

Welcome to your time together: Conversations for Couples

These questions are for you to talk about. The idea is that you come to an even deeper understanding of who the other person is and what their wishes are for the future. Even if you both know each other well, staying curious and interested in the one you spend your life with is an important part of a successful partnership or marriage. People change, especially in long-term relationships.

In long-term relationships there are five challenging aspects that can divide a couple:

- 1: **Inner change** is not shared
- 2: **Assumptions** about agreements which are not clear to both
- 3: **Kindness and Caring** are lost
- 4: **Attention** has vanished
- 5: **Losing** one's own way for the sake of the other

You might wonder, what about infidelity? It is usually the result of missing one or more of the five challenging aspects.

Each day for the next two weeks you and your partner will explore a written question. Some questions require that you sit with them alone first before you share and talk about them. You'll notice some questions have indicated spaces for you to write.

Please agree on the time of day that you will meet and plan for 30 minutes (or more if needed) for your exchange. Some will take more time, some less time. Make sure you are not interrupted. Turn your phones off. Take a walk or find a space that is conducive to your time together.

At the end of each talk please finish the sentence:

I am glad we talked about this, because ...

If you are NOT glad you talked about it, please share your concern:

I am concerned that we talked about this, because ...

How to use Conversations for Couples

Conversations for Couples can either be used for yourself or you can gift them to another couple. It is best to have two copies, one for each partner.

When I gift it to a couple, I make two copies and write in their names, so that each of them has their own copy. I get 14 envelopes, number them, and put both copies of each day in the corresponding envelope. Of course, you can use all sorts of creative ways to package them.

Conversations for Couples are a great gift for a newly engaged couple. I gave them to my daughter and my son-in-law before they got married. They can also be given to new couples or people that have been married for a while.

Please resist the impulse to remove questions that you might find difficult. These are probably the most important. However, you can add questions.

Enjoy them and all the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sabrina". The script is cursive and elegant, with a large initial 'S'.

Sabrina Fox is a well known spiritual teacher and bestselling author in her native Germany. She has been studying spiritual & personal growth for 30 years. She is also a clinical hypnotherapist, mediator, conflict coach, rhythm trainer and has studied sculpture and singing. Sabrina has several very successful online-courses and just started a podcast (Sinn&Sein). Her latest book on the subject of separation and advanced love is called "Wenn wir uns trennen, lernen wir uns kennen". Loosely translated as: "We get to know ourselves and each other, when we part". Sabrina is bilingual (German and English) and welcomes your communication at www.Sabrinafox.com

Akademie
Sabrina Fox

Day 1

Marriages or Relationships you know:

Looking at the marriage (relationship) of your parents, which aspects did you find inspiring? Which aspects would you like to avoid?

Is there a marriage (or relationship) you know of that you like or admire? Why?

At the end of each talk please finish the sentence that fits:

I am glad we talked about this, because ...

I am concerned that we talked about this, because ...

Marriage or relationship created by us:

How would you like your marriage or couplehood to be? Please pick five words from the below list. You can, of course, add any words that are not listed. Before you meet, please write them down in order of importance. Please explain each choice.

Honest. Fun. Exciting. Flexible. Stable. Lots of change. Fluid. Creative. Growing. Attentive. Sexy. Homebuilding. Dependable. Quiet. Dramatic. Respectful. Full of adventure. Time alone as a couple. Time alone for me. Travel together. Travel with friends. Travel alone. To experience new things together. Etc ...

My five:

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

5.....

I am glad we talked about this, because ...

I am concerned that we talked about this, because ...

What will stay and what can change?

This topic covers your personality and habits. Please write down what you need for your wellbeing. How you like to live, to feel well, and what you like to do. And then, what you assume the other one needs for his/her wellbeing. Please share and explain.

What I need for my well being:

.....

.....

.....

.....

What I assume my partner needs for his/her wellbeing:

.....

.....

.....

.....

After your talk: Did something surprise you?

I am glad we talked about this, because ...
I am concerned that we talked about this, because ...

Day 4

What will stay and what can change?

Is there something that you have a hard time accepting in the other?

.....

Is there something that you have a hard time accepting in yourself?

.....

Is there something your partner does that inspires you?

.....

I am glad we talked about this, because ...

I am concerned that we talked about this, because ...

Day 5

What will stay and what can change?

What is your defense mechanism? (for example: get angry, retreat, seek revenge, pretend nothing happened, refuse to talk about it, need to talk, remove yourself emotionally, complain to friends/family etc.)

.....

What do you (almost) automatically do when you feel hurt?

.....

What do you assume your partner automatically does when he/she feels hurt?

.....

How do you deal with your partner doing something you are completely against?

.....

I am glad we talked about this, because ...

I am concerned that we talked about this, because ...

Day 6

What will stay and what can change?

In long-lasting relationships, there is growth and change. Is that something that scares you or are you looking forward to growth and change? Why?

.....

What do you imagine your partner could change into?

.....

What would you imagine you could change into?

.....

Happy couples support each other in their personal growth instead of trying to stay in the “status quo” in fear of change. How have you handled change so far?

(For example the wish for: More travel. More family time. More time alone. A new business. A move to a different place within California or the US. Changing countries. Changing jobs or passions. Wanting to stop working for a while...).

I am glad we talked about this, because ...

I am concerned that we talked about this, because ...

Day 7

Self-reflection:

What does it look like when I stop paying attention to my partner?

.....

What do I notice as signs that my partner stopped paying attention to me?

.....

Finish the sentence: If my partner doesn't pay attention to me I feel ...

.....

What would I find difficult to forgive?

.....

What do I think my partner would find difficult to forgive?

.....

Do I have a hard time forgiving? Was I able to forgive obstacles in the past?

.....

I am glad we talked about this, because ...

I am concerned that we talked about this, because ...

Day 8

Challenges:

How will I respond if I see that our marriage is going in a direction I do not want it to go?

(For example: One becomes a workaholic. Not enough time together. No shared experiences. Alcohol. Drugs. Weird friends. Too little time with sex/cuddle. Time spent with activities/people not enjoyed. Money unwisely spent. Risks were not agreed on. Feeling left alone with responsibilities. Wanting a different direction for your life)

How do we handle a little flirting?

What about porn?

What would you do if you notice that you find another woman/man attractive as a mate?

I am glad we talked about this, because ...

I am concerned that we talked about this, because ...

Day 9

Parenting:

Do we want children together?

If yes, what do we do if we can not have children naturally?

If we want children together:

- How would I envision us being parents?
- How do I see my part?
- How do I see your part?
- What do I want to teach our children?
- What do I want our children to experience? (*Sports. Travel. Hobbies. Extended family. Languages. Spirituality. Music. Community. Service...*)
- How are we going to deal with possible differences in raising them?
- If one of us is a stay-at-home-parent for a while, how do we want to handle that financially? What if we decide to separate when one of us is not bringing in income?

If we both have children from previous relationships:

- What challenges do I see in our family?
- Which challenges do I think you see in our family?
- How often do I feel like I have to defend "my children"? Why?
- How do we want to handle our challenges?
- How do I see my role with your children?
- How do I see your role with my children?
- What would I like to be different? Please describe exactly what your wishes are.

If you have no children yourself, but your partner does or the other way around:

- What is my place in the family?
- What do you expect of me?
- What do I want my part or position to be?
- Can I understand that children are always number one and can I accept that and see that as a blessing (having a partner who cares and loves his/her children)?
- Are there moments where I feel jealous and how do I deal with that?
- Do I have friends who support our patchwork family or do they make our life more difficult?
- Am I able to accept and honor the former partner (and parent) of my patchwork children?
- Am I able to calm a situation down?

I am glad we talked about this, because ...

I am concerned that we talked about this, because ...

Day 10

Separation:

If we should decide to separate: What can we promise each other about the handling of the situation?

The degree of honesty: Sharing thoughts about being unhappy and/or the thought of leaving

- Blaming or trying to understand
- Handling of your joint home
- Dealing with finances

Would we stay in the marriage if we have children, even if we are not happy? Why?

If we have children, what can we promise each other?

- Shared time with the children
- Responsibility with the children
- How is the living situation? How close will we be living together? (*One family home? Two different homes? The reason for this question is the following: Oftentimes people separate and one moves to another place, another city, another country or to a new partner far or further away.*)

How would we prefer to keep the core family healthy and intact?

How do we handle new partners?

I am glad we talked about this, because ...

I am concerned that we talked about this, because ...

Day 11

Finances:

In most couples, one has more financial backing than the other. Here are some questions about that:

- If this is the case, are we okay with that? Please share your concerns about that.
- How do we handle our finances now: What do I like? What could we do better?
- How do we want to handle our finances in the future? (*For example: Will there be a family account? A household account? If yes, what should that be used for?*)
- Do we like some privacy regarding our finances?
- Do we prefer separate accounts with separate responsibilities?

I am glad we talked about this, because ...

I am concerned that we talked about this, because ...

Day 12

Love:

There are five ways of love-showing:

Words. Presents. Time spent together. Things I do for you. Sex/Cuddle.

Pick two you show your love with and pick two your partner shows his/her love with.

I show my love with:

.....

I think my partner shows his/her love with:

.....

What do you think you do that annoys your partner?

He/she is annoyed by

.....
.....

What does your partner love about you?

He/She loves that I

.....
.....

Something to talk about: Is it a problem when I do things without you?

I am glad we talked about this, because ...

I am concerned that we talked about this, because ...

Day 13

Future:

1. Ten years from now: How do you live? What would a typical day be like? A typical year?
2. Twenty years from now: How do you live? What would a typical day be like? A typical year?
3. Thirty years from now: How do you live? What would a typical day be like? A typical year?

Write a list of at least five things that you definitely would like to experience in your lifetime?

I would like to experience:

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

What could you not live without?

.....

.....

.....

I am glad we talked about this, because ...

I am concerned that we talked about this, because ...

Day 14.

Your vows:

What would you like to promise each other during the time you are sharing your life together?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....