

Relationship Reality Check: 10 Questions that Can Transform Your Love Life

BY DR. JACQUELINE DEL ROSARIO

Relationships often collapse because couples are not prepared to withstand the inevitable conflicts or even the humdrum and monotonous plateau period that's nearly certain to present as the years go by. When couples do not understand these are anticipated and natural events in the course of a relationship, they may start looking for the exit door thinking that they have made a grievous mistake.

But many people don't realize the extent that their relational health and happiness is under their control, aided by one's ability to self-assess and foster quality communication with their partner. These ten self-assessment questions can help both partners reach their "happily ever after":

1. Am I putting my best face forward? People dress up in their best clothes and put on makeup for the outside world. Do you put forth the same effort to impress and excite your mate?

2. Am I still growing? You must come to a relationship willing to continuously improve who you are so that your relationship can continue to

evolve. Continue to date and experience new things as a couple.

3. Am I continuing to invest the time and effort to maintain a strong foundation? Are you keeping passion alive in the bedroom, or are you relegated to business as usual? Break the routine here and watch the magic ensue.

4. What are the anchors in my relationship? Why are you together in the first place? Identifying and nurturing similar values, goals and expectancies in your relationship are fundamental and will help you endure the tough times.

5. How can I help improve our communication style? It is essential to learn how each party in the partnership prefers to communicate and make an effort to deliver and receive messages from your mate according to their personal style, which may differ from yours. And, during an argument, always fight fair and with respect—no name calling, no degrading one another.

6. What unmet expectations do we each have that need to be addressed? Unmet expectations are often not shared and, instead, they can fester and result



in resentment and bitterness. It's unfair of you to feel that your partner "should know" or be able to decipher passive aggressive cues that something is wrong. Be honest with what you need from your partner for a real chance that those needs will be met, or even exceeded.

7. What emotional triggers might be adversely affecting my current relationship? Past traumas can hinder the way we respond to or perceive present issues. Were you lied to or cheated on in the past? It doesn't mean you cannot trust your current mate. Put old baggage

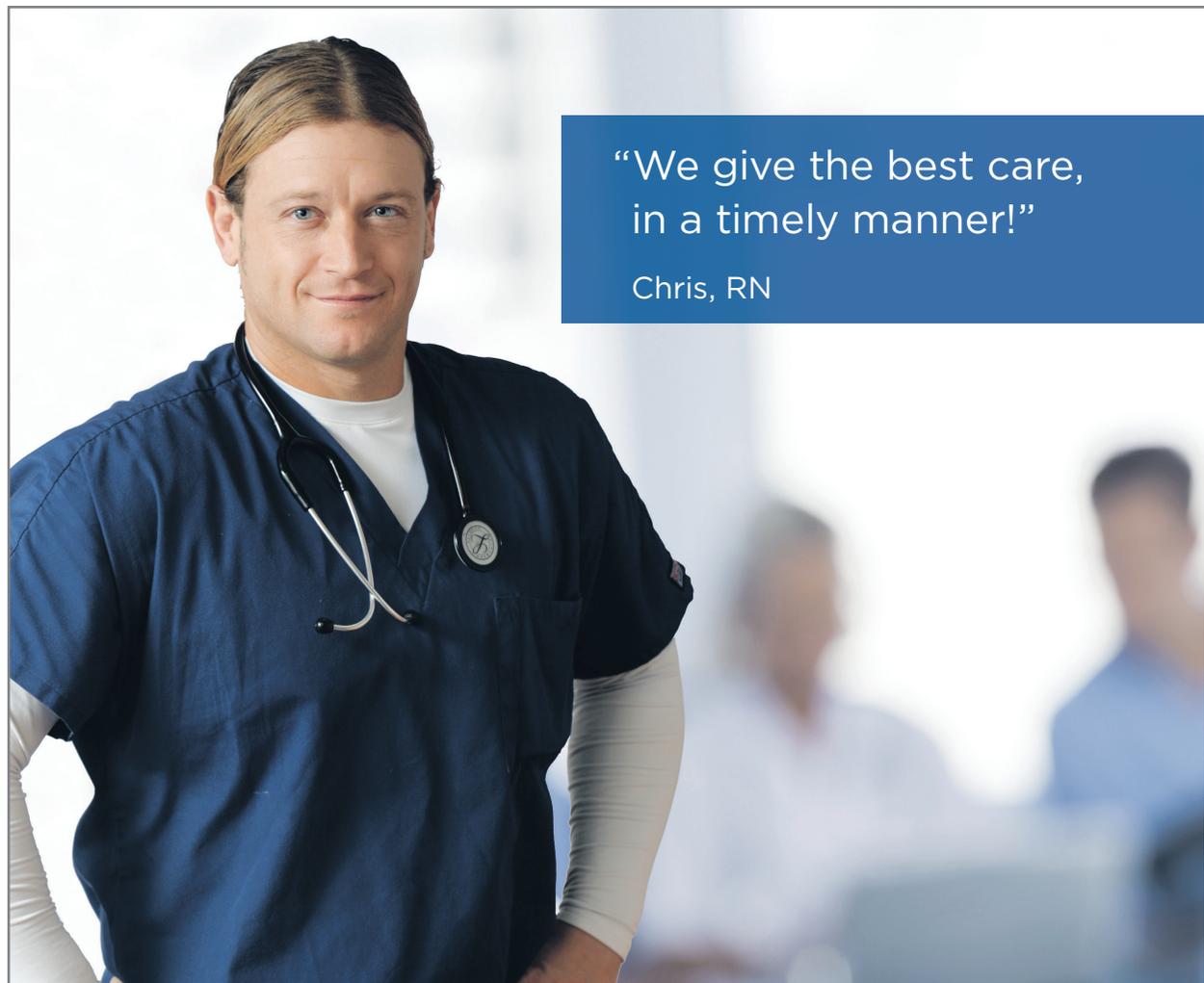
aside and experience your current partner on their own merits and actions.

8. Do I stop, look and listen? Take the time to listen to and validate your mate. Keep the channels of communication open—chatter about the day's events, current events, family matters and similar, and pay attention to their concerns. It bonds the heart and abates the feeling of growing apart.

9. Do I allow outside interference? Your partner may be angry to find out that others are involved in your private life. Instead, go directly to your partner to resolve relationship problems. However, if things are seemingly out of both of your control, seek professional assistance from marriage counselors.

10. Do I have a maintenance plan? Are you still doing what you did to get your mate? Take the time to assess your virtues and ask your mate to cite favorite qualities about you. Then, make a concerted effort to foster these qualities to ensure interest remains.

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