

Love Gives Encouragement



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TIME TO CELEBRATE

Childhood Victories

Take turns sharing childhood memories about a time when a goal was accomplished, a project was completed, or a victory was achieved.

I remember being excited that...

As your partner shares, be sure to rejoice together!

I'm excited that happened. I'm proud of you!

Taking It a Little Deeper

Giving **encouragement** in things that are both big and small is one way that we uplift our partner toward new goals, projects, and achievements. When we rejoice together in past victories, it **encourages** us toward new ones.

Take turns completing the sentence below:

*I recently felt **encouraged** by you when...*

*For example: I recently felt **encouraged** by you when you listened to my dream to learn how to sing and then helped me discover how to accomplish it!*

BEING A CHEERLEADER

Expressing Encouragement

A commitment to **encouraging** one another in goals, dreams, and life challenges means we always have someone in our corner...we're a resident cheerleader for our spouse!

First, take turns sharing:

- A **goal** I have for this month (or this year) is...
- A **dream** I have for the future is...
- A **challenge** I seem to be facing is...



To get the most out of this experience...

Stay positive!

This is not the time to tell the other what he or she has done wrong. Be future focused. Focus on what you want your relationship to be like in the future. Don't concentrate on past failures. (It's okay to remember past successes.)

Talk about your relationship. Do not talk about your job, children, in-laws, etc., unless it's part of the conversation.

Give a gift of love.

Some discussion items will excite you more than others. On the less exciting ones, give a gift of love.

Participate enthusiastically!

Don't force it. If you get on a negative track, stop that discussion. Move on to another topic that you both feel good about.

If you get stuck, ask for help.

If an issue surfaces that you can't handle together, talk to a marriage coach at a local church or counseling center.

Use good communication skills.

Be prepared for some surprises and new insights about each other. They can open new opportunities for growth and intimacy in your relationship. The following are several specific tips for a great date experience:

1. Be honest, yet never unkind.
2. Remember to start your sentences with "I" and let them reflect back on you.
3. Resist attacking the other or defending yourself.
4. Be specific and positive.

Let's Talk About It

Discuss what **encouragement** "sounds like" and "looks like" to each of you—realizing you may have very different responses.

You might start with words like: *"I want to be your best cheerleader, so tell me how!"*

- Encouragement "sounds like" _____ to me.

For example: I am with you in this. In fact, I'm all in!

- Encouragement "looks like" _____ to me.

For example: Giving me a medal or trophy, just to make me smile

Let's Practice it

Practice giving the **encouragement** that best fits you, your partner, and the situation. Choose one or more of the statements below (or a different response that your partner has shared with you) and give a personal word of **encouragement** to your spouse.

- *Count on me to support you.*
- *I'm sure you can do it.*
- *I'll be praying with you about that.*
- *I'm committed to help out in any way I can.*
- *I believe in you.*
- *I'll join you in that.*

THE PERFECT ENDING

Goals, Dreams, and Challenges

Keep in mind your partner's goals, dreams, and challenges that were shared during this experience.

Reflect on your partner's insights about what **encouragement** "sounds like" and "looks like" to them.

Now, take turns being your partner's cheerleader!

- *Thinking about your goal of...I want to share with you...*
- *Reflecting on your dream of...be assured that I...*
- *Considering your challenge of...I want you to know that...*

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