

Focus on Strengths



Content on this side is intended for the educator's reference. The information on the back can be photocopied and shared with clients.

Objective: Clients will become more aware of their partner's strengths and the benefits of focusing on the positive qualities of their partner and the relationship.

Audience: This tool is applicable to clients who are in a couple relationship.

Estimated Time: 10-15 minutes

Educator Instructions: As you read through the statements on the tool, encourage your client to identify specific qualities about his/her partner and their relationship that they admire and appreciate. While his/her focus may shift towards discussing the negatives and what they want changed, reinforce the importance of focusing on the "good" first. The goal with this tool is to help the client practice re-framing the "not so good," and this starts by building from the positives. If your client struggles with identifying any positives and can only recall the negative qualities, this may be a sign that the couple needs counseling from a trained therapist.

Discussion Starter: When you began your relationship, there were likely many qualities that you admired about your partner that attracted you to each other. There also were likely things you did for each other and together that you valued and appreciated. Over time, these experiences brought you closer together, which is why you made a commitment to be together. When we hit rough patches and hard times in our relationships, it can help to remember those good times so we can be reminded why we came together. By remembering and focusing on the strengths of our partner and the relationship, we find common ground to work from together and push through the hard times. I would like for you to take some time to remember those good times, the things that you have done for each other that you value.

Follow-up: In future conversations, ask your client if he/she is still focusing on their strengths. How has focusing on their strengths helped them and their relationship? Are there new positive experiences and things that they have done for each other since your last visit?



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Meaningful relationships do not happen by accident. There are special things about your partner – things that were said and done – that made you feel good. Over time, these positive moments and experiences brought you together and defined your relationship. Remembering those moments helps keep the relationship moving forward.

Every relationship also has its tough times. Remembering the special things that brought you together can help you move through those struggles. But sometimes it is hard to remember the good times when we don't stop to think about them. By making an effort to regularly think about the good times (and talk about them with your partner), it makes it easier to remember them during tough times.

Take a moment now to think about your partner and your relationship. How would you answer the questions below?

- What did you like best about your partner when you first met?
- What do you currently like best about your partner?
- How does your partner show his/her love for you?
- What do you like best about your relationship with your partner?
- Why did you choose this person to be with?

What would help you remember the positives?

Some couples keep a journal and write their thoughts and experiences so they can read them later. Other couples prefer to keep photos or something from their experience together that they can hold and look at later. Find ways that you and your partner can remember and cherish the good times in your relationship. Make time during special occasions, like birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays to talk about those positive moments.

Couples that focus on the good in each other and remember the positive moments in their relationship are more likely to be happy and satisfied with their relationship.