

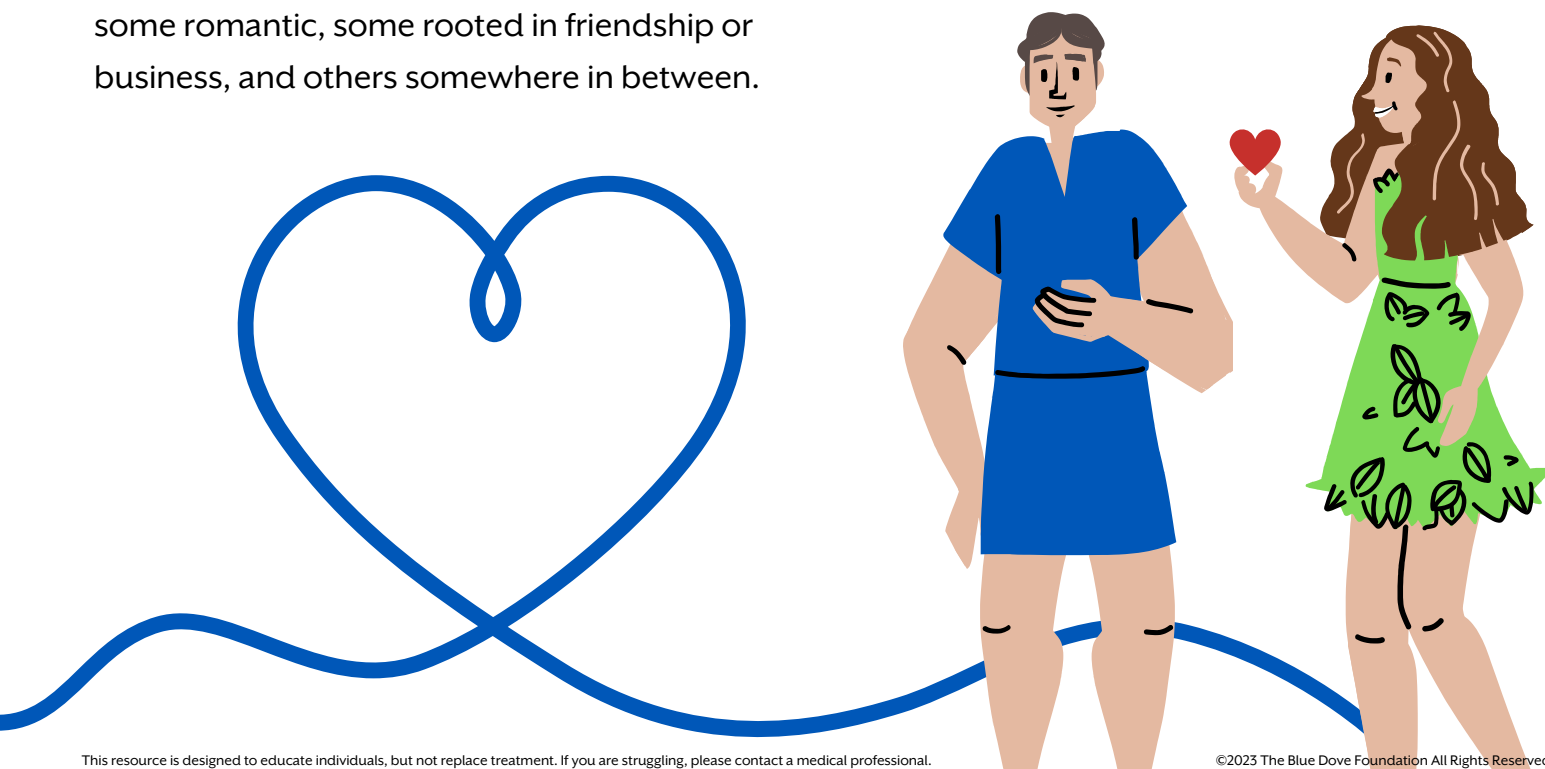


# YOU'RE IN A RELATIONSHIP. NOW WHAT?

On Tu B'Av, a holiday of love, we celebrate the relationships we cherish and appreciate the love we share with others. But mental health concerns can get in the way of genuinely being close to those around us, resolving conflict in a healthy way or even feeling safe in a relationship. Learning how to address these concerns in a robust and constructive way is crucial.

Genesis describes the creation of Adam and Eve with the general lesson that it is unhealthy for people to be alone; rather, people are meant to find connections with others. Before Eve appears, God promises to provide Adam an “ezer kenegdo” (Genesis 2:18), which can be translated in several ways, including “helpmate” and “counterpart.” Eve was intended to be a partner who supported Adam. But God did not simply give Adam a helpmate; one who is kenegdo has been understood to be someone who stands before or opposite another — to show support and/or provide feedback. An ideal partner is more than just a “yes” person; they can respond to and critique their partner and be a collaborative and equal part of the relationship.

We engage in different types of relationships throughout our lives — some romantic, some rooted in friendship or business, and others somewhere in between.





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**Darrah Brustein**, a personal and business coach (<https://darrah.co>) and friend of Blue Dove, uses the following questions in her relationship and shares them with others to use within their own. She encourages people to check in with their partner monthly and ensure they are connecting, in sync and feeling heard.



Consider using these questions with your partner or another individual in your life for a purposeful and intentional check-in. These questions are meant to be collaborative and supportive, just as Eve was an ezer kenegdo to Adam, and to create a healthy and ongoing conversation. “They are also designed to create space for challenges as well as for gratitude and appreciation (not just one or the other).” They can be used more often if needed.

## Ensuring an Effective Check-in:

A proper and effective check-in needs intentionality. You want both partners to feel focused, comfortable and calm to ensure you both have the space to say what needs to be said and address what needs to be addressed.

- Select a happy and physically comfortable space without any distractions. (No electronics, pets or other individuals).
- Consider writing your answers to the questions in a dedicated notebook you can review and reference as you continue engaging in this exercise.
- Be kind to yourself and your partner, knowing you each might be more or less comfortable with an activity like this. You should dive as deeply into these questions as you feel comfortable going.





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## Questions:

**What is something I can do more or less of to make you feel more loved?**

**What was this month's high/low point?**

**What's one thing I did this month that made you feel loved?**

**What are you most proud of when it comes to us as a couple?**

- What are you most proud of about yourself?

- What have I done that made you most proud of me?

**What's your biggest current worry (personally or professionally)?**

**What's your goal/hope/intention for us over the next month?**

Have some fun with the last question; ask a silly hypothetical or tell a joke to lighten the tension. "Remember, this is an exercise centered around the intention of growth (not finger-pointing). If coming from a place of love and introspection, and if all thoughts are shared with a common vision of (strengthening) your relationship rather than trying to hurt one another, this can be an effective tool. After all, it's often the things that spark a response in us that are the keys to the areas in which we have room to grow."



**"Love is what redeems us from the prison cell of the self and all the sickness to which the narcissistic self is prone — from empty pride to deep depression to a sense of nihilism and the abyss." — Rabbi Jonathan Sacks Z"L**

These questions have been adapted from an article Darrah wrote for Forbes.

This resource is designed to educate individuals, but not replace treatment. If you are struggling, please contact a medical professional.

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