

CAN THIS BE LOVE?

EMERGENCY! Is your partner a help or a hindrance in a crisis?

Even if your life runs so smoothly that the envious describe it as humdrum, chances are that you will occasionally be faced with a crisis. At those times—when your cat disappears through an open window or your passport disappears into thin air (on the gangplank of QE2)—it is particularly gratifying to have a partner on whom you can depend for help with life's little emergencies.

Of course, some partners are more dependable than others, so it's a good idea to have a sense of your own mate's ability to cope in a crisis. That way, when the time comes to rely on him, you won't be surprised when he proves as useful as a paper crutch. Let's see how you think he'd do in the follow-

ing hypothetical (God willing!) situations:

1. In the process of making dinner, you accidentally mistake your small finger for an onion, cutting a gash in it wide enough to float a canoe. You scream for your partner who, seeing your predicament, promptly:

a) echoes your screams, before fainting;
b) comes running at a gallop, trips over a chair and hits his head on the stove hood but manages, bleeding himself, to get you into the car and over to the nearest emergency room;

c) ties a tourniquet on your finger with one hand and with the other dials a private ambulance and paramedic service that he's memorized for just such emergencies.

2. While the two of you are on vacation, your handbag, containing most of your own and your partner's travelers checks, is stolen. He reacts by:

a) accusing you of criminal negligence for leaving your bag in such a vulnerable place (the hotel safe) and speculating on the possibility that, without any money, the two of you will wind up in a Mexican jail charged with vagrancy;

b) calling the American Embassy to ask for help and, when that fails, calling his

mother for money;

c) producing a record of your check numbers that he's sequestered in the heel of his shoe, calling a worldwide, toll-free number to report their theft and picking up replacement checks from a bank near the restaurant where you are having dinner, compliments of your hotel.

3. You are expecting thirty people at eight o'clock for drinks and a buffet dinner, and at 6:30 P.M. you learn that your caterer has mistakenly sent all of your food to an Elks Lodge sixty miles away. Your partner:

a) spends the time remaining before the party planning revenge on the caterer, including instituting a million-dollar law suit and switching his stores of salt and sugar;

b) runs out of the house without a word and returns triumphant at 7:55 P.M. with an armload of frozen quiches;

c) quickly calls his friend who owns a French bistro and who, an hour later, replaces your undelivered cold cuts and potato salad with enough foie gras and cassoulet to feed the province of Gascony.

4. On the way to your sister's wedding, your car makes a gasping noise and shudders to a stop, refusing to be revived. At this point your partner:

a) sits back in his seat and, looking a little too relaxed to suit you, remarks that this might just be one gathering of your family horde he's going to miss;

b) jumps out of the car and starts waving frantically at passing cars, by which his tuxedo is hopelessly splattered with mud;

c) calmly takes out his CB radio and contacts someone who calls the AAA, of which he is a lifetime member.

5. At nine o'clock one night there is an electrical blackout, plunging your neighborhood into darkness. At this your partner:

a) goes to bed;

b) knocks over several plants and steps on the dog before finding a flashlight, which has no batteries;

c) whips out candles, a portable radio and a can of Sterno, and serves you a candlelight dinner accompanied by the sound of violins.

SCORING: After judging your partner's probable reactions, give him 1 point for every a, 2 points for every b and 3 points for every c. If he scored from 13 to 15 points, relax. When it comes to crises, you are in roughly the same amount of danger as Lois Lane. If he scored between 9 and 12 points, you might be able to rely on him in some instances. But make it a rule *not* to depend on him when the emergency in question could, by any stretch of the imagination, be considered life-threatening. If he scored from 5 to 8 points, when it comes to an emergency you must consider yourself a single woman. Your partner would be about as helpful as a snowball in a fire.

Forewarned is forearmed.



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