

Welcome!

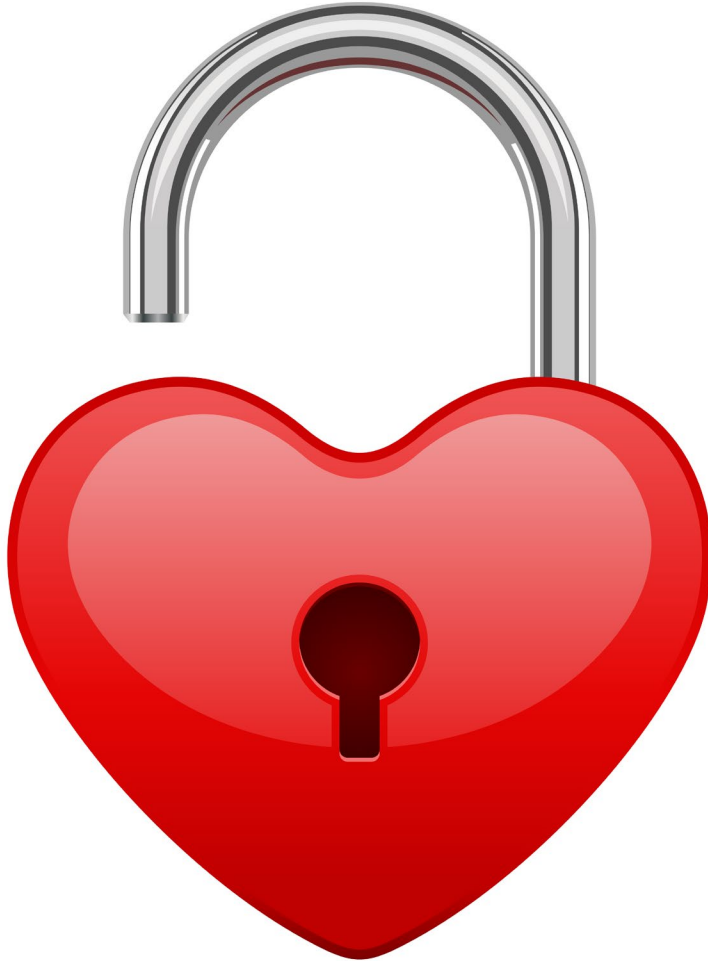


Elevate

Taking Your Relationship to the Next Level

VALUE

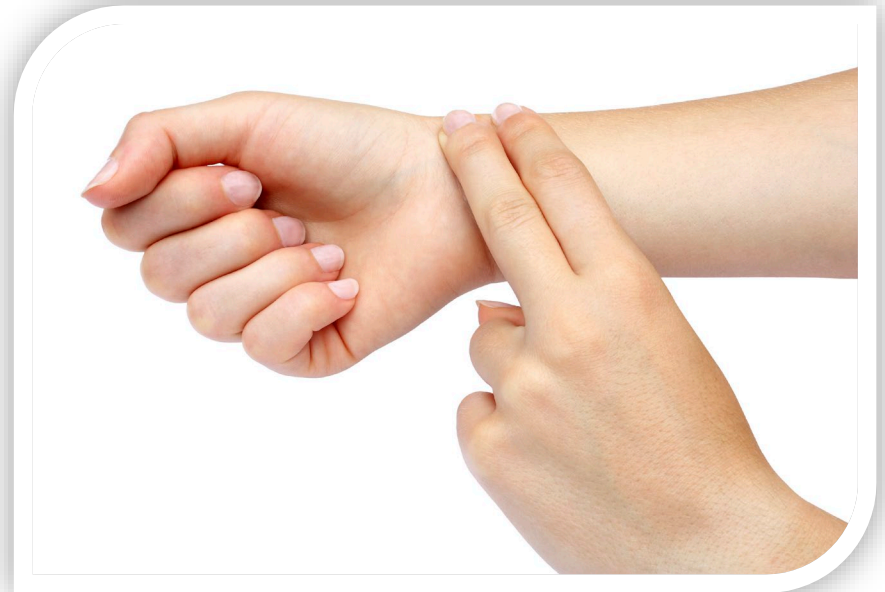
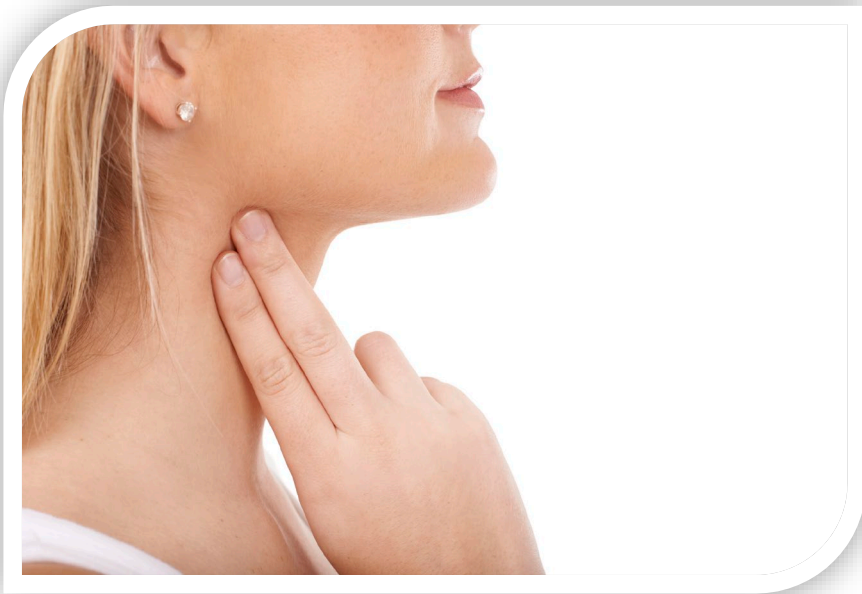
Mindfulness Practice: Loving Kindness



**May you be filled with
loving-kindness;
May you be well;
May you be blessed;
May you feel peace;
balance, and
forgiveness;
May you be happy.**

VALUE

Take Your Pulse



Heart-Brain Connection



	Pulse (15 seconds) x 4 = Heart Rate	Emotional State/Mood
Ex.	Pulse <u>20</u> x 4 = <u>80</u>	<i>happy</i>
1	Pulse _____ x 4 = _____	
2	Pulse _____ x 4 = _____	
3	Pulse _____ x 4 = _____	
4	Pulse _____ x 4 = _____	
5	Pulse _____ x 4 = _____	
6	Pulse _____ x 4 = _____	
7	Pulse _____ x 4 = _____	

Pulse	x4	Pulse	x4	Pulse	x4
15	60	19	76	23	92
16	64	20	80	24	96
17	68	21	84	25	100
18	72	22	88	26	104

VALUE



EMPOWER
YOURSELF



LAY THE
FOUNDATION



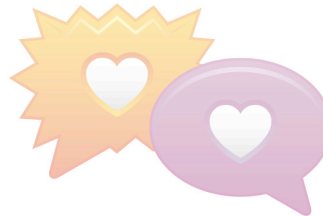
ENLIGHTEN



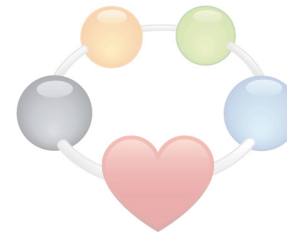
VALUE



ATTACH



TAME



ENGAGE

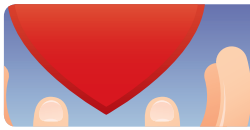
VALUE

Value your partner...even when it's hard!



**What are
some
ways that
you show
you care?**





Name The Ways You Care



In the stress of day-to-day life, we sometimes have a hard time showing that we care. The good thing is that there are a lot of ways to show you care for someone you love. Some of those ways require more effort than others, and some are very simple things to do (or say). For example:

- You clean the dishes when your partner cooks dinner.
- Your partner kisses you before leaving for work.
- You call (or text) your partner at work to say you are thinking about him/her.
- Your partner makes sure the children eat breakfast every day.
- You hug your partner and say, "I love you."
- Your partner leaves you a note that reads, "thank you for all you do."

It can be helpful to remind yourself of the caring things you do for your partner, as well as the many things your partner does for you.

List 5 ways that you show you care about your partner.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

List 5 ways that your partner shows he or she cares about you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now that you've made these lists, make plans to tell your partner "thank you" for the caring things he or she does. During the course of each day, be mindful of what you each do for each other and your family. Show thanks every day!

When you receive love from your partner, say "thank you" to send love right back!



Caring in Action



How well do you and your partner know when the other person is showing love? Do you sometimes say or do things to show affection, but your partner doesn't notice? This activity will help you identify different things you both do and say throughout the day to show care and love.

For this exercise you will need:

- Two empty containers (jars, bowls, boxes). Label one container "How I showed love today" and the other "How my partner showed love today."
- Two different colors of paper cut up into small squares. Each partner will use one color of paper so you can tell who wrote what. (If you do not have different color paper, you can use two pens with different colored ink).

Instructions:

1. Agree on a day to do the activity.
2. Throughout the day write down (on your color paper) the ways **you** show love for your partner. Use one piece of paper for each thing you do or say. Place them in the container labeled "Ways I showed love today." For example, you might write "I kissed you before you went to work," "I cooked dinner," or "I took the kids to school."
3. Also write down the ways **your partner** shows love for you. Place these in the container labeled "How my partner showed love today."
4. At the end of the day, sit down together and take turns reading how you showed love that day. Read what you wrote down on the color sheet you used and put in the container "Ways I showed love today." Next, read what your partner wrote down on his or her paper and put in the container "Ways my partner showed love today." Now read the sheets that describe how your partner showed love that day.

Talk about the notes. Did you write down the same things? If not, that's okay! There might be some things that you did to show love, but your partner didn't notice. There might also be some things that your partner did, but you didn't notice and write those down. Or, maybe you both did notice and just forgot to write it down? Use this time to express your appreciation for the loving things your partner did – both what you noticed, and what you didn't.

This exercise is about showing care, not competition. Do not compare the number of things you and your partner do. Some days one partner may show more care for the other. Use this activity to remind yourself to show care and appreciation for each other.

Recognizing the many things your partner says and does to show love can strengthen your relationship.

VALUE

Maintain Positivity In Your Relationship



**Make deposits
into the love bank!**

People that have
lots of positives in
their relationship
handle the negative
better.

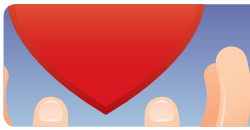
VALUE

Appreciating the Positive



What has your
partner done
today that
you
appreciate?





Appreciating the Positive



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.

VALUE

But I am stressed and I feel crabby...



**How
do we
react to
stressful
family
situations?**

VALUE

Crabby Reaction OR Caring Action?

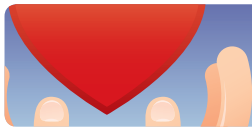


Loving Action



Crabby Reaction?





Caring Actions, Not Crabby Reactions



Happy couples have far more positive moments than negative ones. This isn't because those couples are special, or just lucky. It is possible to *choose* to stay positive, even when we're tempted to be irritable, angry or "crabby." How do you react to your partner?

Here are some examples of couple moments, with a "Crabby Reaction" and a "Caring Action."

- Example 1:** Your partner answers their cell phone while you are trying to tell them something important.
- Crabby reaction:** Shout at your partner while they're on the phone, and give them the cold shoulder when they hang up.
- Caring action:** Wait patiently; when the phone conversation ends, say, "That hurt my feelings. I felt ignored."
- Example 2:** You are very busy, helping one child with their homework and changing another child's diaper at the same time. Your partner walks in and says, "Is dinner ready yet?"
- Crabby reaction:** You say, "You can cook your own dinner! Can't you see I'm busy! I can't believe you never help out around here!"
- Caring action:** You say, "I could really use your help. Can you take care of the kids, or would you rather get dinner started?"

What would you do? Now practice how you would react to your partner. Read the following examples and come up with your own Crabby Reactions and Caring Actions for each one.

Your alarm clock didn't go off this morning, and now you are running late for work. Your partner is still asleep in bed and the children aren't ready to leave for school yet.

Crabby reaction: _____

Caring action: _____

You've been looking forward to watching your favorite TV program, but when the time comes your partner insists he or she wants to control the remote.

Crabby reaction: _____

Caring action: _____

You and your partner have agreed on a budget for your money. At the end of the month, your partner has spent too much on eating out, and you barely have enough money to pay your bills.

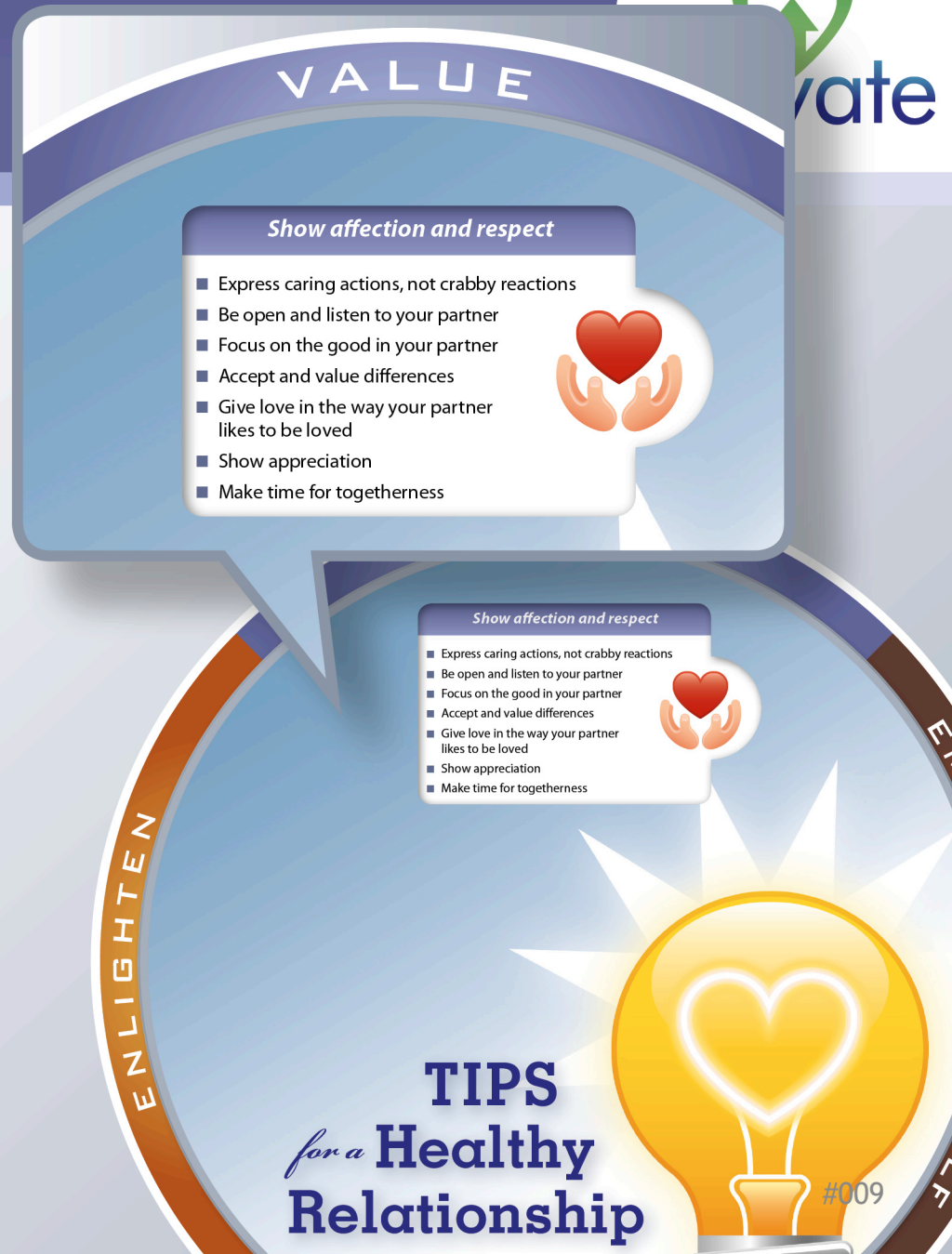
Crabby reaction: _____

Caring action: _____

**Healthy, happy couples use more caring actions instead of crabby reactions each day.
Choose to stay positive!**

Action Plan

- ✓ What are you currently doing to cultivate positive interactions with your partner?
- ✓ What is one thing that you plan to do in the future?



Tips For a Healthy Relationship



EMPOWER YOURSELF—Individual health impacts the health of couple relationships. Taking care of yourself first can help improve the wellness of your relationship. Below are some ways that you can *Care for Self* and help your relationship:

- Eat healthy and exercise regularly.
- Set regular sleep and wake times for yourself.
- Notice and appreciate the small, good things in your life to help you find greater happiness and satisfaction.
- Find ways to use your strengths to serve your community.
- Look for the positive meaning in your life.
- Learn to manage stress in more healthy, effective ways.



LAY THE FOUNDATION—Are you making deliberate and conscious decisions about your relationships? It is important to be intentional when establishing and nurturing healthy relationships. Here are some ways to show how you *Choose* to strengthen your relationship:

- Make the decision to enter into a relationship rather than sliding into one.
- Commit and provide effort in the relationship.
- Focus on each other's strengths, and what each of you brings to the relationship.
- Avoid thoughts and behaviors that could potentially be hurtful to one another.
- Find positive and effective ways to grow your relationship.
- Envision and set goals for a healthy future together.



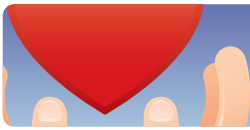
ENLIGHTEN—How well do you know your partner? Sharing and developing an understanding with your partner creates stability and increases awareness of your partner and the relationship. Here are some ways you can get to *Know* your partner better:

- Ask about your partner's life, thoughts, and feelings to get to know them better.
- Be sensitive to your partner's worries and needs.
- Think back on positive experiences you have had together.
- Express sincere interest in what is happening in your partner's life.
- See situations through your partner's eyes to gain a better understanding of how they look at things.
- Discuss what you expect in a relationship with one another.



VALUE—Keeping a relationship healthy is the responsibility of each person in that relationship. What do you do to show support, affection, and respect for your partner? Here are some ways to show that you *Care* for your partner:

- Show respect by expressing caring actions towards your partner instead of crabby reactions when he or she has had a stressful day.
- When communicating, be open and listen to your partner.
- Focus on the good in your partner.
- Accept and value the differences that you and your partner share.
- Give love in the way your partner likes to be loved.
- Show appreciation as a way to make a deposit in your relationship account.
- To maintain a strong relationship, make time for togetherness and moments of connection.

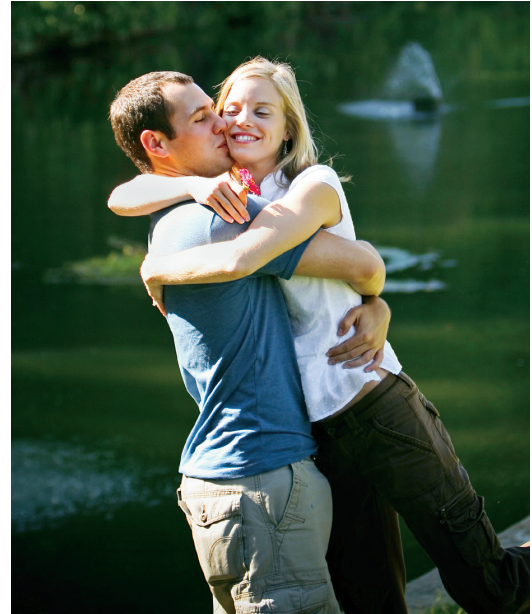


Showing Affection and Respect

Make Time for Togetherness

While big celebrations and vacations are special and can contribute to the relationship, healthy relationships depend more on everyday moments of connection and affection. Try to think of ways that you can show your partner your care in the midst of your daily routine.

- Make time to talk together everyday.
- Take a short evening walk together.
- Work together on a household project.
- Take the kids to the park.
- Learn to find small moments of caring for each other by being together and talking.
- Send “I love you” text messages.



Did you know that playing together as a couple helps to improve your communication?

Spending time together doing something fun helps couples to encourage each other and share about their day. Playing together can also make conversation lighter – just have fun and let loose!

Showing Compassion

One of the best ways to care for your partner is by showing compassion. Showing compassion involves trying to understand someone else’s perspective in order to love and care for them.

Another way to care for your partner is by understanding and respecting them. Accepting that some differences will not change or cannot change is a way to show respect and care. Every relationship has differences; instead of expecting your partner to change, learn to accept them for who they are and care for them unconditionally.

Knowing that you are loved is essential in a healthy relationship – let your partner know that you love them for who they are, not what they do.



Supporting your partner during difficult times

Every relationship experiences hard times. What counts is how you care and support each other during those times.

Ask your partner how you can best care for them. Whether it’s offering a big hug, helping out more around the house, or spending time listening while they share their frustrations, learning to care for your partner during times of struggle can be one of the most helpful ways to strengthen your relationship.

What makes your partner feel the most loved and appreciated?

- A warm hug?
- Hearing the words “I love you” or “I’m proud of you”?
- Being brought home a surprise gift?
- Spending uninterrupted time talking and sharing with each other?
- Coming home to a clean house?



You most likely have different ways of feeling and demonstrating love and caring. It’s important to share with each other what makes you both feel loved so that you know how to love each other.



Show “no-strings-attached” Affection

Learn to see each act of kindness toward your partner as adding to the relationship, rather than making a sacrifice. This helps to create a sense of joint effort to make the relationship better.

Don’t wait to show your partner how much you love them – do it without a reason. Be the first to make a deposit in your love bank by:

- Giving an affectionate hug
- Writing an encouraging note on the fridge
- Saying “I love you” as you leave the house

Instead of keeping track of how many “nice” things your partner has or hasn’t done for you before you do something for them, show them how much you care by being the first to demonstrate kindness.



Value

Attach

Tame

Engage

Take your relationship to the next level!