

PURPOSE

Find out how you are doing with keeping close to your partner

MATERIALS

Some paper to write on and some coloured pens

TIME

An hour – perhaps more



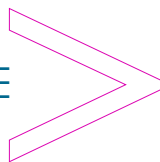
Keeping close to each other is critically important to maintaining a positive relationship. According to Gottman and Silver.

Our archives are filled with scenes in which the husband looks out the picture window and says, “Wow, look at that boat,” and the wife peers over her magazine and says, “Yeah, it looks like that big schooner we saw last summer remember?” and the husband grunts.....

When couples engage in lots of chitchat like this, I can be pretty sure that they will stay happily married. What’s really happening in these brief exchanges is that the husband and wife are connecting – they are turning toward each other. In couples who go on to divorce or live together unhappily, such small moments of connection are rare.

Gottman and Silver (1999:79)

Couples that make an effort to keep connected, up to date and involved with each other are increasing their chances of being together over the

ACTIVITY ONE**TIME OF OUR LIFE**

Think about your week.

Allocate a different colour for each of these:

- *When you feel close*
- *Times when you are together for the purpose of keeping in touch with each other*
- *When what you are doing reduces your feelings of closeness.*

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7am							
8am							
9am							
10am							
11am							
12pm							
1pm							
2pm							
3pm							
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DISCUSS WITH YOUR PARTNER

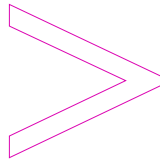
- What works well?
- What are you really happy about?
- What would you like to do more of?
- What doesn't keep you connected?
- How would you change things?
- Anything you'd like to change, but think you



Set some goals and make some plans to increase your connection to and enjoyment of each other.



ACTIVITY TWO



PRIORITIES

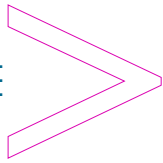
On a separate piece of paper, make a list of all of the things that you put time into.

What things would you drop if there was a major difficulty or you only had a limited time to live? Cross them off the list. What are you left with?

How can you adjust your life now to pay more attention to the important things?

Make a plan to start today.

ACTIVITY THREE



KEEPING CLOSE

Keeping close requires commitment and effort.

Some things you can do to keep this part of your life going well are:

- Make keeping in touch with your partner your priority
- Know what is going on with your partner
- Know what's important to your partner
- Taking note of patterns that happen in your lives such as watching TV each night and not talking or having really good conversations when you eat out.

Read the table on the following page. Individually, decide where you are in each column and record it in the table below.

ACTIVITY	LEVEL
KEEPING IN TOUCH	
KNOWING WHAT'S GOING ON	
KNOWING WHAT'S IMPORTANT	
NOTING PATTERNS	

KEEPING CLOSE LEVELS

LEVEL	KEEP IN TOUCH	KNOW WHAT'S IMPORTANT	KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON	NOTICE PATTERNS
FABULOUS	We keep in touch to share and build our life and understanding of each other. Our contact is supportive, a source of pleasure and feels like a gift. Our unexpected contacts are interesting and creative.	We know what is going on in all of the important parts of each other's life, the things that our partner cares about and the things that might impact on them.	We can easily list the things that are important to our partner and how they fit with the rest of their life and predict choices they might make in light of these important things.	We realise that there are patterns that occur in each other's life and we are able to predict how we will react in particular circumstances, we are able to offer support and help each other to gain insight about what happens.
BETTER THAN I EXPECT	We keep in touch to build our life together. Our contact is a rich source of pleasure and connection. We contact each other unexpectedly for fun.	We know what is going on in all of the important parts of each other's life and the other things that our partner cares about.	We can easily list the things that are important to our partner and how they fit with the rest of their life.	We realise that there are patterns that occur in each other's life and we are able to predict how we will react in particular circumstances and we offer support.
JUST AS I'D LIKE	We keep in touch to share our life. We contact each other unexpectedly to share things. Lots of our contact is just to be in touch, not to arrange anything.	We know what is going on in all of the important parts of each other's life.	We can easily list the things that are important to our partner	We realise that there are patterns that occur in each other's life and we are able to predict how we will react in particular circumstances.
NEEDS ATTENTION	I don't feel like we are in touch enough to share our life. Pretty much all of our contacts are to arrange something.	I often feel that I don't really know what's going on in my partner's life/ I often feel that my partner doesn't know what is happening in my life.	We do not know what is important to each other in quite a few areas of our life.	We recognise some of the major patterns that happen and can offer some support.
NEEDS SERIOUS ATTENTION	We are only in contact to arrange things and we struggle with that.	I am often surprised by things that my partner assumes I know or what they don't know about my life.	We do not know what is important to each other in many areas of our life	We suspect there are some patterns in each other's life.

SHARE the levels that you think you are on with your partner.

What differences are there?

Why do you think these are different?

Agree on some areas that could be improved.

Make some plans to improve them.

ACTIVITY FOUR



MAKING IT HAPPEN

From the plans you have made work out what you will do this week.
