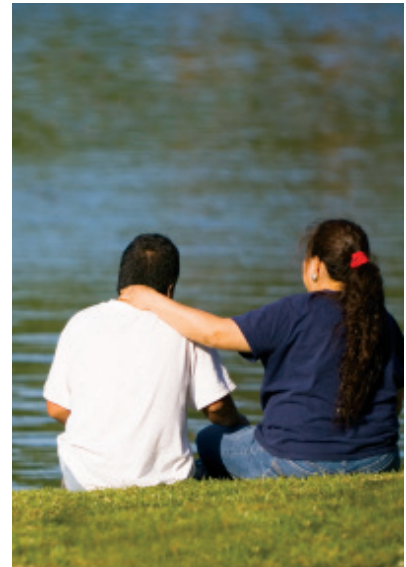




Know the 10 Ps



If you are single and thinking about dating, or if you are dating someone and trying to decide if this person is right for you, it is important to learn about his or her relationship expectations, values and beliefs, past relationships, and family. Each of these issues might impact your relationship. There is no “right” way to get to know each other better, but the following questions can give you some direction. As you learn more about your partner, share more about yourself as well.



Personality. Healthy relationships are easier to maintain when personalities are compatible (not the same but similar). What qualities matter to you? What matters to your partner? Can you accept and appreciate each other’s differences?

- Does your partner tend to be talkative, or more reserved and quiet?
- Does your partner generally trust others, or look for fault?
- Does your partner forgive and forget easily, or does he or she hold grudges?
- Is your partner often depressed, irritable, or “blue,” or have a sunny disposition?
- Is he or she open to new experiences, or prefer to stay with things that are familiar?

Passions. How well do you understand your partner’s values and beliefs, likes and dislikes, and hopes and fears? Couples should have some passions in common and should feel comfortable with each other’s passions.

- What does your partner like to do in his or her spare time?
- Is your partner religious or spiritual? Is this something you have in common?
- What makes your partner experience strong emotions?
- Are your passions similar? Different? How do you feel about passions that differ?

Plans and Priorities. Commitment is strengthened when a couple talks about shared hopes and dreams. Working towards individual and shared goals starts by first understanding what each partner wants.

- What really matters to your partner?
- What are your partner’s financial goals? (e.g., big purchases, pay off debt)
- What has your partner always wanted to do?
- Where does your partner see him- or herself in the next year? 5 years? 10 years?

Previous Partners. You might not like to think about your partner with someone else, but most people have had more than one romantic partner. Past relationship experiences can help (or hurt) future ones.

- How long did previous relationships last? How and/or why did they end?
- How were disagreements handled? What went well? What did you learn?
- How well does your partner get along with ex-partners now?

Perspective Taking. Adults in healthy relationships show empathy, compassion, and understanding. They do not easily become angry if their partner has a different opinion. Observe how your partner interacts with you and with others like friends and family.

- Does your partner become hurt or angry when you disagree with his or her ideas?
- When you disagree, do you talk and compromise, or does one of you usually “win”?
- Does your partner seem sincerely remorseful if he or she hurts another’s feelings?
- Does your partner take time to listen and understand?

Problem Solving. Conflict is present in all relationships – even in happy ones. Couples in healthy relationships find ways to manage conflict and solve problems that work for both partners.

- Can your partner put his or her thoughts and feelings into words?
- Does your partner show you respect, even during conflict?
- When you say how you feel, does your partner listen and validate you?
- Does your partner value your opinion?
- How does your partner manage differences with friends, family, and co-workers?



Past Family Experiences. You have probably heard the saying, “The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.” While each of us is unique, we are also shaped by our experiences. Our family upbringing is one of the most powerful influences in our lives.

- What was the mood like in your partner’s childhood home?
- How was affection shown?
- How did parents or caregivers handle conflict?
- What were parents like as caregivers? Do you want to be the same or different?
- How were decisions made in each family? How was money handled?

Physical/Psychological Health. Healthy behaviors are a sign of self-respect. People who have good health practices are more likely to take care of themselves. They can then take care of others and their relationships.

- Does your partner smoke, drink a lot, use illegal drugs, or abuse prescription medications?
- Does your partner have healthy eating habits? Does he or she exercise regularly?
- Is there a history of health problems or unhealthy habits in your partner’s family?
- Does your partner have any sexually transmitted infections?
- When your partner experiences stress, does he or she cope in healthy ways?

Parenting Experience and Approach. If you have children or want children someday, ask yourself, “What kind of a parent would this person be toward my/our children?”

- If your partner has children, is he or she warm and supportive? Does your partner set and enforce reasonable limits?
- Have you seen your partner interact with other children?
- Does your partner want to have children? How many? Does your partner share your expectations and beliefs about parenting?

Provider Potential. Money is one of the topics couples argue about most. Job skills and responsibility are necessary for secure employment.

- Does your partner have a secure job or skills to get a job?
- What kind of education has your partner received?
- Will your partner be able to help provide for your needs? Your children’s needs?
- Is your partner’s job likely to change in the next year? 5 years? 10 years?
- Is your partner a hard worker? What have your partner’s previous jobs been like?



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