

**7. The majority of the sample considered themselves part of a committed couple after having been together for less than a year.**

In the narratives obtained from both the Phase I ORI<sup>1</sup> interviews and the Phase III interviews, some participants spoke of being “soul mates” or having virtually instantaneous connections upon meeting, while others described taking time to get to know and settle in with one another. Notwithstanding these differences, the Phase II online questionnaire indicated that *99 participants (81.1%) of the sample began to consider themselves part of a committed couple in fewer than two years of meeting one another. More than half of the sample (74 participants, 60.7% of 122) began to consider themselves part of a committed couple in less than one year*; 25 participants (20.5% of 122) considered themselves part of a committed couple at or after one year, but in fewer than two years; 12 participants (9.8%) felt committed to one another at or after two years, but fewer than three years; and the last 11 participants (9.0%) took three or more years before feeling that they were part of a committed couple.

One might wonder if feeling committed earlier on in the relationship rather than later on evidences a stronger unconscious yearning and bond, and if it predicts longevity of the relationship. Although the data, especially from the Phase III interviews, convey that commitment seems to be synonymous with emotional exclusivity and was accompanied by a certain level of trust, it might be helpful to determine what characterized the emotional experience of moving from an early stage of the relationship to the point of feeling committed. It also would help to know if there were specific events (i.e., a commitment ceremony, the exchange of a symbolic gift, or moving in together) that coincided with the commencement of feeling committed to one another. It is likely that the commitment had already occurred on an intra-psychic level long before a public exchange was even contemplated.

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<sup>1</sup> For a quick overview of the Object Relations Inventory, please click on the “About the ORI” link.