

# Weekly Check-In

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 time and space to practice collaborative problem-solving together. To create a more loving you, make a commitment to discipline and practice.

## Before You Get Started

- Please put aside an hour each week
- Find a space to have your weekly check-ins 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 irrational 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, listening to each other deeply. Choose to listen to the partner who was flooding.

### **Flooding**

is a sensation of feeling psychologically and physically overwhelmed during conflict, making it impossible to have a productive conversation.  
(A "hook" of old hurts)

There are five steps for a weekly check-in ----->

## Step 1 - Give one another 5 appreciations.

The first step is to have a pre-conflict warm up. By focusing on the positive aspects of your partner and of your relationship at the beginning of the discussion, you remind yourselves that you are fighting for each other, not against each other. Noticing the positive defuses tension and makes it easier for both of you to work together.

Take turns sharing five things your partner did in the past week that you appreciated. Think of an example or incident where your partner displayed a positive trait, and note what that positive characteristic means about your partner.

I appreciate \_\_\_\_\_. (be specific, imagine why that was important to them)

### Examples:

- *I appreciated when you took the kids out for breakfast on Saturday so I could sleep in because it shows me you are thoughtful and caring. Plus, it's a special time for our kids. I imagine you love those moments with our children.*
- *I appreciate that you always do the dishes after I cook dinner. It's considerate of you and it helps chores feel balanced in our relationship. You want us to have a balanced relationship with our household responsibilities.*
- *I appreciate that you helped me figure out that difficult work situation this week. I really value your thinking and input, and it took some of the stress out of finding a solution. You want me to be less stressed for all of us.*

I appreciate \_\_\_\_\_.

### Need ideas?

Identify the positive characteristics that your partner displayed this week.  
Practice empathetic understanding of your partner. What's important to them.

## 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. Five minutes each way: one of you focuses on what went well while the other listens and summarizes what they heard. Then the other partner goes for five minutes. No interruptions during each partners' speaking.

### 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 conversation 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 good 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.

### 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 perspectives 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. 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 heard and understand what the speaker has expressed. Practice empathy for the other.

Our role is to understand the other before our need to be understood.

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 \_\_\_\_\_."

Listener:  
"I heard \_\_\_\_\_. Did I get  
it right?"

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

Listener:  
"It makes sense that you feel \_\_\_\_\_  
about \_\_\_\_\_, and that you 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.

## Step 4 - Tell each other what you need in order 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.*

One thing I need this week is \_\_\_\_\_.

## Step 5 - End your weekly check-in discussion

Once you've worked through steps one through four, 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 plan 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?*

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

Remember, your hope is that this weekly check-in will create a mutually empowering loving relationship.

For more information, look at our website [www.hetimaine.org/reading-room-relationships](http://www.hetimaine.org/reading-room-relationships).