

Discover Your Shock in Relationships

Describe a **recent behavior of your spouse, child, or co-worker that upsets you**. Examples: you yell at me; you leave when I am talking to you; you never help with tasks at home; you leave and go places without me; you blame me when you can't find something; you're not on my side when the kids need discipline; you work so much, we never see you; you are not really "present" when I talk to you. Write yours here:

- a) _____

- b) _____

- c) _____

- d) _____

- e) _____

1) Describe **how you react** to the above behaviors (each one individually). Examples: I become quiet and withdraw; I get really angry; I do something to get even; I argue or demand what I want; I talk to a friend to gather support or to get consoled. Write yours here:

- a) _____

- b) _____

- c) _____

- d) _____

- e) _____



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2) People often go into shock when they have a disagreement or fight. Some people dissociate by becoming paralyzed with unexpressed fear or anger and rage (called parasympathetic shock). Some people dissociate by becoming preoccupied with a substitute activity (called sympathetic shock). Initial the ones that you experience most. Mark the ones that you feel your spouse or partner goes into with his or her initials. We've included blank lines that you can fill in to personalize the results.

Parasympathetic (passive)

Sympathetic (active)

- ___ ___ withdraw
- ___ ___ read
- ___ ___ “space out” with the TV
- ___ ___ “disappear” into computer
- ___ ___ fall asleep
- ___ ___ get a headache
- ___ ___ get sick or hurt
- ___ ___ _____
- ___ ___ _____
- ___ ___ _____

- ___ ___ clean the house
- ___ ___ work
- ___ ___ talk on the phone
- ___ ___ go shopping
- ___ ___ get busy in the kitchen or garage
- ___ ___ get “lost” in nagging or raging
- ___ ___ become violently angry
- ___ ___ _____
- ___ ___ _____
- ___ ___ _____

3) People often use a substance or behavior to help them dissociate, allowing them to escape the difficult work of resolving a conflict. Which of these behaviors do you use to avoid talking to your partner to resolve the conflict? Initial the ones that you experience most. Mark the ones that you feel your spouse or partner goes into with his or her initials.

- ___ ___ alcohol
- ___ ___ drugs
- ___ ___ smoking
- ___ ___ overeating
- ___ ___ pornography
- ___ ___ computer games
- ___ ___ shopping
- ___ ___ just leaving the house
- ___ ___ fantasizing other partners
- ___ ___ checking up on the other
- ___ ___ “Cruising”
- ___ ___ _____
- ___ ___ _____
- ___ ___ _____
- ___ ___ _____



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4) Which of the behaviors in #3 are ones you recognize as used by your mother or father (or other significant adult) in your childhood?

Mother

Father

5) Describe in your own words a typical conflict that can develop between you and your significant other or significant relationship: their behavior that upsets you, and your reaction. Is there a pattern of sympathetic or parasympathetic shock in your reaction? Do you recognize substances or behaviors that you tend to use to dissociate from the interaction? Can you see a connection between your parents' style of interaction and yours?



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