



Love Gives Approval

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CELEBRATE AND HAVE FUN!

First Impressions

Tell your partner about one thing that first attracted you to them. Celebrate your positive first impressions and talk about what piqued your interest in one another!

Looking Deeper

As you've come to know one another and are relationally closer, which of your partner's character strengths is attractive to you? Celebrate the great things you now more fully appreciate about the unique qualities of your partner. Tell them about that now.

The more that I've come to know you, I'm especially attracted to your ...



BE VULNERABLE AND GRATEFUL!

Love Gives Approval

Approval of your partner's character qualities affirms who they are as an important person in your life. In order to give words of **approval**, you might acknowledge and affirm your partner's: diligence, understanding, dependability, generosity, compassion, supportiveness, thoughtfulness, helpfulness, caring heart, respectfulness, attentiveness, or encouraging spirit.

Take turns sharing these sentences with each other:

When I see the person you are, I am really grateful for your unique character qualities. I am especially grateful for your _____.

(Name one of the qualities above or choose your own.) I see that quality in you when ...



To get the most out of this experience...

Stay positive!

This is not the time to tell the other what he or she has done wrong. Be future focused. Focus on what you want your relationship to be like in the future. Don't concentrate on past failures. (It's okay to remember past successes).

Talk about your relationship. Do not talk about your job, children, in-laws, etc., unless it's part of the conversation.

Give a gift of love.

Some discussion items will excite you more than others. On the less exciting ones, give a gift of love.

Participate enthusiastically!

Don't force it. If you get on a negative track, stop that discussion. Move on to another topic that you both feel good about.

If you get stuck, ask for help.

If an issue comes up that you can't handle together, talk to a marriage coach at a local church or counseling center.

Use good communication skills.

Be prepared for some surprises and new insights about each other. They can open new opportunities for growth and intimacy in your relationship. The following are several specific tips for a great date experience:

1. Be honest, yet never unkind.
2. Remember to start your sentences with "I" and let them reflect back on you.
3. Resist attacking the other or defending yourself.
4. Be specific and positive.

Continue this Love Experience

Now talk about a more recent time when you were grateful for a specific character trait that your partner displayed. Give words of **approval** for one another as you take turns sharing your response to this sentence:

*This past week, you were very _____ when you...
(Name one of the qualities above or choose your own.)*

I am really grateful for this part of you because ...

CELEBRATE IMPERFECTIONS AND EXPRESS THANKS

Let's Make it Real

Relationships are strengthened when we can notice the imperfections in one another and yet not forget the positive character traits that are also true in our partner.

In strong relationships, couples are able to share this perspective:

- Even when I am imperfect in the things I do...please do not forget who I am!

Think for a moment about some of your own imperfections and choose one to talk about for yourself. (This isn't the time to remind your partner of their imperfections.)

I can sometimes be...(impatient, irritable, insensitive, preoccupied, oblivious, sloppy, compulsive, forgetful etc.)

Now, take turns responding to one another with words of acknowledgment and expression of thanks.

I know that I can sometimes be _____, but thank you for remembering today that deep down, I really am a _____ person. I love you.





BONUS IDEAS

Character Qualities

A few character qualities you can draw from are the following:

Diligence, understanding, dependability, generosity, compassion, supportiveness, thoughtfulness, helpfulness, caring heart, respectfulness, attentiveness, or encouraging spirit.

Continue this love experience:

Begin thinking about how you might share these same kind of words during the upcoming week. Take the list of character qualities listed above and begin thinking about other ways that your partner has displayed them. Look for new ways that he shows a particular character trait this week and verbalize your thanks. Look for additional ways that she demonstrates one of the character traits and share your gratitude in a personal way.

Continue this love experience:

Think of creative ways to let others know how proud you are that your partner is in your life. Post messages, publicly acknowledge your gratefulness about your relationship, and boldly declare your love for your special someone! Your words of **approval** might begin with:

- *I am so proud that _____ is in my life because...*
- *I am so grateful to be married to _____ because...*



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