

## Fairness quiz

By B. Hibbs, Ph.D., Psychologist and author of: *Try to See It My Way, Being Fair in Love and Marriage*

Circle either usually true, or usually false for the following questions:

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. I rarely express my anger at my partner directly.                  | 1. Usually True ... Usually false  |
| 2. When I disagree with my partner, I keep it to myself.              | 2. Usually True ... Usually false  |
| 3. I want my spouse to "just know" what I need.                       | 3. Usually True ... Usually false  |
| 4. I often feel angry that my partner doesn't give me what I need.    | 4. Usually True ... Usually false  |
| 5. I feel caught between my children and my partner.                  | 5. Usually True ... Usually false  |
| 6. If I'm honest, I'd say I blame my partner for too much.            | 6. Usually True ... Usually false  |
| 7. I take on more than my spouse does.                                | 7. Usually True ... Usually false  |
| 8. I accept blame, even when it's not my fault.                       | 8. Usually True ... Usually false  |
| 9. My partner never wants to talk about problems.                     | 9. Usually True ... Usually false  |
| 10. My partner's needs feel unreasonable.                             | 10. Usually True ... Usually false |
| 11. I can't count on my partner to tell me what he/she wants.         | 11. Usually True ... Usually false |
| 12. I "simmer in silence" in my relationship.                         | 12. Usually True ... Usually false |
| 13. What I do is taken for granted.                                   | 13. Usually True ... Usually false |
| 14. After a run-in, we seldom seem to work it out.                    | 14. Usually True ... Usually false |
| 15. I don't think it's worth it to discuss problems, nothing changes. | 15. Usually True ... Usually false |

**Scoring:** If you answered "usually true" to five or more of the questions, this indicates that you are shortchanging yourself (and possibly your partner) in resolving fairness issues.

## 10 Fairness Tips

It's what we learned in kindergarten—be nice, take turns, play fair. Here are 10 fairness tips.

1. Give up the certainty that you're right.
2. Learn about your blind spots in love and fairness, often created by unevaluated assumptions and patterns for relating to people that are learned in your family of origin.
3. Re-examine the "shoulds" for what partners owe to, and deserve from, each other.
4. Keep a good balance between give and take with your partner.
5. Show appreciation often. If you didn't have to do it (clean up, cook, take out the trash, get up in the middle of the night with the baby), say "thank you." Offer specific acknowledgments—these will feel more heartfelt than just a general "thanks."
6. If you were unfair, own up to it. Everyone is unfair sometimes. When you are—take responsibility—it's the best natural medicine for a partner's hurt feelings.
7. Replace blame with claims. Instead of complaining...ask for what you need.
8. Stop keeping score.
9. Back-up feelings of love with actions of fairness.
- 10. Stop fighting to win and start caring about your partner's perspective. Try to see it from all sides – each person's perspective.**