



Appreciating the Positive



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 identify, focus on, and communicate about positive qualities of their partner.

Audience: This tool is applicable with clients at various stages in their relationships. More specifically, this tool may be best for clients who are having problems seeing the positive aspects of their relationship and/or who have difficulty showing their partner appreciation.

Estimated Time: 15-30 minutes if completed during visit with client; 10-15 minutes if left with client to complete at home.

Educator Instructions: This tool could be completed during your visit with the client, or it could be left with the client for them and their partner to complete on their own time. Before reviewing the instructions on the tool, start with the Discussion Starter below or something similar. Ask your client to share specific examples of why s/he appreciates each quality listed. Encourage him/her to share these qualities with his/her partner.

Discussion Starter: One important difference between happy and unhappy couples is that happy couples focus more on the things they like about their partners and their relationships – they are more “positive.” Even when they have problems and conflicts, happy couples are able to talk about the things they like and appreciate about each other. This activity will help you come up with ways to show appreciation. To start, name 5 of your partner’s characteristics that you really appreciate. As you list these qualities, think about some examples of why you appreciate each one. Try to be as specific as you can about what you like and appreciate about your partner. Would you like to share some of those qualities with me?

Follow-up: During your next visits, ask the client how they have shown appreciation for their partner.





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When life gives you lemons, what do you do?

The way we respond to good and bad things in our lives affects how we see our partners. If you tend to focus on the negative and find fault in situations, you are more likely to focus on problems in your relationship. Showing you care, sharing happy memories, and expressing appreciation can help ease troubled feelings and nurture positive feelings.

How often do you tell your partner you appreciate him or her?

Thinking about what you admire in your partner is important, but that is not enough. *Telling* your partner that you appreciate him or her is even more important. It is easy to get caught up in daily hassles and become too tired or busy to connect and let our partners know they are valued and appreciated. Taking just a moment to say “thank you,” sharing happy memories and letting your partner know that you are happy they are in your life can help ease troubled feelings and nurture positive feelings.

What do you appreciate in your partner?

Couples who have the closest, healthiest relationships focus more on the positives than the negatives in their relationship. The more positive ways you can express or show appreciation and love, the better you will be able to work together when problems arise.

Read through the list below and mark characteristics you really like about your partner. Is there more about your partner you like? Add it to the list!

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good personality | <input type="checkbox"/> Listens to you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sense of humor | <input type="checkbox"/> Intelligence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Loyalty | <input type="checkbox"/> My partner's sensitive side |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Willingness to help out around the house | <input type="checkbox"/> Shares some of my passions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hard worker | <input type="checkbox"/> Similar plans and priorities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How my partner treats my children | <input type="checkbox"/> Willing to solve problems together |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shows compassion and understanding | <input type="checkbox"/> Takes care of him/herself |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dependability | <input type="checkbox"/> Talks openly about childhood/family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Open-mindedness | <input type="checkbox"/> Shows respect, even during conflict |

Others:

Now that you have identified some things you like about your partner, think of specific examples of these characteristics. For instance, if you like your partner's sense of humor, think of a time your partner made you laugh.

Share these with your partner!

Tell your partner what you like about him or her, and share the specific example you remember.

Sincere expressions of appreciation can help couples strengthen their relationship over time.