

PURPOSE

Identify and confirm positive things you know about your partner

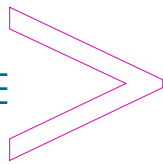
MATERIALS

This sheet or one with more space.

TIME

Allow approximately 1/2 hour per activity

ACTIVITY ONE



POSITIVES AND NEGATIVES...

List 20 positive things and 20 negative things you know about yourself.

POSITIVES

- | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. | 18. | 13. |
| 2. | 19. | 14. |
| 3. | 20. | 15. |
| 4. | | 16. |
| 5. | | 17. |
| 6. | | 18. |
| 7. | | 19. |
| 8. | | 20. |
| 9. | | |
| 10. | | |
| 11. | | |
| 12. | | |
| 13. | | |
| 14. | | |
| 15. | | |
| 16. | | |
| 17. | | |

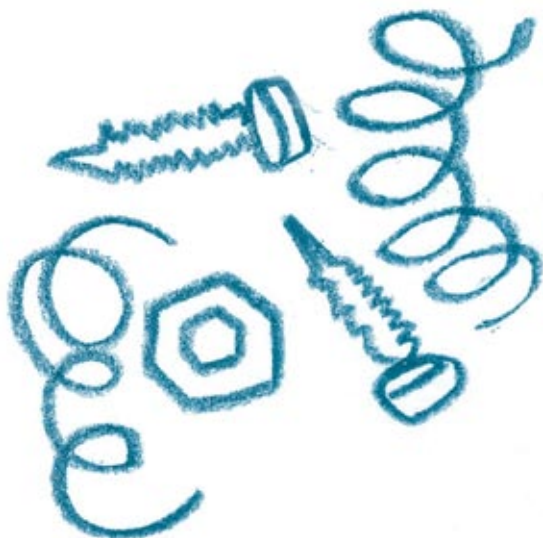
NEGATIVES

- | | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |
| 5. | | |
| 6. | | |
| 7. | | |
| 8. | | |
| 9. | | |
| 10. | | |
| 11. | | |
| 12. | | |

THE INTERNAL CRITIC

Many people find that they are able to list many more negative than positive things. It is easy to understand this as a result of the way we manage our lives. When there are tasks to be done it is useful to ignore things that are working well and to pay attention to the things that need changing.

No one would want their car mechanic to give them a detailed list of the parts of their car that are working and completely ignore the broken parts. They need to pay attention to the broken or damaged parts.



Unfortunately, people don't work the same way. Attention needs to be given to the things we like and enjoy about each other. Giving attention makes it more likely for an action to be repeated. Praise and compliments keep the behaviour going. The praise to criticism ratio should be about 5:1. For many people it is more like 1:5.

The same applies to the things we say to ourselves. Many people have an internal critic that is only too quick to point out where they have gone wrong, or where they could have done better. This can be useful, but it is more likely to be overwhelming.

It may be tempting to try and silence this critic. This is prone to failure however, as the internal critic is almost uncontrollable. Rather than silence, the best technique is to reduce the power this critic has over you. When your internal critic is being harsh, try to be aware that these are just opinions, and like any opinions they are not real. You can act in a loving way to yourself and your partner despite your internal critic. What you'll probably find is that your internal critic starts to lose its power.

WORK OUT A PHRASE YOU CAN USE IF YOUR INTERNAL CRITIC IS BEING HARSH.

Eg. "That's a harsh opinion. I don't agree!"

PRAISE

Many people feel very embarrassed when they give or receive praise. It is a skill to be mastered. Sometimes the embarrassment comes from the praise being too general or too much.

It is not that you shouldn't say things like, "Good job, mate," or "You are the best cook in the world". But if you want to increase the chances of the person continuing to do what you have appreciated, you should give them as much information as possible.

There is a helpful pattern that will help you to give very pleasant and effective praise.

Start with thanking the person for what they did.



"Thanks for showing me your drawing".
"Thanks for cooking that lovely meal".
"Thanks for putting your things away."

Then describe your reaction in detail.

"I'm really impressed with the colours you used."
"I really liked how there were a mix of flavours"
"It's lovely to come home to a tidy room."

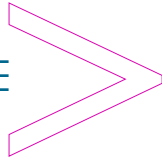
Finish off with an acknowledgement that shows you have understood that they have put in an effort. It also helps because it gives the person being praised something to talk about if they want.

"It must have taken a lot of effort to learn those skills."
"You really thought about what you put together."
"I know it was an effort and I really appreciate it."

Sometimes people seem to reject your praise and acknowledgement. Possibly they haven't had a chance to learn how to respond to praise or they could have a very harsh internal critic. Just keep praising them and watch out for when they start to be more accepting of your praise.

If you find yourself rejecting praise, simply say, "Thank you".

ACTIVITY THREE



THESE ARE A FEW OF YOUR POSITIVE THINGS

Consider the things you know about your partner. Write positive things about each of the following aspects of their life. Use more paper if you wish.

ARTS
plays, fine art, music

BELIEFS

**CAREER &
COMMITMENTS**

FAMILY

FRIENDS

HEALTH

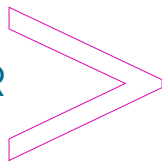
LEARNING

RECREATION
Sport, Travel, Hobbies

RELATIONSHIP

SHARE with your partner. This is a time to be supportive and accepting. Most people find there are some areas of their partner's life they are not sure about. Are there any areas where you had no idea? Ask now or make a time to share this information.

ACTIVITY FOUR



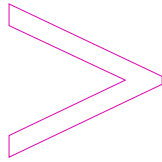
QUALITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, TALENTS AND STRENGTHS

Individually, fill in the table with qualities, achievements, talents and strengths that you notice in you partner. Use words starting with each letter of the alphabet.

A	<i>Artistic - can paint and sing</i>
B	
C	
D	
E	
F	
G	
H	
I	
J	
K	
L	
M	
N	
O	
P	
Q	
R	
S	
T	
U	
V	
W	
X	
Y	
Z	

Keeping the qualities, achievements, talents and strengths that you admire in you partner in your awareness is an important part of feeding your appreciation of them and your desire to be with them.

ACTIVITY FIVE



QUALITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS, TALENTS AND STRENGTHS

Play this as a game with each person telling the other their alphabet of admirable qualities, achievements, talents and strengths once this week. Take turns at the dinner table.

GIVING COMPLIMENTS

Noticing strengths and positives is completed by giving sincere compliments. A well-formed compliment delivered sincerely is a precious gift that is savoured for a long time.

Unfortunately, many people find it hard to receive compliments.

To make it easier for people to receive compliments, start with the person's name if you know them well, followed with a statement of what it is that pleases you about their appearance, quality, achievement, strength, talent or behaviour.

Then, give them a reason why you are pleased with that aspect of them.

'Johanna, you handled that situation really well because you helped them to sort out exactly what was bothering them before you responded.'

'Jack, you look great in that suit because it brings out the colour in your eyes.'

'John, you handled the baby's crying so well. It was brilliant to try having a shower together.'

If people habitually reject compliments ask them a question after you have delivered the compliment.

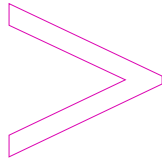
'Johanna, you handled that situation really well because you helped them to sort out exactly what was bothering them before you responded. What put you onto their worries about the future?'

'Jack, you look great in that suit because it brings out the colour in your eyes. Where did you get it?'

'John, you handled the baby's crying so well. It was brilliant to try having a shower together. What made you think of that?'



ACTIVITY SIX



POSITIVES COMPLIMENT

Choose one of the positives you identified in your partner, design a compliment and give it to them. Try for one a day!

This is likely to feel very odd at first. Keep going. Before long you will be able to give a very sincere compliment comfortably.