Decreasing Criticism and Judgment in Your Relationship

Objective

To identify the judgments and criticisms you make about your partner and to increase your supportive behavior.

You Should Know

It is only natural to occasionally judge or even criticize your partner. However, if you find that you are constantly judging your partner's behavior and making critical comments, then you are devaluing your partner and eroding your relationship.

Certain kinds of criticism are particularly destructive in a relationship, including

- Criticism that is directed at your partner's personality or character, rather than his/her behavior.
- Criticism that is intended to blame or shame your partner.
- Criticism that suggests there is no room for improvement.
- Criticism that assumes there is only one right way to do things.
- Criticism that is belittling or unkind.

If there are things you want your partner to change, he or she is much more likely to do this when you act in ways which are supportive and respectful. When your partner feels valued and respected, he or she will be much more interested in trying to please you.

What to Do

Over the next few weeks, write down each time you find yourself criticizing your partner and how he or she reacts. Also, write down the supportive things you say or do and how your partner reacts. See if you can decrease your critical comments and increase your supportive statements.

Date	What did you say to criticize your partner?	How did your partner react?	What supportive thing did you say or do?	How did your partner react?

How does your partner react when you are critical?

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How does your partner react when you are more supportive?

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Did you see any patterns about the way you and your partner relate to each other?

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Reflections on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = Not very helpful to 10 = Extremely helpful)

Is there anything specific you learned from this exercise?

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