



Exercise 1: The Emotional Bank Account

Choose the three that you most wish your partner would do with you. You can also circle an item if you and your spouse already do it jointly but you wish you did so more frequently or that your spouse was more “there” emotionally during the activity.

For example, if you currently read the newspaper together every morning but wish your spouse would discuss the news with you more instead of just reading silently, you can circle that item.

1. Reunite at the end of the day and talk about how it went.
2. Shop for groceries. Make up the shopping list.
3. Cook dinner, bake.
4. Clean house, do laundry.
5. Shop together for gifts or clothes (for self, kids, or friends).
6. Go out (no kids) for brunch or dinner, or to your favorite spot.
7. Read the morning paper together.
8. Help each other with a self-improvement plan (new class, weight loss, exercise, a new career).
9. Plan and host a dinner party.
10. Call and/or think about each other during the workday.
11. Go to church together.
12. Eat breakfast together during the work week.
13. Stay overnight at a romantic hideaway.
14. Do yard work, do home repairs, car maintenance, and washing.
15. Perform committee work in the community (e.g., volunteering).
16. Exercise together.
17. Go on weekend outings (e.g., picnic, drives).
18. Spend “everyday” time with kids- bedtimes, baths, homework.
19. Take the kids on outings- (e.g., zoo, museum, dinner).
20. Attend school functions (e.g., teacher conference).
21. Stay in touch with/spend time with parents, in-laws, siblings.
22. Entertain out of town guests.
23. Travel together (plane, car, bus).
24. Watch TV or videos.
25. Order take out.



26. Double –date with friends
27. Attend sporting events.
28. Engage in a favorite activity (bowling, hike, ski, canoe, bike, go to an amusement park, sail, swim, etc).
29. Talk or read together by an open fire.
30. Listen to music.
31. Go dancing or attend a concert, nightclub, jazz club, or theater.
32. Host your child's birthday party.
33. Take your child to lessons.
34. Attend your child's sporting events or performance.
35. Pay bills.
36. Write letters or cards.
37. Deal with family medical events (take kids to the doctor, dentist, or emergency room).
38. Work at home but still be together in some way.
39. Go to a community event (e.g., promotion, graduation).
40. Go to a party.
41. Drive to or from work together.
42. Celebrate milestones in your children's lives (confirmation, graduation).
43. Celebrate other milestones in your lives (e.g., promotion, retirement).
44. Play computer games, surf the Internet.
45. Supervise your children's play dates.
46. Plan vacations.
47. Plan your future together. Dream.
48. Walk the dog.
49. Read out loud together.
50. Play a board game or a card game.
51. Put on plays or skits together.
52. Do errands together on a weekend.
53. Engage in hobbies; e.g., painting sculpting making music.
54. Find time to just talk without interruptions- find time for spouse to really listen to you.
55. Philosophize
56. Gossip (talk about other people).
57. Attend a funeral.
58. Help out other people.
59. Do devotions together.
60. Test drive new cars.



61. Hunt for a new house or apartment.

62. _____.

Now, share your top three choices with each other so you both know how best to turn toward each other and accrue points. Rather than being critical on what your partner has not done in the past, focus on what you would like to have happen now.

The real benefit of this exercise comes when you both look at the other three items your partner chose and follow through by committing to do one of them. This should be a firm agreement.

The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work

By: John M. Gottman, PH.D., and Nan Silver