*What Do You Expect Regarding . . .*

1 a. *The longevity of this relationship. Is it “Till death do us part”?*

b. *Sexual fidelity. What does that mean to you?*

c. *Love.* Do you expect to love each other always? Would anything change that that? What way do you

show your love best? What kind of things tell you most clearly you are loved?

d. *Your sexual relationship. Frequency? Practices? Taboos?*

e. *Romance.* What is romantic for you?

f. *Children.* Do you want children? More children?

g. *Children from previous marriages?* If you or your partner have children from a previous marriage, where do you want them to live? How do you expect that you should share in the upbringing and discipline of these children?

h. *Work, careers, and provision of income.* Who will work in the future? Whose career or job is more important? If there are or will be children, will either partner reduce work time out of the home to take care of them?

1. *The degree of emotional dependency on the other.* Do you want to be taken care of? How? How much do you expect to rely on each other to get through tough times?

j. *Basic approach to life.* Do you see the two of you as a team or as two independent individuals?

k. *Loyalty*. What does that mean to you?

l. *Communication about problems in the relationship*. Do you want to talk these out? If so, how?

m. *Power and control.* Who do you expect will have more power and in what kind of decisions? For example,

who will control the money? Who will discipline the kids? What happens when you disagree in a key area?

Who has the power now? How do you feel about that?

n. Household tasks. Who do you expect will do what? How much household work will each of you do in the

future? If you live together now, how does the current breakdown of tasks match up with what you ideally

expect?

o. *Religious beliefs and observances.* How, when, and where do you expect to practice your faith? If there are

differences in religious beliefs, cultural backgrounds, or family traditions, how might they affect the

relationship?

p. *Time together.* How much time do you want to spend together (as opposed to with friends, at work, with

family, and so on)? How acceptable is spending time apart?

q. *Sharing feelings*. How much or what you are each feeling do you expect should be shared? What should be

kept private?

r. *Friendship with tour partner*. What is a friend? What would it mean to maintain or have a friendship with

your partner?

s. *The little things in life.* Where do you squeeze the toothpaste? Should the toilet seat be left up or down?

Who sends greeting cards? Really think of the little things that could irritate you or have irritated you (or

have been going really well). What do you want or expect in each area?

t. *Forgiveness.* How important is forgiveness in your relationship? How should forgiveness affect your

relationship?

u. *Other relationships.* Which ones are OK? Friendships with the members of the opposite sex? Relationships

with coworkers? When you are not together, how much time spent with friends is OK with you?

2. List any other expectations that you feel are important about how you want things to be and that did

not appear in the forgoing list.

3. Now, with your mind primed from all this work, consider again the hidden issues we described: issues

of power, caring, recognition, commitment, integrity, and acceptance. Do you see any other ways now

that they influence or are influenced by expectations? What do you expect in these areas that you

haven’t already address in working on the preceding list?

4. Now go back and rate your expectations (1-10, 10 is completely reasonable) as to how reasonable you

think it really is. Next place a check mark next to the expectation that you feel you have never clearly

discussed with your spouse.

5. Plan time to sit together and discuss these expectations. Do NOT discuss them all at once.

I highly recommend that you use the Speaker/Listener Technique to keep these discussions structured

and safe.

6. Talk about the degree you both feel that these expectations are reasonable or unreasonable, and

discuss what you want to do about any unreasonable expectations.

7. Talk about what your overall long-term vision is for the relationship. What expectations do you share

about your future together?