

The Elasticity Contract

FILLED IN BY · DATE / / · ONE OF YOU

Fill this in alone. Different rooms, no conferring — that is the active ingredient. **Start with the last column.** Until *Limit* is written, the other three are a trap. Then swap pages, and read your partner's *Limit* column first, before anything else. Don't discuss it. Read it. Then look for where their **Costly** meets your **Natural**: that is an effort that costs them dearly and costs you nothing. Those are the free trades of a shared life, and most couples never find them.

NATURAL	ELASTIC	COSTLY	LIMIT
what I give without thinking	what I could learn to give	what I can do, but not every day	what I must not accept

Revisit: / /

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The Gap

SCORED BY · DATE / / · ONE OF YOU

Score alone, out of sight of the other page. 0 = rarely true · 1 = sometimes · 2 = most of the time · 3 = reliably true. Then, together: **do not add up the columns.** Read the two pages line against line. A pair of low scores is a shared project. **A gap of two or more is a translation error in progress.** Watch 11 against 12, 16 against 17, 8 against 15. One gap per round of the Two Turns — not all at once. Then date this page and keep it. In three months: fresh page, same twenty lines, and compare the gaps, never the scores.

1.

When I say I'm tired, I feel heard before I'm handed a solution.

☐
2.

I can tell the difference between my partner's silence and my partner's absence.

☐
3.

I can name one thing my partner did this week that nobody asked them to do.

☐
4.

When we argue, I know what we're actually arguing about.

☐
5.

When my partner needs to be alone, I know they're coming back — and roughly when.

☐
6.

In a room where I'm being made small, I trust my partner to be on my side out loud.

☐
7.

I can reach for my partner without rehearsing what I'll do if they turn away.

☐
8.

My partner can say "not tonight" without me hearing "not you."

☐
9.

Decisions that touch both of us are made by both of us.

☐
10.

I know which of my partner's efforts cost them the most — including the ones I never asked for.

☐
11.

I believe my partner sees how much I carry.

☐
12.

I could list what my partner carries that shows up on no statement.

☐
13.

This week I thanked my partner for something specific enough that no one else's partner could claim the sentence.

☐
14.

I can refuse something my partner asks without them concluding they don't matter.

☐
15.

I can be refused without concluding I don't matter.

☐
16.

I know my partner's limit — the thing I must not ask of them.

☐
17.

My partner knows mine.

☐
18.

I am not carrying any decision alone in order to spare them.

☐
19.

If tonight is ordinary — dinner, dishes, nothing special — that feels like enough, not like settling.

☐
20.

I can name our "someday, maybe" — and I believe we'll say it out loud this month.

☐

Widest gap tonight: line · Next round: / /

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