

Express Gratitude to Your Partner

Objective

To express gratitude to your partner on a regular basis to strengthen your relationship.

You Should Know

As a relationship matures, it is normal for couples to get comfortable and begin taking each other for granted. Researchers have found that expressing gratitude to your partner can lead to a longer-lasting relationship. Displays of gratitude create more connectedness, happiness, and satisfaction for both partners, strengthening commitment and intimacy. People who appreciate their partners and express gratitude tend to be more responsive to their partner's needs, and are more devoted to their relationships.

When you express gratitude toward your partner, you increase the chances that they will act warmly and lovingly to you. Furthermore, when you feel grateful for your partner, you are more likely to increase your loving behaviors toward your partner and to value your relationship on a deeper level.

Gratitude means appreciating not only what your partner *does*, but who he or she *is* as a person. In other words, you are thankful that your partner took your kids to soccer practice—and you appreciate their thoughtfulness in noticing how busy you are. As you become more aware of the positive things that your partner does, your gratitude will naturally increase.

What to Do

Gratitude for your partner means acknowledging their best traits and remembering what attracted you in the first place.

What do you love, respect, and value most about your partner?

What makes your partner unique and interesting?

What is your partner's best quality?

Here are some ways to express gratitude and appreciation for your partner.

- Find little ways to show you are thinking of them: a text, a short email, a note in their wallet.
- Acknowledge the little things your partner does in your daily lives that are kind, thoughtful, or loving—and might otherwise go unnoticed. Thank them for taking out the trash, filling the car's gas tank, or starting dinner.
- Compliment your partner for a trait that you appreciate and find attractive, loveable, or admirable.
- Express yourself through physical touch. Even just holding your partner's hand or touching their arm shows them you care and conveys intimacy and attraction.
- Do something thoughtful for your partner. The more heartfelt and genuine the gesture is, the more meaningful it will be to your partner.
- Break the routine by taking on a chore or task that is usually your partner's responsibility.
- Share your success. If you receive a promotion or obtain a degree, acknowledge your partner's supportive and encouraging role in your achievement.

How do you plan to express gratitude to your partner? Describe.

In addition to the demonstrations of gratitude above, simply telling your partner that you are thankful for them can positively impact your relationship. Use descriptions and details to express what you appreciate about your partner, and how it positively affects your life. Try using phrases such as “I appreciate it when you...”, “I am thankful for...”, “I love it when you...”, or “I am grateful for...”

Write down two statements of gratitude you would like to express to your partner.

Now, over the next week, plan ways you can express gratitude toward your partner. Describe what happened, and how your partner responds.

Date	What Did You Do	How Did Your Partner Respond?	What Was the Outcome?	Notes

Reflections on This Exercise

Has this exercise helped you identify ways to express gratitude for your partner? Explain.

Has this exercise helped improve the level of appreciation that you and your partner have for each other? Explain.

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

Is there anything in particular you learned from this exercise?
