What’s in a name? Do you and your partner have pet names for each other? This may be more telling than you think.

We all have a natural desire to be known and understood. Nobody can do this better than an intimate partner with whom we share everything. We all want to be understood and truly known. And this is no minor detail, it even affects our health.

Married people live longer. It’s a statistical fact. I think this is because we are known by our partner. I’m not talking about a superficial relationship. I’m talking about gut level, honest stuff.

Science has been able to prove this. Neuroscientists are able to measure the stuff in our brains that help us feel better or worse. Oxytocin is a neurotransmitter that puts us at ease when we feel safe. And Glucocorticoids are the stuff that put us on edge when we anticipate danger. A trusting relationship promotes the release of the good stuff that fosters well being. And it’s this experience of well being that promotes a long and healthy life.

If we are living in danger, our bodies are always on edge, ready for the fight or flight response. This is detrimental to our health and sense of contentment. Worry, paranoia and not feeling safe or good enough contribute to this lack of ease or you might even say ‘dis’ ease!

A trusting relationship provides the safety we need. But it takes commitment. We need endurance and wit to get to know someone. And we don’t need to be easily scared off. Your partner may really put you to the test to get to know him or her, in truly understanding him or her. But the result of knowing the truth of your partner, their nature and their name, will yield fabulous results.

We all love to have our name called by the one we love. It’s a wonderful combination of invitation and affirmation. In the group therapy that I do, people immediately feel better about themselves when others in the group are able to identify and relate to their problems. The newcomer feels understood and invariably recognizes they are not alone, they belong. You say your name and what the problem is and everybody responds, “hey, Bruce.” It’s wonderful.

As our partner gets to know us, they will inevitably know things about us before we do. This is true intimacy. We may even know what they need before they do.

Many times women need security and men need affirmation. It may not be what we ‘feel’ like we need to give, but because we know something of their nature, we are well served to meet our partner’s needs, especially when they don’t expect it.

If my partner really knows me then there’s nothing to hide, I can fully give myself to the relationship.

When my partner knows me, I come to know myself better. And if we persevere, we will find that our partner is the soulmate we were seeking.