

There's an unspoken contract in friendship: You be there for me, I'll be there for you. But what if one of you isn't living up to her end of the deal? (What if it's *you*?) Sometimes it's okay to keep score, says Martha Beck. Just go through this who-does-what-for-whom list, and find out how you score.

1. Initiate contact between the two of you (by calling, e-mailing, dropping by for a visit, sending an invitation to an event, etc.).

I do this for my friend:

never     rarely     sometimes  
 often     always

My friend does this for me:

never     rarely     sometimes  
 often     always

2. Create a supportive atmosphere, making a point of being cheerful, encouraging, and caring enough to make the other person feel good.

I do this for my friend:

never     rarely     sometimes  
 often     always

My friend does this for me:

never     rarely     sometimes  
 often     always

3. Prepare a special event (a dinner, birthday party, fun activity) for both of you to do together.

I do this for my friend:

never     rarely     sometimes  
 often     always

My friend does this for me:

never     rarely     sometimes  
 often     always

4. Stand up for the friend with other people; defend or support her when people aren't treating her well.

I do this for my friend:

never    rarely    sometimes  
 often    always

My friend does this for me:

never    rarely    sometimes  
 often    always

5. Focus on the other person's problems; offer empathy, understanding, kindness, comfort, and verbal reassurance.

I do this for my friend:

never    rarely    sometimes  
 often    always

My friend does this for me:

never    rarely    sometimes  
 often    always

6. Physically help out with the other person's life: show up to take care of things when the other is ill; take care of pets, plants, children while friend is out of town.

I do this for my friend:

never    rarely    sometimes  
 often    always

My friend does this for me:

never    rarely    sometimes  
 often    always

7. Give small (or large) presents that will mean a lot to the other person. Remember birthdays and other occasions that are personally significant to that person.

I do this for my friend:

never    rarely    sometimes  
 often    always

My friend does this for me:

never    rarely    sometimes  
 often    always

8. Compliment the other person's looks, intelligence, talent, importance, fashion sense, magnanimity, and other sterling qualities.

I do this for my friend:

never    rarely    sometimes  
 often    always

My friend does this for me:

never    rarely    sometimes  
 often    always

9. Help the other person feel better after unpleasant interactions with others (issues at the office, family-of-origin drama, and above all, the processing of romantic relationship dynamics).

I do this for my friend:

never    rarely    sometimes  
 often    always

My friend does this for me:

never    rarely    sometimes  
 often    always

10. Make a point of being punctual for appointments, keeping promises no matter what, and remembering and honoring all commitments.

I do this for my friend:

never    rarely    sometimes  
 often    always

My friend does this for me:

never    rarely    sometimes  
 often    always

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**MY TOTAL SCORE: 30**

**MY FRIENDS TOTAL SCORE: 22**

Now subtract your friend's score from yours. This may be a negative number: 8

**Between +8 and -8:** You have a balanced relationship with this person, and that's the starting place for all really beautiful friendships. If the relationship is relatively new, pay attention to maintaining the balance that allows you and your friend to both care for and be cared for by each other. If the relationship is a long-standing one, thank Zeus and give yourself a libation. Few things in life are as precious as a balanced friendship, and you've got one.

**MY TOTAL SCORE: 34**

**MY FRIENDS TOTAL SCORE: 7**

Now subtract your friend's score from yours. This may be a negative number: 27

**Between +40 and +25:** Hello-o-o-o! You are an echo-o-o-o! Seriously, in this relationship, you're doing way too much of the work and allowing yourself to be devalued. At some level, you know this. If you begin standing up for yourself, expecting fair treatment and reciprocity, you may lose the relationship. But if you don't, you'll lose your soul. Time to step up.