

# Appreciation

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Caring for children takes a lot of emotional and physical energy. And kids aren't generally good at remembering to express gratitude and appreciation... It can be easy to start feeling unvalued. If parents make a conscious effort to actively express appreciation to each other, it can be invaluable for giving each of you the energy to continue nurturing and loving your kids. It also helps you connect to each other and strengthens your relationship.

## **Techniques for Sharing Appreciation:**

*5 Minute Writing: What I appreciate about my partner.* Each of you take a piece of paper and a pen. Set a timer for 5 minutes, and spend the time listing everything you love about your partner. Pour out all the appreciation you haven't had time to share. Give your list to your partner to have and to hold.

*Exchanging appreciations:* Sit facing each other. Take a couple deep breaths. One partner (the Giver) goes first, completing the sentence "Something I appreciate about you today is..." The other partner (the Receiver) should just take a few deep breaths to let that sink in, then say "thank you." The Receiver should *not* interrupt, laugh, dismiss, snort sarcastically, respond with 'proof' that the Giver is wrong about what s/he's just said, or do anything else that pushes away the gift of appreciation. Just take it in and receive it as an expression of their love. Then switch roles, and repeat.

*Appreciation post-its.* Every time you think of something you appreciate about your partner or about life in general, write it on a note, and stick it somewhere that you'll both see it and be reminded by it.

*Weekly review.* During the week, make a list of everything you have to celebrate – accomplishments, happy moments you've shared, health of family members, clean kitchen counters, anything that gave you satisfaction or joy! Schedule a weekly snuggle time to share your lists with each other.

## **Some Sentence Starters**

If you're having a hard time thinking of what to say, here's some ideas to get you started.

- ☉ One unique quality you have that I appreciate is...
- ☉ I appreciate the way you've helped me grow by...
- ☉ One positive thing I am aware of through my senses right now is...
- ☉ One positive aspect of my life today is...
- ☉ Something you did today to make my life easier was...
- ☉ I appreciate your body and especially your...
- ☉ One thing you do that I appreciate, but often take for granted is...
- ☉ I really appreciate this about how you see the world...
- ☉ I appreciate the way you create beauty in our lives by...
- ☉ I appreciate that your creativity has generated...
- ☉ One thing I appreciate about our sexual relationship is...
- ☉ One thing I'm noticing about you and appreciate is...
- ☉ In your interactions with others, I appreciate...
- ☉ Something I am grateful for is...
- ☉ I am so glad that we do \_\_\_\_\_ every day (every week)...
- ☉ I feel loved when you....