?) Part of this is simply due to the power of two people working together on a goal. Perhaps more importantly, you cannot overestimate the power of a mate who has faith in your ability to reach your goals. This faith will sustain and motivate you in times of big challenges and self-doubt. It can make a big difference in your ability to achieve your goals, financial and otherwise. Of course, support of this quality does not just happen by magic. It takes two partners committed to making mentorship a key part of their relationship.

Copyright ©2002 Claire Hatch, LICSW  
[www.clairehatch.com](http://www.clairehatch.com)

---

Claire Hatch Counseling · 615 Market Street, Suite C · Kirkland · WA · 98033

Claire Hatch, LICSW, is a licensed counselor who specializes in turning marriages around. She works with clients in her Seattle area office and by phone around the world. Claire also gives seminars on how to turn conflict to connection, build a strong marriage, and balance family and work. Visit [www.clairehatch.com](http://www.clairehatch.com) or contact Claire by email at: [claire@clairehatch.com](mailto:claire@clairehatch.com).

**You are welcome to reproduce this article anywhere as long as you include the information above.**