

“Year procedure” for a couple in order to keep a relationship healthy

OVERVIEW

I and my second wife read 1995 about a sect in North Italy, who had the principle to be married only one year a time. We thought that it was a good idea especially since we both had been in relationships, which not have ended up well. In the case of the sect the arrangement was that both partners had a “representative”, who before each “year-day” asked if there should be one more year or not.

We have done in a little different way. The objective for us is to have the relationship healthy, by being very and constructively honest in crucial issues at least once a year. Of course we also are like that all the time, but this time we sum up the year, which has gone and put forward what each of us wishes for the future. It is similar to the appraisal interview, which is used in the working life. Moreover it helps us to focus on what is important for us. This is good, because all of us are over-stimulated today, so it is easy to loose focus...

How do we do this? Well, on the year-day of the day we have met, we have a meeting when each of us answers four questions. It is not always we have the meeting exactly that day, but we have always the meeting a day around the year-day. We have now had such a meeting in many years and still we think it is very worthwhile. Now – 2014 – in 20 years...

We have so far during our 20 years together never had a destructive conflict. Of course we have different opinions in many topics, but we can handle that constructively. The conflicts remain sound and don't change to be destructive. Reasonably contribute our year procedures. We know each others goal and therefore we understand each others priorities.

Step 1

Each of you take an empty A4-sheet and make a layout for the following questions:

1.What has been fun with the year, which has gone? I e general good events for me or for us both together.

2.What has been difficult for me during the year, which has gone?

Referring to the same principle as in the former question, but now it is about events, which have been difficult with the partner. How should the partner otherwise have the possibility to explain himself/herself or consider to solve the other partner's problem. Of course it could also be wise to be open about other difficult experiences during the year.

3.My vision for the future. With the time horizon of some years. A life situation, which you really wish. Everyone hasn't a clear opinion about their vision, so below you can get some tips how to do...

4. What do I hope for the next year? As question 1, but for the next year. Look at it as a step goal to your vision or as your “carrots” for a better “future”;-)

Step 2

After you have answered the questions you should talk them through e.g. one of you can start with the answer of the first question, then the other answer the same question. After that the other continues with the second question, etc. Make then a copy of the sheets, because they could be interesting to look at before next year's meeting. We end then the meeting with a three-course-dinner and enjoy our relationship;-)

How could you keep a relationship healthy by doing this – referring to the questions?

1. You realise hopefully that you have had some fun during the year. It is easy to forget – especially when you just now have many troubles;-) Moreover this question gives energy to the relationship and supports to carry out the year procedure – especially the next question. If you don't have had so much fun, then it is important to discuss: What can you do about that?
2. This is probably the most difficult question and the most crucial in order to get no energy drain in the relationship. There is not so much space on the sheet, so there is only place for important issues. Moreover a human being can normally only improve one bad habit a time. What is important is up to each of you to decide. For one of you it could be e.g. “the handling of the toothpaste tube”, which is very important. However, it is crucial that each of you give priority to the behaviour, which is most irritating. Otherwise that partner has been unfair to the other;-)
3. All hidden objectives come up on the surface, which explains each person's priorities. This doesn't mean that the objectives have been consciously hidden, but because they are hidden it will cause unnecessary conflicts. If the wishes about the future go in different directions, then it needs to be discussed. Otherwise you could drift apart from each other or the other person adopt too much, which will not be good in the long run.
4. The last question aims for giving each of you a “goal-picture” for the next year. Moreover, it gives possibilities to help each other to accomplish the other partner's wishes. For some people it feels awkward to have a goal-picture, but it increases the probability that the wishes come true – you get in this way a better focus. So you need to have the right wishes;-)

How to get a vision?

Everyone has not a clear opinion of how a vision can support a better future. One crucial advantage is that your subconscious will also go for your vision. The same as athletes use mental training and goal pictures. More powerful than most people realize.

Some people believe in prophecies of doom and that they can occur. Compare with having a positive vision and that it happens...

How to create your positive vision? Everyone don't have so easy to create "wish lists". There is however a smart way... Instead of creating a vision directly you look in your rear-view mirror and answer the question: What has been fun in my life so far? Most often there are something, isn't it? Moreover, everything is also relative, so in worst case you can think what has been least bad...

Take a note pad of any kind. Note one thing per sheet of paper. When you can't note any more, then you sort your sheets in piles and on them you put "label sheets". Based on these sheets and the content per pile you can probably create a vision.

One tip, when you express your vision, is that you should be more in principal or "rough". If you are very specific, then your vision can be very hard to accomplish. Compare that you have a vision to go to New York with

- To go to a mega town or
- To go to a place, which can give very powerful experiences or
- To go to a place with a lot of creativity or
- Etc.

If the visions differ...

At first think how good it is that you discover this early instead of many years later, because then it can be hard to handle the consequences of everything, which have happened during the past years. One of the great advantages with doing this yearly procedure is actually to discover more or less incompatible visions – in time!

How then to handle the differences? At first you have to investigate how respective visions are expressed, i.e. are they very specific – look in the section above – or are they more in principal (rough). In the latter case it will be easier to adjust to each other visions. Then of course it is crucial to determine what needs are most important for each of you. After that you should check, if you can create a "vision package", which both of you could accept.

Another aspect of this is that it is valuable in itself to know each other priorities, because you then understand each other expectations. It gives a good platform for need-based problem solving. One example...

My wife had an expectation on me that I should have figured out what we should have as dinner for the Friday evening, if I worked at home and she was working in the city that Friday. Moreover, I should also have fixed that all ingredients were at home and also started to prepare the dinner. I was for a long time unaware of her expectation. Gradually I felt that there was something...

We talked therefore about it. After a while we reached a deal, which was OK for us both. One obstacle for me to meet her expectations was that I am neither good in cooking nor like to cook. If I should do a Friday dinner, then I would have needed the whole Friday to accomplish that. Perhaps also the dinner would not be good enough. Moreover, it would be "expensive" with a big "income reduction" from my work...

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We agreed on the following “package”

- my wife does normally the Friday dinner
- we do the Saturday dinner together, i.e. she is master and I be journeyman
- I do the Sunday dinner with my wife as an advisor

IT has now been working during many years. I am better in cooking and it can also happen that I think it is fun;-) I have also become more interested in recipes, cooking tricks, etc.

Katarina & Rolf wish Good luck!

P.S. A colleague to Rolf has done the year procedure after 11 years of marriage and their opinion was to recommend it. They appreciated most were that they came back to the core of their relationship. They think that it is easier to keep it that way now.

One more possibility to care about the relation...

The autumn 2012 we developed HumanGuide Cards – an additional product in the HumanGuide-concepts. Cards consists of a deck of cards and an app. The app you will reach by registering on the address cards.humanguide.se (no costs). The app is among other things a mobile crib page, i.e. there you can get tips how to show that you appreciate your life partner. In the app’s menu there is a button, which is named ”How to show that I like”, there you find the tips based on what factor, which is dominant in your life partner’s personality.

The app’s crib pages consists of extracts from my book “Let the Personality Bloom”. The deck of cards and the app can also be used in order to improve a relation or cooperation in a team. More information on my website www.humanguide.com.