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*The 12 Days of*

# Giving and Receiving

*A Couple's Exercise*

Make the holidays and every day a time to celebrate your relationship, by listening, sharing, and validating. Loving is both giving and receiving love. Every conscious present moment builds the future moments. (Some of these suggestions are adapted from The Couple's Companion for Getting the Love You Want by Harville Hendrix and Helen Hunt.

## On the First Day:

Think of one act of unconditional love that you have **received** from your partner. Tell your partner about it. Now think of one unconditional act of love you have given your partner. Keep that one to yourself, and reflect on doing something loving for your partner, unconditionally.

## On the Second Day:

Today is a time to practice active listening. Be quiet inside, but aware of the world around you. Notice the hum of electronic appliances, the person typing next to you, the traffic outside, the people chatting behind you in line—things you normally try to ignore. Try to remember that listening to my partner is loving my partner.

## On the Third Day:

Get a small piece of scrap paper and a pen. Make a list of three ways that your partner touches your heart. Today, tell your partner how beautiful they are to you.

## On the Fourth Day:

Tell your partner today one thing that they did yesterday that you appreciate. If you are not together, call them now to express that.

## On the Fifth Day:

Make a gift to your partner with no strings attached: write a love poem, rake the leaves, bring home a bouquet of balloons, do the dishes, serve breakfast in bed. Note how your partner feels and how your unfettered gift makes you feel.

## On the Sixth Day:

Today, try to convert each complaint into a desire. Instead of “you never come home on time,” say “It means so much to me when you call to let me know you will be late.” Notice the difference in how you feel.

## On the Seventh Day:

Healing is the goal of the attraction of opposites. Tell your partner today “You are the perfect partner for me because...” Fill in the blank. For example: you help me trust my voice, you help me value my quiet side, I learn to be direct from you, I learn that feelings are important to express.

## On the Eighth Day:

Surprise your partner today with that book, piece of jewelry, movie, or tool that they’ve been hinting about.



## On the Ninth Day:

Today, nothing has to be fixed, done, changed. Just relax and be in relationship, noticing the flow of activity and connection from an attitude of appreciation and trust in the good intentions of each other.

## On the Tenth Day:

On a piece of paper, write down ten ways that your partner shows their love for you. “Comes up behind me giving me a big hug,” “Takes papers and cans to recycling center,” “Stays up with me when I can’t sleep.” Tell your partner about the ways that you feel loved, and ask them to repeat them back or mirror them.

## On the Eleventh Day:

During the day today, see the humor in life: let yourself be amused by life’s ups and downs, by our human foibles. Tonight bring humor into your relationship and laugh together.

## On the Twelfth Day:

Together, write a list of 12 things that your partner does that makes you feel loved. “I feel loved and cared for you when you...(be specific and positive) For example: “when you walk the dog when I’m too tired,” “When you call me at work just to talk,” “when you notice the grocery list on the refrigerator and come home from work with the items purchased.” Share this list with each other, and be a source of pleasure to each other.