

Are You There For Your Partner When The Going Gets...Good?

When we start dating seriously, get engaged, or get married, one of the things we hope for and expect from our partners is support. After all, we all need a shoulder to cry on and a listening ear...someone to be there for us when times are rough. If a partner doesn't play that role well, we may feel alone and frustrated.

But what about when something *great* happens to us, like an award, a new job, a lucky break, or an accomplishment? Are our partners "there for us" in the good times, too?

If you've never thought about that question, maybe you should. Believe it or not, how our partners respond when *good* things occur might even be more important than how they react when there's trouble. Read on to learn more.

Are You Active and Constructive?

In various studies, researchers have looked at how couples behave towards each other when talking about events in their lives. Specifically, they wanted to know whether being active vs. passive and constructive vs. destructive in response to good news would influence relationships.

What does it mean to be active or passive and constructive or destructive? Well, let's take this situation. Imagine that you just found out that you got a promotion at work, and you can't wait to get home and tell your spouse. When you finally spill the beans, how does your spouse react?

A. "Wow, that's amazing! I'm so proud of you and your accomplishments. Tell me more about it." (*active and constructive*)

B. "Isn't that going to mean a lot more responsibility? Do you think you can handle it?" (*active and destructive*)

C. "That's great, hon. Can you pass the remote?" (*passive and constructive*)

D. "I'm never going to get promoted. I hate my stupid job." (*passive and destructive*)

What This Means for Your Relationship

Men and women whose partners were *active and constructive* in response to good news were more satisfied with their relationships and rate them as higher-quality. They also reported more feelings of commitment and passionate love! But when people were *negative and/or passive* in response to their partners' good news, couples were more likely to be dissatisfied--and more likely to break up.

What's more, people's feelings and opinions about how their partner responded to *good* news seemed to matter more than how they felt about their partners' ability to support them after *bad* news.

(By the way, if at first you thought choice C was an okay response, it seems that lukewarm enthusiasm doesn't cut it. Researchers think responses like this can make someone seem selfish, out of touch or uninterested.)

Be Excited For The Good Stuff!

So here's some important advice for couples: remember to really "be there" for your spouse or partner when he or she has had a great day or exciting news. This sharing of happiness and positive feelings seems to really matter to us in relationships. Your genuine interest and active response can bring the two of you closer together, which is "good news" for you both.

References:

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