

FREE TIME

"FREE"TIME

is just that – time free from commitments, obligations, and requirements. It is self-defined; it can be whatever you want it to be. Depending on your stage of life, there are factors that determine just how much free time you have. Work, children, and other responsibilities dictate how much time is left over.

It is important to acknowledge that you probably can't change the amount of time you have in the free category, but **you can change how you choose to spend it.**

Now, consider your free time through the lens of your relationship. When you have free time available, **you have a choice to choose an activity you do with your partner or an activity you enjoy without your partner. There isn't a bad choice here. Both are healthy because relationships thrive on balance.** Remember, balance doesn't mean it has to be equal. To ensure you keep a healthy balance, **talk with your partner about expectations and the reality of the choices you each make regarding your free time.**

DISCUSSION

// Discuss what external (time, money, etc.) and internal (energy level, interest, etc.) resources are required for you and your partner to spend time together. Consider what resources are needed to spend time separate from each other.

// What are barriers to spending time together? What are the barriers to finding time apart from each other?

// On average, how much free time do you and your partner each have in a week? What outside factors impact the amount of free time each of you have?

// Have you discussed preferences for how you and your partner enjoy spending free time together? Or do you rely on assumptions from how you have historically enjoyed time together? How have you and your partner's preferences changed over time?

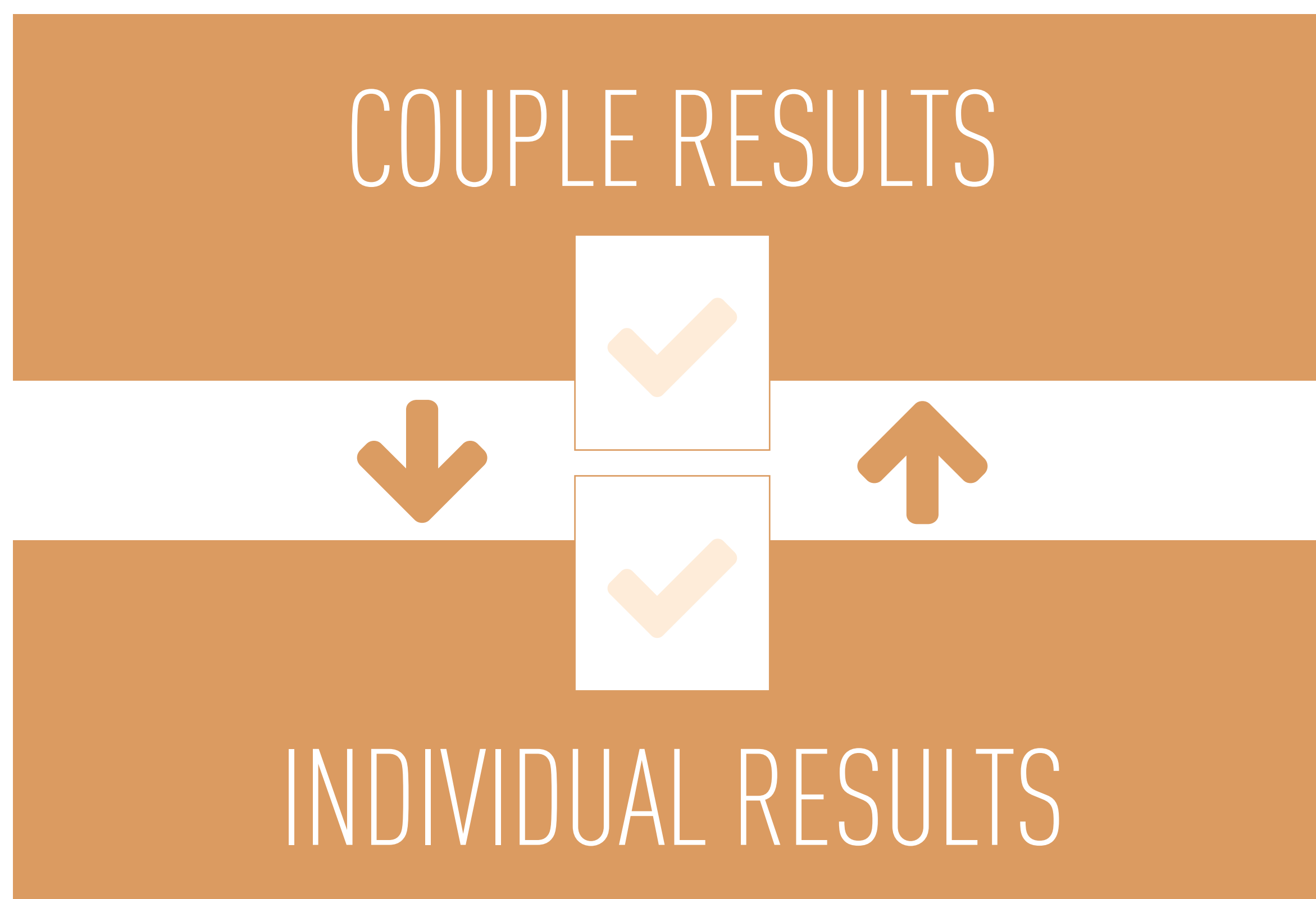
// Is the free time you and your partner spend together quality time? How is "quality" defined? Are there times when quantity is favored over quality?

CHECK IN WITH CHECKUP

Check in with your Couple Checkup results

by reviewing the *Leisure Activities* (married couples) and *SCOPE Personality* sections of your report.

Are you surprised by the suggested discussion items?



Look at your individual results for Leisure Activities

- Does this accurately reflect how you feel about spending time with and without your partner?

Review how you and your partner scored on each dimension of the SCOPE Personality. How does personality impact how you spend free time?

TAKEAWAY

Discuss expectations for free time and strive for a balance between spending time together and apart.

APPLICATION

Decide on a time frame – 1 week, 30 days, or whatever is manageable for your schedules. Now try to schedule free time together and free time apart – yes, actually write it down or add it to your calendar on your phone! It will seem silly to add this to a calendar, but it will increase the likelihood of it actually happening.

NEXT STEPS

Pick a time to review this topic again. Maybe it's the first Saturday of next month when you drink coffee and read the paper together before the kids are up? Or maybe it's before your next date night? Whatever feels right to you. The key here is to establish a time to discuss free time again, thus creating some accountability for both you and your partner.

SECTION SUGGESTION

Consider exploring **Money** or **Expectations** next.