

# What to Do When You Feel Unappreciated and Undervalued

## Objective

To reduce the likelihood you will feel unappreciated and undervalued.

## What to Know

You might wonder if the things you do for others are worth your time and energy. Perhaps you feel your efforts are ignored, or others expect things from you without showing their appreciation. It might seem easier to stop trying or even end a relationship if your efforts are repeatedly ignored and unacknowledged.

You might feel undervalued or unappreciated in a romantic relationship, with your family, at work, or elsewhere. This can affect how you feel about yourself and your behavior toward others, eventually leading to resentment and anger. Here are some suggestions if you feel unappreciated or undervalued by the people around you.

**Communicate.** When you feel like no one cares about who you are or what you have done for them, clearly express how you feel without accusing or attacking them. Provide examples of when you felt unappreciated or undervalued. You might say, “Sometimes, I feel like my work goes unnoticed. I really enjoy it when my efforts are appreciated.” Sometimes others fail to realize their actions hurt you. If, however, you find a person truly does not appreciate you, decide if you want to continue the relationship.

**Model appreciation.** Do you offer appreciation to the people in your life? If you want to be valued and appreciated by others, make sure you are expressing appreciation in your relationships. Your expressions of gratitude and respect can shift things and reduce resentment. Thank your loved ones for all they do for you by saying, “thank you,” or sending them a note reminding them how much you appreciate them. Whatever you choose, make it genuine and heartfelt.

**Consider others’ actions.** Maybe others fail to say the words you expect them to say. Perhaps they show their appreciation in other ways – with a touch on the shoulder or a gift. But you might still need to hear the words. If so, let them know what you need and how they can supply it – if they choose.

**Consider your motives.** Do you do things so others will appreciate or validate you? If so, instead of acting out of a need for recognition, make choices based on what you want. This does not mean you will never do anything for anyone else. When you do things for others (and focus on the pleasure you experience), your resentment and anger will lessen. Also, before you do something for someone else, consider whether you will resent it if you receive a negative response – or no response at all.

**Avoid attaching to roles.** You do not have to do something just because others in that role have done it before you. Work with others to identify ways for everyone to contribute equally. If something needs to be done (and no one wants to do it), take turns.

**Focus on teamwork.** Although working together can be ideal, it does not mean others will acknowledge your part in it or value what you have contributed. So, pitch in, do your part, and show appreciation for the parts others play.

**Be objective.** Perhaps the person is so focused on their own problems they do not show their gratitude. It might not be about you at all. Try to identify what is behind the lack of appreciation. What you do – and who you are – might actually matter to the other person – they just cannot (or will not) show it. If you cannot remain objective, a mental health professional or coach can help you define your feelings and make reasonable choices.

**Make different choices.** If the other person is unwilling to value you and express their appreciation to you, explore why their appreciation means so much to you. Be more assertive in asking for recognition. Reassess what you want in life and decide if you want to continue the relationship.

**Set limits and say "no."** Sometimes, the more you do for others, the more they expect you to do. And they might forget to appreciate all you do. So, just say, "no" to remind others not to take you for granted. Saying "no" is also a good idea if you are a people pleaser. Declining a request for a favor might be hard if you always say "yes," but doing so reminds you (and others) that you do not have to do anything you do not want to do.

**Be kind.** Showing kindness can boost your happiness, and helping others without expectations can increase your confidence and self-esteem. Consider all the things you gain from doing things for others.

**Reframe negative thoughts.** Watch for negative thoughts, like, "No one ever does anything nice for me," or "Everyone expects me to do everything!" Respond to negative and unhelpful thoughts with more realistic ones and remind yourself of the times others have shown their appreciation.

**Seek help.** If you chronically feel unappreciated or undervalued, your wellbeing and relationships will likely suffer. You may want to talk to a mental health professional or life coach about how you are feeling.

Feeling unappreciated and undervalued can be hurtful, and sometimes it may be intentional. But other times it can be easily addressed. This worksheet will help you cope when you feel unappreciated and undervalued.

## What to Do

First, answer the following questions.

Describe why you feel unappreciated or undervalued. Write down specific examples, and who is involved.

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Why does their appreciation mean so much to you?

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Have you had a conversation with the person or people involved? Why or why not?

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If you have not communicated your feelings, jot down some ideas about what you might say.

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Do you have a hard time expressing appreciation or valuing others? Explain.

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Do you tend to be a people pleaser? Explain.

Next, fill in the boxes on the next page.

**All the things I do for others!**

**The last time I felt truly valued was  
when...**

**And it made me feel...**

**All the ways I show my appreciation to others...**

**Things that make me feel good about  
myself:**

**The people in my life that make me feel good about  
myself:**

**And what I can do to achieve this:**

**Because...**

## Reflections on This Exercise

What was easy about this activity? Difficult? What would you like to do to continue practicing feeling valued and appreciated? Be specific.

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Did this exercise make you feel more valued and appreciated? Why or why not?

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How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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