

Weekly Check-In Prompt

Having weekly check-ins with your partner can help you reflect on your relationship, share aspects that are working well, and address areas of conflict in a productive way. These regular discussions can help you both feel heard, understood, and appreciated, while preventing issues from building up and giving you space and time to practice problem-solving together.

BEFORE YOU GET STARTED:

- Find a space to have your weekly check-in that is free from distractions. Removing TV, cell phones, and other potential interruptions from the equation creates space to fully focus on each other.
- Consider writing notes during your check-in. Writing things down can help you process your thoughts and feelings, and having a record of your check-ins can be a great reference if you want to track how you've progressed over time. You and your partner can look back at the appreciations shown and the decisions you've made together, and refer back to compromises and solutions you worked through for similar issues.
- If **flooding** occurs during your check-in, pause the discussion and take a break for at least 20 minutes. When emotions are tense, intellect can become nonsense and you may say hurtful things that you will regret later. If you do take a pause, make sure both of you agree on a time to revisit the conflict and work through it together.

FLOODING

is a sensation of feeling psychologically and physically overwhelmed during conflict, making it impossible to have a productive conversation.

Here are the five steps for a weekly check-in →

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CHARACTERISTIC BANK

| | | | | |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Loving | Decisive | Playful | Careful | Gentle |
| Sensitive | Creative | Caring | Reserved | Practical |
| Brave | Imaginative | Friendly | Adventurous | Witty |
| Intelligent | Fun | Exciting | Receptive | Relaxed |
| Thoughtful | Attractive | Spontaneous | Reliable | Beautiful |
| Generous | Interesting | Shy | Responsible | Calm |
| Loyal | Supportive | Vulnerable | Dependable | Lively |
| Truthful | Funny | Committed | Nurturing | Handsome |
| Strong | Considerate | Involved | Warm | Assertive |
| Energetic | Affectionate | Expressive | Virile | Protective |
| Sexy | Organized | Active | Kind | Sweet |
| Silly | Understanding | Flexible | Powerful | Tender |

Step 2

Talk about what is going well in your relationship.

Next, take some time to discuss together what is working, improving, or going well in the relationship.

EXAMPLES:

- "I'm really proud of us working as a team in navigating the family drama at the reunion this weekend. Thank you for having my back!"
- "We're both doing a good job scheduling date nights and following through with our plans. I enjoyed our picnic date this week."
- "We talked about softer start-ups for our conversations last week, and I think we're getting better at it. What do you think?"

I'm proud of _____ .

We did really well at _____ .

I think _____ is going well because _____ .

You did a really great job at _____ .

We are getting better at _____ .

Acknowledging the work you and your partner put into the relationship will help you stay motivated and connected.

The Gottman Institute

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Step 3

Select an issue to discuss or process any regrettable incidents.

Take turns sharing any concerns you may have from the past week.

Each partner must be given a time to speak and a time to listen as you work through the different stages of your conversation. When it's your turn to speak, you get the floor for as long as you need to fully express your feelings and perspective on whatever issue you've chosen to discuss.

Note: this is a time for listening, not a time to persuade your partner or recommend a solution. The Gottmans' research shows that it is counterproductive to try to problem-solve before each partner feels fully understood.

Decide which partner will be the speaker and which will be the listener.
Then approach the conversation with this script in mind:

The speaker communicates their emotions about the problem and states a positive need.

Once the speaker talks for a few minutes, the listener reflects back on what they heard and confirms that they understand what the speaker has expressed.

Once the speaker confirms that the listener understands what they communicated, the listener should then empathize with the speaker.

• **SPEAKER:**

"I feel _____, about _____, and I need _____."
[name an emotion] [a specific event] [state a positive need]

• **LISTENER:**

"I heard _____.
Did I get it right?"
[repeat what the speaker has communicated]

SPEAKER:

"Yes, that's correct." OR
"Not quite, let me explain further."

• **LISTENER:**

"It makes sense that you feel _____ about _____ and that you need _____."
[state the feeling(s) expressed] [state the specific event] [state the need]

The speaker and listener then swap roles, and repeat.

Conflict is inevitable and necessary in any relationship. When handled constructively, it will leave you feeling more connected. For that to happen, you must work on being *attuned* to one another.

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To help you stay attuned to one another, Dr. John Gottman has developed an acronym to remember what to do during these conversations:

ATTUNE

Awareness of your partners feeling and experience

Tolerance that there are two different valid viewpoints for negative emotions

Turning Toward recognizing your partner's need and turning toward it

Understanding attempting to understand your partners' experience and their perspective

Non-defensive Listening listening to your partner's perspective without concentrating on victimizing yourself or reversing the blame

Empathy responding to your partner with an understanding, awareness, and sensitivity to their experience and needs

Step 4

Tell each other what you need to feel more loved, connected, and supported.

Share one thing your partner can do to help you feel more connected, loved, and supported in the coming week.

HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES:

- "One thing that would help me feel more loved in the coming week is if we spent some time cuddling in bed on Saturday morning."
- "I need you to say 'I love you' more often to me. I know that you do love me, but hearing it from you more often will help me feel more connected to you."
- "Could you help me with the birthday party preparation for this weekend? I need your support and to feel like we're a team."

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One thing I need this week is _____
_____.

Step 5

End your weekly check-in discussion.

Once you've worked through steps 1 through 4, confirm with your partner if there's anything else they'd like to address for the week.

FOR EXAMPLE:

- "Do you want to briefly go over the social engagements and plans for the upcoming week?"
- "Are there any projects around the house that require your attention this week?"
- "What are some things outside of your relationship that you need to pay attention to this week?"
- "Do you need to revisit any of the previous check-in steps?"

Once both of you are satisfied, agree to conclude your conversation.