



Love Gives Attention

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PLAY A GAME

We'll never "know" everything there is to know about our partner—so the gift of **attention** will always be needed.

Just for fun, try the following game. It's called, "Are you more like?" Read each statement below and then decide which of the options you are "more like" and why. Take turns sharing your responses. See if you can guess how your partner might answer.

ARE YOU MORE LIKE:

- A spicy jalapeño or a juicy orange?
- A Volkswagen or a Ferrari?
- A paint brush or a pencil?
- Salt or pepper?
- Batman or Superman?

Keep the conversation playful. The goal is to more deeply know your partner in a fun, lighthearted way.

Take a second to celebrate this moment... maybe even take a selfie!



BE VULNERABLE AND GRATEFUL!

Giving the gift of attention means...

This means: Entering into someone's world, taking thought of them, noticing them, doing things they like to do.

Couples often think that to need **attention** means that a person wants to be the "center of **attention**." This may be true, but it isn't always the case.



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.

Giving attention *does* involve noticing your partner.

Share surprises: Take turns finishing this sentence:
(Remember to keep it positive and fun!)

I remember what a surprise to me it was that you _____.
For example: I remember what a surprise to me it was that you don't wet your toothbrush before brushing your teeth!

Let this be a time of playful celebration and how you've noticed the "little things" about one another.

Let's practice giving attention.

Remember, giving the gift of **attention** involves initiative: Taking thought of your partner and then taking action.

Invite your partner to respond while you listen... **attentively**.

- Tell me about some of the important events of your day/week.
- I'd like to hear about some of your most recent concerns.
- Let's talk about what's been going on with friends, family, or kids, and how that's impacting you.

Let's celebrate together.

Take turns finishing this sentence:

I really enjoy it when you take initiative to _____. *I sense you're taking notice of me and my world.*

For example: I really enjoy it when you take initiative to hold hands, plan a date, surprise me with flowers, cook, etc.

What does it look like to enter your partner's world?

Giving the gift of **attention** involves being with your partner and joining them in what they enjoy doing.

Reflecting your world: Take turns finishing this sentence:

I love it when you join me in _____ because...

For example: I love it when you join me in going for walks, attending sporting events, gardening, etc. because it makes me feel special.

As your spouse shares, be **attentive**. Make sure to:

- Notice and get to know your partner even better
- Think about a time when you can do the activity they just shared with you
- Listen for why this activity means a lot to your partner





Let's make a plan

Now that you've explored your partner's "world" in more detail, make plans to join your spouse in doing something they like to do.

Consider what you've come to know about your partner and then take the initiative:

- *I would like to plan a time when we* _____.

Calendar a date _____

- *Let's set a date for when we* _____.

Calendar a date _____

Remember:

Your joy may not be found in the activity your partner identifies.
(*Going for walks may not be your favorite pastime!*)

Your blessing can come from the joy it brings your spouse!



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