

Ask an Expert – Show Gratitude for Your Partner This Season (and Always!)

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This month, we celebrate the joy that comes from sharing gratitude. According to research from Harvard Health, gratitude can truly make a person happier. In recent years, psychologists have focused on the benefits that come to individuals when they create a habit of being thankful and showing gratitude. These benefits, however, are not just for the individual. This research shows that couples who show gratitude for their partner, and who express it regularly, feel more positive toward the partner. Research also shows that expressing gratitude releases oxytocin, or the “love hormone,” which builds a greater connection and bond between two people.

Although showing gratitude to your partner has many benefits, it can be difficult to find a way to do it regularly and in a meaningful way. Consider these tips to help you cultivate gratitude in your relationship.

1. **Share compliments out loud.** Have you ever caught yourself thinking something nice about your partner? Instead of keeping the thought to yourself, say it out loud. Tell your partner what you appreciate about what he or she did, right in the moment.
2. **Pitch in and give your partner a break.** It can be easy to forget or not notice how much effort your partner is putting into his or her job or at home. Show your gratitude and appreciation for those contributions by giving your partner a break and helping where you can to lessen the load.
3. **Involve your children in thanking and letting your partner know of your appreciation.** Getting children in on the joy of practicing gratitude

can be fun and worthwhile. Help your children recognize how much work your partner puts in by encouraging them to show thanks through notes, words, or chores.

4. **Write a note, text, or letter expressing appreciation and gratitude.** Can you remember the last time you wrote a love message to your partner? Go deeper than merely expressing your love; explain the reasons for your love and share the small things that he or she does to make your life better.
5. **Express gratitude for your partner, especially when he or she isn't there.** It can be easy to get into a routine of complaining about our significant others when they are not present. For example, if your coworkers are talking about what bothers them about their partners or expressing frustration about a home situation, your instinct may be to join in and share your complaints. Next time this happens, turn the complaining session into a gratitude session. Even though your partner may not be present to hear what you appreciate, you will have an increased level of gratitude and may even be able to influence those around you to have an increased level of gratitude for their partners as well.

No matter how you choose to show gratitude and cultivate a greater sense of appreciation in your relationship, remember that it is a simple way to build and strengthen your bond. In this month of November, when we focus on gratitude and giving thanks, remember that you can strengthen your relationship by sharing your appreciation for your partner, with your partner. For references and citation links, visit <https://extension.usu.edu/relationships/faq/index>.

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