

10 Thoughts to Build Connection with Your Partner

When we feel angry, stressed or distant from our partners we often focus on their negative characteristics. This leads to distress-maintaining thoughts, which in turn leaves us feeling more distant and isolated from our partners.

The following exercise from *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* by John Gottman and Nan Silver is designed to get us back into the habit of thinking positively about our partners and rebuilding a sense of connection.

For maximum impact read the thought and then do the suggested task five days a week for the next two weeks and capture your work in a journal or notebook.

1. **Thought 1: I am genuinely fond of my partner.** Task: List one characteristic you find endearing or lovable about your partner.
2. **Thought 2: I am physically attracted to my partner.** Task: Think of one physical attribute you like about your partner.
3. **Thought 3: My partner has specific qualities that make me proud.** Task: Write down one characteristic that makes you proud of your partner.
4. **Thought 4: We have the same general beliefs and values.** Task: Describe one belief you share.
5. **Thought 5: We have common goals.** Task: List one such goal.
6. **Thought 6: My home is a place to come to get support and reduce stress.** Task: List a time when your partner helped you reduce stress.
7. **Thought 7: I can easily recall the time we first met.** Task: Describe that first meeting on paper.
8. **Thought 8: We divide up household chores in a fair way.** Task: Describe one way you do this on a regular basis.
9. **Thought 9: We are able to plan well and have a sense of control over our lives together.** Task: Describe one thing you both planned together.
10. **Thought 10: I think we can weather any storm together.** Task: Reminisce about having made it through a hard time.

As you work through this exercise you're likely to find your perspective on your partner and your relationship becoming far sunnier. What you're doing is rehearsing a more positive way to think about your partner and your relationship. Like any rehearsal, if you do it often enough, the words (and, more importantly, the thoughts) will become second nature.

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