

One Sure Thing in Successful Relationships

By Lynda Savage, M.S., LMFT, LPC

I'm teaching a couples class. I'm sharing with them well-researched and applied points that assure success in relationships. John Gottman and others have studied couples for 30 plus years discovering these things. One of many sure fire actions that work for success in relationships is thoughtful appreciation.

What does that mean; thoughtful appreciation? It means:

- Noticing and putting a few words to the tiniest daily things that make each other's day more pleasurable and comfortable
- Small gestures of appreciation and support
- Being grateful for the other's contribution to life together
- Small gestures of non-sexual appreciative touch
- Spontaneous words of kindness
- Speaking about effort a person makes, not waiting for an end product
- Couples who have been together for years still appreciate the words: "Thank you"

When assets appreciate, they grow in what they are worth. The same is true in relationships. When we value and appreciate the countless things that occur every day in life with those around us, we are investing in our own happiness and the happiness of our loved ones.

It is easy to always be on the lookout for ways we are not appreciated, especially when we have experienced hurt with a loved one in the past. As a therapist, I have seen countless people change from a very critical stance of defensiveness to using that same watchfulness to observe and comment on appreciation. Changing the habit of being sensitive to wrongs to being sensitive to rights in daily life, can and does happen.

When grateful appreciation is expressed the defensive position of being on the watch for being wronged diminishes. This cannot be a surprise given that long ago the writer of the Corinthian passage, presented at so many weddings, has said love does not keep a record of wrongs. Love is patient and kind and so on. (1Cor. 13:4-8) This passage points to what modern research says; a strong predictor of marital success is regular thoughtful appreciation.

Compliments of Practical Family Living, Inc.

P.O. Box 1676, Appleton, WI 54912 (920) 720-8920

You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute our articles in any format provided that you credit the author, no modifications are made, you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, and you include Practical Family Living's web-site address (<http://www.pfl.org>) on the copied resource. Quotations from any article are also permitted with credit to the author and citing the web-site. Any use of other materials on this web-site, including reproduction, modification, distribution or republication, without the prior written consent of Practical Family Living, Inc., is strictly prohibited.