
Learn to Cherish Your Partner

Thoughts of the Month: November 2008

Contrary to what many people believe, conflict and negative feelings do not ruin an intimate relationship. Imago Relationship Theory is not about sugaring up relationships to make it seem there is never an angry feeling or negative interaction. Of course, there are!

Why, just the other day I forgot a plan for the weekend that we had both talked about and Donna gave me "THAT LOOK!" You know, the one that says, "You imbecile....don't you ever listen?"

Negative interactions are inevitable, but it is the way they are handled that is all important. And what's really critical is that there is not a preponderance of negative feedback going on in a family. Researchers like John Gottman who observe couples have learned that if the positive communications far outweigh the negative ones, then the couple can be quite happy together.

So increasing the positive interactions is what I'm talking about!

Let's start with appreciations. Anyone can improve things in their relationship by actively expressing 3 - 5 appreciations for their partner each day. If you cannot think of any (or you don't "feel" appreciative) then go back to your romantic days: "I still think you have the prettiest eyes."; "I loved the way you handled that with our son." Pick something that is authentic and meaningful and you will immediately see the Space between you improve.

Learn to cherish your partner. This starts with the same courteous behavior that you would use with your colleagues or with strangers, for that matter.

To go further, make a search and discover mission to get clear about how your partner might feel cherished. Many women feel cherished when their partner spends undivided time with them, or when their partner does some act of service like cleaning up the kitchen or cooking a meal. Many men feel cherished when their partner touches them or expresses some word of praise or affirmation.

The important thing is to find out how your partner feels cherished and to learn how to supply that thought may not be what you would want. It may also not be what you feel like doing. Get over it! For help with this, get the book, *The Five Languages of Love* by Gary Chapman.

It was Gandhi who said, "You must be the change you want to see in the world." You can change your relationship for the better by learning to cherish your partner.

Hope you have a joyful and blessed Thanksgiving,
David and Donna

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