

Are You And Spouse Best Friends?

BY VAL FARMER

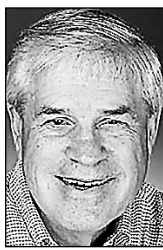
Answer true or false to the following statements:

- I can name my partner's best friends.
- I know what stress that my partner currently faces.
- I know the names of those who have been irritating my partner lately.
- I know some of my partner's life dreams.
- I am very familiar with my partner's religious beliefs.
- I can outline my partner's basic philosophy of life.
- I can list the relatives my partner likes the least.
- I know my partner's favorite music.
- I can list my partner's major aspirations.
- I know what my partner would do if he/she won the lottery.
- I can relate in detail my first impressions of my partner.
- I ask my partner about his/her world periodically.
- I feel my partner knows me fairly well.

Scoring: If you answered true to more than half, consider their friendship to be an area of strength in your marriage. These questions were adapted from John Gottman's, "Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work."

According to Gottman, successful couples have a, "mutual respect for and enjoyment of each other's company." They are emotionally supportive and find their partner to be an emotional friend, a helpmate, and a soul mate.

Couples, "know each other intimately if they are well versed in each other's likes, dislikes, personality quirks, hopes and dreams. They have an abiding regard for each other and express this fondness," in big and little ways, day in



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are accepted.

What happened? The courtship began with attraction, intimate communication, fun, friendship and delight in each other's company. With increased knowledge, a young couple came to appreciate, admire and respect their partner's unique talents, gifts, values, courage and specialness. Then they got married.

But instead of a lifelong friendship, many marriages end up "sleeping with the enemy." The years come and go and so does the friendship. Where does friendship go? How does it get lost as couples live side by side and share the same struggles in life? How is it they stop sharing and learning about each other? How does admiration and respect turn into contempt and intolerance?

There is the obvious. Not enough talking or listening. Not enough time together. Not enough fun. Not enough goals in common. Not enough effort is put into bringing two worlds together. But that leads to emotional distance, not to hostility and painful conflict.

There is the less obvious. The couples' inability to resolve conflict in a respectful manner has a corrosive effect on the friendship. In their anxiety to win an argument and create the change he or she wants, they don't listen to

each other. They react with anger, contempt, defensiveness, and refuse to meet their partner's requests. Oftentimes they are unwilling to discuss the issue. They justify their anger.

They don't put the brakes on their negative comments. They are intolerant of differences and see their spouse's motives as deliberate and provocative. Neither partner feels understood or cared for. Friendship in marriage is killed off bit by bit through repetitive, futile habits of fighting. Gradually the negative interactions cause the partners to see each other as sources of frustration and pain rather than pleasure and support.

Men and women used to come from common backgrounds and had clear ideas and expectations of each other in the marriage. Expectations have changed. Traditional cultures and religious faith put a premium on family harmony. Overt expression of anger was discouraged - especially when the kids were underfoot, which they nearly always were.

Modern couples expect more emotional rewards from marriage. Couples express themselves more. There are more opportunities for conflict, more opportunities to negotiate differences.

A survey has shown that men and women share the following perceptions of who withdraws during arguments: 1) men withdraw during arguments 42 percent of the time, 2) women withdraw in the 25 to 27 percent range, and 3) both withdraw in the 15-17 percent range. In only 15 percent of the cases does neither one withdraw. These are the couples who report having the best relationships.

What do they do? They keep their tempers under control. If they can't, they call timeout and agree to meet later. They take

pains not to escalate a fight. If they see that hurtful comments have harmed their relationship, they are quick to try to repair the damage with positive comments. Most of all, despite their own discomfort and emotional arousal, they show empathy and understanding for their partner's point of view and allow themselves to be influenced by it.

Listening to each other's complaints and frustrations deepens their understanding and their friendship. Each knows their partner better and respects their differences as normal and natural. Being right and being married don't go together. Through respectful conversational etiquette, they avoid rip-roaring, name-calling, blow out fights that destroy friendship, trust and respect.

By learning how to handle conflict better, couples can get back to the basics of friendship and getting to know one another and meet each other's needs with kindness instead of being locked into an endless cycle of bitter infighting and recrimination. Their conversational style reflects the equality of their partnership.

Want your friendship back? Learn marital manners. You can learn communication skills that will help you be a respectful listener, speaker or negotiator in the face of your normal differences.

For more information on marriage, visit Val Farmer's website at www.valfarmer.com.

Val Farmer is a clinical psychologist with MeritCare in Fargo, North Dakota. He specializes in rural mental health and family business consultation.

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VISITING HOURS:

Avera, Community Celebrate National Doctor's Day

BY PAMELA J. REZAC, ED.D.

President & CEO
Avera Sacred Heart Hospital



Rezac

Yesterday, March 30, we celebrated National Doctors Day. The Yankton region has every reason to celebrate this national day of observance.

We have a wealth of physicians in Yankton practicing a wide variety of specialties - something most cities the size of Yankton cannot claim.

At Avera Sacred Heart Hospital, we are grateful for the role physicians on our medical staff play in the health of our region. In addition to their expert knowledge in their specialties and their direct patient care, our local physicians are also mentors to future doctors through The University of South Dakota's Sanford School of Medicine.

All medical students from the school utilize the medical resources and the knowledge of our physicians during their four years of medical school. In addition, 12-14 third-year medical students, based on the Avera Sacred Heart Yankton Campus of the Sanford School of Medicine of The University of South Dakota, participate in the Yankton Ambulatory Program. This program gives these future doctors a chance to do rotations at all Yankton health care facilities in a wide variety of medical specialties. All of our physicians, in one way or another, give their time and expertise to educate these future doctors.

We are proud of the physicians in the Yankton community and grateful for their dedica-

tion to the health of our patients and families throughout the region. Whether they are doing a patient assessment, conducting rounds at the hospital, performing surgery or coming in to answer a call in the middle of the night, the physicians in the Yankton region are top notch and we salute them.

Doctor's Day History

The first Doctors' Day observance was held on March 30, 1933, by the Barrow County Auxiliary in Winder, Georgia. The idea of setting aside a day to honor physicians was conceived by Eudora Brown Almond, wife of Dr. Charles B. Almond, and the day was chosen to coincide with the anniversary of the first administration of anesthesia.

On March 30, 1958, a resolution commemorating Doctors' Day was adopted by the United States House of Representatives. In 1990, legislation was introduced in the House and Senate to establish a National Doctors' Day. Following overwhelming approval by the United States Senate and the House of Representatives, on Oct. 30, 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed the resolution designating March 30 as National Doctors' Day.

This weekly column is produced by the public relations office at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital to promote healthy lifestyles and provide useful medical information to our community.

Yankton Middle School, Sacred Heart Go 1-2 At Science Olympiad

Yankton Middle School's Science Olympiad Team repeated as State Champions with 53 points at the 26th Annual South Dakota Science Olympiad Tournament, held Saturday, March 27 on the USD Campus in Vermillion. The second place team was Sacred Heart Middle School of Yankton with 58 points. There were 10 teams that competed in the "B" division. Each team consists of up to 15 members from the 6th-9th grades.

Of the 23 competitions held, Yankton Middle School placed first in seven events, second in eight events, third in four events. Sacred Heart MS placed first in seven events, second in six and third in four events.

Individual Olympic-style medals were awarded to the first three place winners in each of the 23 events. Team trophies were awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place teams based on overall scoring.

The Yankton Middle School team has been invited to participate in the 26th National Science Olympiad Final at the University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois on May 21-22nd, 2010. This is also the 26th State Championship for the Yankton Middle School Team.

The State Science Olympiad Program is sponsored by the University of South Dakota and coordinated by State Director of Science Olympiad Clark Bennett of the University of South Dakota. The events are set-up and evaluat-

ed by USD Staff, students and volunteers from the surrounding area.

YANKTON MIDDLE SCHOOL:

Garrett Adam (7th Grade): 2nd place in Anatomy, 2nd place in Battery Buggy, 2nd place in Bio-Process Lab
Kim Cap (7th Grade): 2nd place in Anatomy, 2nd place in Fossils, 2nd place in Dynamic Planet
Silas Schaeffer (9th Grade): 2nd place in Battery Buggy, 1st place in Junkyard Challenge, 1st place in Physical Science Lab

Erica Westerman (7th Grade): 2nd place in Bio-Process Lab, 5th place in Can't Judge a Powder, 4th place in Pentathlon, 1st place in Science Crime Busters
Callie Pospishil (7th Grade): 5th place Can't Judge a Powder, 5th place Write It Do It
Cassie Pospishil (9th Grade): 2nd place Dynamic Planet, 1st place in Junkyard Challenge, 1st place in Science Crime Busters, 5th place in Write It Do It

Clara Schild (9th Grade): 3rd place in Road Scholar, 1st place in Wright Stuff, 3rd place in Disease Detectives, 3rd place in Experimental Design, 2nd place in Trajectory
Eileen Mullican (9th Grade): 1st place in Ornithology, 1st place in Physical Science Lab, 3rd place in Shock Value

Layne Droppers (8th Grade): 1st place in Elevated Bridge, 1st place in Wright Stuff, 2nd place in Trajectory, 2nd place in Solar System
Alexa Bryan (7th Grade): 1st place in Elevated Bridge, 4th place in Pentathlon
Amber Livingston (8th Grade): 4th place in Compute This, 2nd place in Solar System

Broc Mauch (7th Grade): 4th place in Compute This, 1st place in Meteorology, 1st place in Ornithology
Story Leshner (7th Grade): 2nd place in Ecology, 2nd place in Fossils, 3rd place in Shock Value
Alyssa Schild (8th Grade): 3rd place in Experimental Design, 1st place in Meteorology, 3rd place in Road Scholar, 4th place in Pentathlon
Jade Nelson (7th Grade): 3rd place in Disease Detectives, 2nd place in Ecology, 4th place in Pentathlon
Thomas Hill (6th Grade): Alternate
Mason Blaha (7th Grade): Alternate

The advisors for the Yankton Middle School Team are Tom Merrill, Elizabeth Dooley, Rebecca Corlew and Cheryl Schaeffer.

SACRED HEART MIDDLE SCHOOL:

Gold Medalists: Anatomy-Theresa Barnes and David Barnes; Dynamic Planet-Theresa Barnes and Alex Dangler; Experimental Design-Charlotte Ekeren, Ben Cameron and Madison

Dangler; Battery Buggy-Madison Dangler and Kelsey Fitzgerald; Pentathlon-Isaac Althoff, Alex Dangler, Sarah Hicks and Kelsey Fitzgerald; Trajectory-Jon Barkl and Charlie Stephenson; Shock Value-Jon Barkl and Matt Fitzgerald.

Silver Medalists: Write It Do It-Charlotte Ekeren and Ben Cameron; Physical Science Lab-Theresa Barnes and David Barnes; Wright Stuff-Isaac Althoff and Lucas Rockne; Meteorology-Isaac Althoff and Lucas Rockne; Can't Judge A Powder-Ben Cameron and Tyler Wenander; Ornithology-Lucas Rockne and Jon Barkl.

Bronze Medalists: Elevated Bridge-Alyssa Schroeder and Charlotte Ekeren; Ecology-Sarah Hicks, Kelsey Fitzgerald; Bio-Process Lab-Alyssa Schroeder and Madison Dangler; Junkyard Challenge-Alex Dangler and Matt Fitzgerald.

Team members also included Sam Bisgard and team alternates Charlie Stephenson and Cody Frakassilis. Coaches for the team were Marcia Olmes and Rebecca Peterson and all the parents of the team with special assistance from Rick and Mary Althoff, Glenn Ekeren, Jeff Barkl and Wade Dangler.

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FROM AVERA SACRED HEART

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