

CAN THIS BE LOVE?

THE TEN-CAREER COUPLE Nine of the jobs are yours, one is his

Do you ever have the feeling that your partner doesn't appreciate you? That he doesn't value your efforts on behalf of the relationship, or recognize the fact that without you his life would be chopped liver? Perhaps it's time you did something to make him realize what you're really worth. For starters, calculate from the following list how many jobs you do within the context of your relationship.

BOOKKEEPER: You know this is your job if: (a) When the telephone bill arrives, you are the one to inspect the charges and point out to your partner that neither of you knows anyone in Caracas, let alone anyone you'd want to call and talk to for forty-five minutes; (b) When your monthly statement arrives from the bank and you go over your partner's withdrawals, you have to remind him not to confuse himself with Ferdinand Marcos; (c) When your partner insists there is no way he could amass a charge-card balance of \$1,207.23 in only one month, you are the one who spends half an hour going through all his pockets and assembling the receipts that prove he has dressed and eaten his way to the poorhouse.

CAREER COUNSELOR: You can tell this is your function if: (a) Your partner comes home fed up from a day at work, ready to throw away eight years with the same insurance firm to become a magician, and you are the one who counsels him to sleep on it; (b) He can't decide between a job that pays a lot and one that pays less but offers the opportunity to travel extensively, and you steer him in the obviously right direction; (c) You often help him solve work-related problems, such as finding the best way to tell his superior that he doesn't consider being given the job of buying uniforms for the company softball team an adequate substitution for a promotion.

DIETITIAN: This is your part-time career if: (a) You are always bringing fresh fruit into the house, in the hope that your partner might be tempted to reject his usual snack of chocolate nougats in favor of an apple; (b) You're the only one in your household who knows what lentils actually look like; (c) You've consistently had to point out to your partner that eating vegetables does not automatically make him a wimp.

HEALTH-CARE WORKER: You hold this position if: (a) You're the one to poke holes in your partner's contention that there are fewer health benefits from physical exertion performed on a weekend; (b) You have to

remind him that "feed a fever..." does not mean stuffing his face with beef enchiladas; (c) You are the only one in the house who can read a thermometer.

HOUSEKEEPER: You can bet you do this job if: (a) You suspect that without your efforts, your partner's home would resemble either a two-thousand-year-old archeological dig, an abode shared by a prospector and his donkey, or an indoor stadium after a well-attended sports event; (b) You spend a goodly amount of your time making the place look as if it is inhabited by two people who understand the link between filth and disease.

LIAISON OFFICER: This is you if: (a) You are always the one who has to tell his parents why you can't see them on any given day of the year; (b) You have to ask your hostess at a dinner party to provide ketchup for your partner, who likes it on *pâté*.

PERSONAL SHOPPER: Add this to your résumé if: (a) You find yourself continually purchasing bottles of contact-lens cleaner, even though you have 20/20 vision; (b) Your shopping list has a lot of entries made in a handwriting other than your own; (c) Along with his height and weight, you know your partner's sleeve length.

PSYCHOLOGIST: This is your avocation if: (a) You helpfully point out to your partner those occasions when he is simply being neurotic; (b) He comes down with the flu before his parent's fortieth anniversary party and you suggest that his illness is psychosomatic and the product of his warped attitude toward marriage; (c) He laughs at Dustin Hoffman playing *Tootsie*, and you "diagnose" that he is revealing his hidden hostility toward the entire female sex.

WARDROBE CONSULTANT: Count this among your skills if: (a) You were the one to suggest that instead of *wearing* his lucky tie (the one with his hand-painted portrait on it) to an important interview, he should stuff it in his pocket; (b) When he considered buying a red running suit that came with a matching Santa's cap, you told him to go ahead only if he liked the idea of moving to the North Pole; (c) You had to repack his suitcase before your vacation, removing the wool shirts and cashmere sweaters he considered necessary for the Caribbean.

Once you have established which jobs are yours within the relationship—not forgetting the standard female roles that I haven't bothered to include on my list, such as surrogate mother and scapegoat—compute the average number of hours per week you perform them. Then check out the federal government's suggested hourly wage for each job. Those figures should allow you to prepare a fairly accurate bill, which you can whip out and present to your partner next time he has the audacity to ask, "Why do I always have to do everything around here?"

by Bette-Jane Raphael