

APPRECIATIONS & RESENTMENTS

This exercise is designed to give couples an opportunity to give valuable feedback to each other. The idea is to practise giving and receiving information without judgement. At first it is better to schedule the exchange.

1. Decide on a time each week to have this exchange. It only takes about ten minutes, but it is best carried out when there are few distractions. Mark this schedule on a common calendar.
2. Tell your partner one thing that you appreciated about him or her in the last day, or week, as per your schedule. Your partner will respond with a Thank You. Also tell your partner something that you resented. Again the response is Thank You (for giving me this feedback). Introduce resentments only after you have established a routine with appreciations.
3. The appreciation should reflect a positive quality or act that you might not otherwise tell your partner, like cleaning up the dishes or managing a child=s behaviour.
4. The resentments should be non-threatening at first. The purpose of the exercise is not to defend or debate the issue. The receiver only needs to take in the resentment, without the obligation to respond or act.
5. When you are feeling comfortable with this exercise, you will be able to express appreciations and resentments of your partner less formally, in your everyday conversations, without feeling threatened. When couples are able to honestly tell each other about their feelings, they will be drawn together.