



Love Check-Up

Relationship Report

Personalised Report for Jess

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I. WELCOME

A note before you read

Hi Jess — thank you for completing the Love Check-Up. What follows is a personalised look at love and satisfaction in your relationship with John, grounded in three of the most widely used scientific instruments in contemporary love research.

Before we begin, a few things to keep in mind. I am a love researcher, not a psychologist or therapist. This is not a clinical evaluation, and I will not be giving you advice or telling you what to do. What I will do is walk you through what the science says about your responses — and what patterns show up in your data. This is a personalised research-based report, not a psychological assessment or therapeutic intervention. It is what a love researcher can tell you about what your answers look like against the published literature.

Romantic love is one of the most universal human experiences. Research across 168 cultures has found evidence of it in virtually all of them (Bode & Kushnick, 2021). It is not a Western invention or a modern luxury — it is part of who we are as a species. But how love shows up, how it feels, and how it changes over time varies enormously from person to person, and across the years of a single relationship.

That last point matters for you, Jess. You have been with John for seventeen years. The shape of love at that stage is almost always different from the shape of love at the start. Your results are yours alone. Let us see what they say.

II. THE FRAMEWORK

Understanding love in romantic relationships

Researchers generally distinguish between two broad types of love in romantic relationships. The first is romantic love — the intense, consuming experience of being drawn to someone. It is what people usually mean when they say they are “in love.” Romantic love involves a strong desire for closeness, obsessive thinking about a loved one, idealisation, and a feeling that the other person is deeply special.

The second is companionate love — the warm, steady affection and attachment that grows over time. It is about trust, comfort, deep familiarity, and mutual support. It does not burn the way romantic love does, but it endures. Most long-term relationships are built on it.

These two kinds of love are not opposites. They often overlap, especially in the early and middle years of a relationship. Over time, romantic love tends to give way to companionate love — the intensity eases and something steadier takes its place. My colleague Associate Professor Phillip Kavanagh and I ran the Romantic Love Survey 2022 at the University of Canberra, the largest study of romantic love ever conducted, and one of its clearest findings is that both forms coexist in many relationships, though their balance shifts over the years.

This report covers both, along with your overall relationship satisfaction, to give you a picture of where your relationship with John sits right now.

III. THE INSTRUMENTS

The science behind this report

This report draws on three validated research instruments from the scientific literature, along with a small set of contextual questions about your life with John. These are instruments used in both academic and applied settings. Here they are being used to give a personalised, non-clinical picture of your relationship.

The Passionate Love Scale – Short Form (PLS-5) captures yearning, physical attraction, and idealisation — the hallmarks of being “in love.” Despite the name, it measures romantic love, not a separate construct. This report uses the Passionate Love Scale – Short Form (PLS-5), a brief version of the widely-used Passionate Love Scale (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986) currently undergoing cross-cultural validation (Kowal, Scheller, Łakomy, Muzek et al., in preparation).

The Triangular Love Scale (TLS-15) is based on Sternberg’s (1986) theory that love has three core components: intimacy, passion, and commitment. The TLS-15 was validated across 37 countries with over 60,000 participants as part of the Romantic Love Survey 2022 (Kowal et al., 2024).

The Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS) measures your overall satisfaction with your relationship (Hendrick, 1988). It covers how well your needs are met, how your relationship compares to others, and how you feel about its direction.

Alongside these instruments, I have included questions about your relationship context — duration, status, how often you have sex, and how much time you spend thinking about John. These help interpret your scores in the context of your actual life.

IV. ROMANTIC LOVE

Your PLS-5 result

Your romantic love intensity was measured using the Passionate Love Scale – Short Form. Despite its name, it measures romantic love — the yearning, physical attraction, and idealisation that mark the experience of being “in love.”

ROMANTIC LOVE INTENSITY (PLS - 5)

3.0 / 7.0

Low range — some elements present

Your PLS-5 score of 3.0 sits in the low range — some elements of romantic love appear to be present, but the pattern is not consistent with being “in love” in the intense sense. For context, the original validation work on the full Passionate Love Scale (Hatfield & Sprecher, 1986) found that women in relationships they described as being “in love” scored well above the scale midpoint. Your score falls below that benchmark. That does not speak to whether you love John — that is a separate question, and your other scores address it differently. What the PLS-5 can say is that the specific flavour of love it measures, the intense and consuming kind, does not appear to be a strong feature of your responses right now.

Looking at the individual items sharpens the picture. Your response on the appetite-for-affection item (5.0) stands alone as the highest score in your entire PLS-5 profile. That is a meaningful finding — your response on that item is consistent with a continued pull toward John specifically, even where other markers have softened.

The rest of the profile reads as muted. Your scores on yearning to know all about John (3.0) and melting-when-looking-into-his-eyes (3.0) both sit at the midpoint — responses consistent with familiarity and fondness rather than consuming feelings. After seventeen years together, that is not unusual.

Your scores on the delight-in-his-body item (2.0) and the perfect-romantic-partner item (2.0) both sit below the midpoint. These are the items most closely tied to physical idealisation and romantic infatuation — and they are the ones that tend to soften most across the long years of a relationship.

This fits a pattern often seen in long-term relationships. It does not point to an absence of love so much as a shift in what love looks like over time.

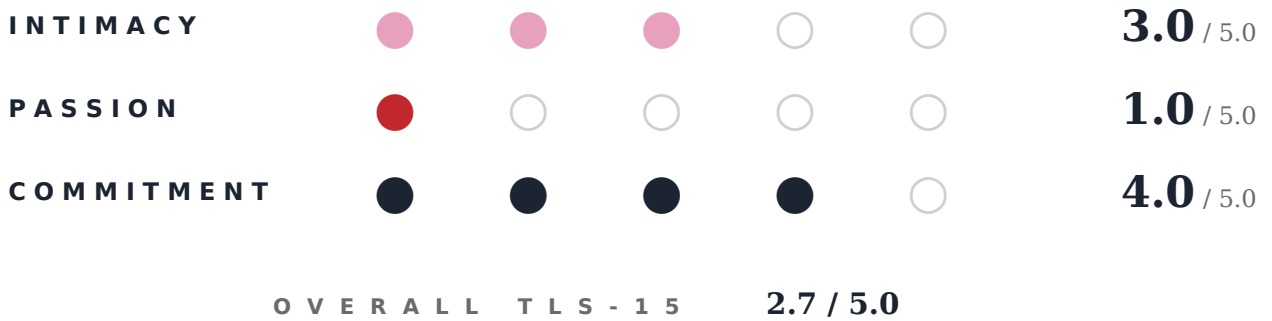
A NOTE ON WAKING HOURS

You reported spending less than 10% of your waking hours thinking about John. This matters. Obsessive thinking about a loved one is one of the most reliable cognitive markers of romantic love — it reflects what is happening in a person's mind, not an outward behaviour (Bode, 2023). A response of under 10% is consistent with your PLS-5 score of 3.0. The two readings agree: your responses do not look like those of someone currently in the consuming mental preoccupation that marks intense romantic love. For someone seventeen years into a partnership with two children, daily life may also leave less mental space for relationship-focused thoughts.

V. THE THREE COMPONENTS

Your Triangular Love Scale result

The TLS-15 measures three components of love: intimacy (warmth, closeness, emotional support), passion (romance, attraction, the sense that the relationship is special), and commitment (stability, permanence, certainty). Together, they map the shape of your love for John.



For reference, TLS-15 subscale scores run from 1.0 to 5.0. The published interpretation ranges are 1.0–2.0 low, 2.1–3.0 below average, 3.1–3.5 moderate, 3.6–4.0 above average, 4.1–4.5 high, and 4.6–5.0 very high. Your three scores span almost the full width of that scale.

Your intimacy score of 3.0 sits in the below-average range. The individual items suggest warmth and mutual support are present, but the score is not at the ceiling you might find in a relationship at peak closeness. Your response on the comfortable-relationship item (4.0) is the strongest of the five — consistent with being at ease with him after seventeen years of knowing someone. Warmth, emotional support, and valuing him greatly all landed at 3.0, solid and present without glowing. The feeling-understood item dropped to 2.0, your lowest intimacy score. That is worth noticing. Feeling understood tends to be the part of intimacy most closely tied to ongoing emotional connection — when it slips, it often reflects a period in which the partnership has become more about logistics and less about inner life.

Your passion score of 1.0 is a floor score — every single passion item scored at the absolute minimum. That is rare, and it is the single most striking number in your profile. Your responses were: not at all romantic (1.0), John as not at all personally attractive (1.0), you could easily imagine another person making you as happy (1.0), nothing “magical” about the relationship (1.0), and not passionate (1.0). Five items, five floors. A score this low suggests the romantic-passionate dimension has quietened substantially. Your own words — “the passion is gone” — are consistent with what the scale shows.

Your commitment score of 4.0 is above average — a clear, steady anchor in the middle of a profile that otherwise shows passion at the floor. Every commitment item scored 4.0: confidence in the stability of the relationship, solid commitment to John, certainty of your love for him, viewing the relationship as permanent, and a felt sense of responsibility toward him. No peaks, no troughs, just five consistent fours. Commitment at this level is commonly observed in long-term partnerships, and yours appears to be doing the work of holding the relationship together.

Put the three components side by side — high commitment at 4.0, moderate intimacy at 3.0, passion at 1.0 — and Sternberg’s (1986) triangular theory gives this pattern a specific name: companionate love. It describes the shape of a deep, enduring bond in which the intense romantic-passionate dimension appears to have given way to trust, stability, and steady affection. Sternberg described companionate love as the classic pattern of long-term committed partnerships after the passionate phase has passed. It is one of the most common profiles in relationships that last decades — and research consistently finds that many successful long-term relationships are built on this foundation.

VI. SATISFACTION

Your Relationship Assessment Scale result

The Relationship Assessment Scale measures how satisfied you are with your relationship overall. It covers whether your needs are being met, how the relationship compares to your expectations, and how you feel about it day to day. Hendrick (1988) developed the RAS as a brief, reliable measure of global relationship satisfaction.

RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION (RAS)

3.6 / 5.0

Above average — satisfied

Your RAS score of 3.6 sits in the above-average range — a score that aligns with someone who is satisfied with their relationship, though not extraordinarily so. Hendrick (1988) reported a mean RAS score of 4.22 among university students in relationships. Your score is below that benchmark, but that benchmark is heavily skewed by the early, high-intensity phase of young couples' relationships. For a seventeen-year marriage with two children, your result is consistent with a relationship that is working reasonably well without feeling extraordinary.

Looking at the individual items clarifies the shape of the score. Your response on the needs-met item (4.0) suggests John meets your needs well. The “wish I hadn't gotten in” item scored 1.0, which reverses to the maximum of 5.0 — a score consistent with not regretting the relationship after seventeen years. Your responses on general satisfaction (3.0), how your relationship compares to most (4.0), how well your expectations have been met (3.0), and how much you love John (3.0) all sit in the moderate-to-satisfied range. None are low. None are soaring.

The problems item scored 3.0 (reversed to 3.0) — a response consistent with a middling number of problems, neither a smooth ride nor a crisis. Taken together, this is the RAS profile often seen in long, stable marriages where the day-to-day is working but the intensity has dropped away.

VII. SYNTHESIS

Bringing it all together

The single most striking pattern in your data is the split between commitment and passion — commitment at 4.0, passion at 1.0, a three-point gap with every item at the maximum for commitment and every item at the floor for passion. This is the defining feature of your profile. Your commitment scores align with someone who is deeply committed to their partner, certain of their love, and views the relationship as permanent. At the same time, every marker of romantic and physical passion appears to have bottomed out. These are the two poles of Sternberg’s theory, and in your case they sit as far apart as the instrument can register.

Your self-assessments line up with this almost exactly, which is a quietly impressive piece of self-awareness.

You said you love John — yes. The commitment score of 4.0 confirms it. You said you were not sure whether you are “in love” with him. The PLS-5 at 3.0, passion at 1.0, and waking hours under 10% all say: not in that intense sense. You said you think John loves you — yes. Your RAS shows a relationship that is working, which research suggests is linked to perceived reciprocity of love.

In short: when you were asked to describe how you feel, your description aligns closely with what the instruments show.

What this pattern looks like, across the whole report, is companionate love. High commitment, moderate intimacy, passion at the floor. This is commonly seen in long marriages. Bode and Kushnick (2021) note that romantic love tends to fade over the years of a relationship while companionate love deepens — the two forms trade places. Your results appear to reflect that transition. The consuming early feelings seem to have given way to something steadier, less thrilling, and more durable.

Your sex frequency of once a week is worth mentioning for the same reason you mentioned it yourself — it feels, in your words, “more like an arrangement than anything particularly fun.” The physical connection appears to have quietened in step with the passion subscale. This is common in long partnerships with young children; the practical pressures of parenting tend to absorb the energy that used to go elsewhere. It does not mean the physical side of the relationship cannot recover, only that the current pattern looks like maintenance rather than peak intensity.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Your results sit within the companionate-love pattern: commitment scores are high, intimacy is moderate, and the romantic-passionate dimension appears to have quietened. Research suggests that many long, enduring marriages are built on this foundation — companionate love is not a consolation prize, it is the form love often takes when a partnership has moved past its intense phase. What the data shows is not a failing relationship. It looks more like a settled one in which the intense phase appears to have ended some time ago.

VIII. REFLECTIONS

Your words, in context

You wrote:

“ I love John, and John loves me. We’ve been together nearly 20 years but the passion is gone. We still have sex, but it feels like more of an arrangement than anything particularly fun. We have two kids and they take up most of our time. There’s just nothing exciting in our relationship. But he’s a good man and I’m lucky to have him.”

There is a lot in that paragraph. The first thing is how closely it matches your scores. You told me the passion is gone, and your passion subscale came in at 1.0 — a floor across every item. You told me you love John, and your commitment score of 4.0 is consistent with that. You told me you feel lucky to have him, and your RAS score of 3.6 aligns with someone who is satisfied with their relationship. The numbers and your own words point in the same direction.

The second thing is the honesty of it. Many people in seventeen-year marriages will not name the passion gap even to themselves, let alone to a researcher. You did. The “not sure” answer to the in-love question appears to reflect an accurate reading of where you are. Your response on the appetite-for-affection item still scored 5.0 on the PLS-5 — the single highest item in that subscale. That score suggests something in the pull toward John specifically has not fallen away, even where the broader passion items have. That combination — continued appetite for affection alongside a passion floor — is common in long partnerships with small children, where affection and parenting tend to absorb the energy that used to drive romance.

The two kids matter here. Young children in a household reliably compress the time, energy, and mental space a couple has for each other. Your waking-hours answer fits that reality — under 10% of your thoughts go to John because the rest go to the kids, to work, to the thousand small tasks that make a family run. Research across the lifespan of relationships shows exactly this pattern: the early years of parenting are typically the lowest point for romantic-love intensity and relationship-specific attention, and many couples recover some of it as children grow older (Bode & Kushnick, 2021).

At 44, female, seventeen years into a marriage, the profile your data paints is not unusual. It reads like the shape of a partnership that has done the long-haul work.

Your commitment and intimacy responses suggest a partnership with real affection and a strong sense of responsibility. The words you chose — that John is a good man — line up with your 4.0 on “I feel a sense of responsibility toward John” and your 4.0 on “I view my commitment to John as a solid one.” Your scores are consistent with having built something durable together.

What appears to have quietened is the specific texture of romantic intensity — the yearning, the sense that the relationship is special in a way that is hard to name. Your PLS-5 and passion-subscale scores both point there. Your own words pointed there first.

Companionate love is what the research calls the pattern you are in. It is not a dimmer version of the real thing — it is the form love takes when it has outlasted the phase that demanded all your attention. Some relationships stay in that shape for decades. Others find a second wave of romantic intensity later, often after the parenting years ease. What the Love Check-Up can tell you is where you sit right now. Where it goes from here is, as always, yours to decide.

IF THIS HAS RAISED DIFFICULT FEELINGS

Support is available 24/7.

Lifeline — 13 11 14 • beyondblue — 1300 22 4636

International: Crisis Text Line — text HOME to 741741

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Adam Bode, PhD

Dr Adam Bode is a researcher specialising in romantic love, bonds, and attachments. He holds a PhD in Anthropology from the Australian National University and has published extensively on the psychology and biology of romantic love in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Adam's research has been featured on ABC Radio National, Triple J, The Guardian, and 10 News+. He is the founder of loveresearch.info and has been invited to contribute to a Royal Society Meeting on the science of love. He proposed that romantic love evolved by co-opting mother–infant bonding — a theory informing his ongoing work.

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Drafted with the assistance of AI technology and personally reviewed and edited by Dr Adam Bode.

DISCLAIMER

Dr Adam Bode is a researcher, not a psychologist or therapist. This report is not a psychological assessment, not therapy, not a clinical evaluation, and not a substitute for professional mental health support. It is a personalised report written by a love researcher using validated scientific instruments from the research literature. No diagnoses are made, no clinical interpretations are offered, and no advice or recommendations are given. The information is intended for personal reflection and self-understanding only. Do not rely on this for decision-making. This report was drafted with the assistance of AI technology and personally reviewed and edited by Dr Adam Bode to ensure accuracy, quality, and personalisation. If you are experiencing psychological distress, please consult a qualified mental health professional.

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