**Quality Time Together, Kindness, and Gratitude**

*Prior to starting, ensure that you have viewed the homefun assignments so you can confidently review them with the client.*

***Hi \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_***

Welcome back to the session today. We are currently in session 9 of 10 sessions. Today we will talk about quality time together, kindness, and gratitude in relationships. Before we begin with our warm up exercise, I would like to check in with you. How are you feeling in this moment, what sensations, thoughts, and emotions come up for you right now? Can you rate your mood from 1-10?

***Let’s start off with our warm-up based on positive psychology….***

* *(If needed: The reason why we do this is to help us focus, highlight, and identify some of the positive things that you do and are doing to manage your social-emotional well-being.)*
  + *How has another person shown that they care about you within the past week?*
  + *What has happened this week that has been exciting?*
  + *Describe something fun that you did today.*
  + *What was something nice you said to someone this week?*
  + *Describe something that made you laugh this week.*
  + *Describe something you were thankful for this week.*
  + *What was a challenge you overcame this week?*
  + *What was something that made you feel happy this week?*

**Ok so let’s spend some time discussing the worksheets from last week:**

* Setting Boundaries Worksheet
* Passive, Aggressive, and Assertive Communication

**Ask the client which worksheet they would like to discuss.**

**Boundary Discussion Q):** Let's pick two of the scenarios to review your response in setting boundaries OR Tell me about an interaction that happened over the last week where you needed to set a boundary

OR

**Assertiveness Discussion Q):** Let's pick two of the scenarios to review your responses as either passive, assertive, or aggressive OR Tell me about an interaction that happened over the last week where you used assertiveness

**Ok so let’s spend some time discussing the video from last week.**

**Stop Bickering. It is Killing Your Relationship**- **5.5 MINS**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xl7AcgjCyLU&ab\_channel=EstherPerel**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xl7AcgjCyLU&ab_channel=EstherPerel)

***Q) What stood out the most for you from that video? What were your takeaways?***

**Q) What were your takeaways?**

**Q) What skills/strategies did you learn?**

**Q) How can you apply these skills to your own relationship?**

**Stop Bickering. It is Killing Your Relationship Review of Video**

**Main Points:**

The video is about relational conflicts.

**What is Bickering?**

* Low intensity chronic warfare
* Ongoing negative friction

**Criticism:**

* Produces the opposite effect of what we seek when we are loved and love someone which is to feel good about ourselves.
* If you are with someone in which you constantly feel lousy, unloved, uncared, devalued, inadequate and so on, this can be very detrimental to your well being and your relationship.
* Criticism sits on a top of a mountain of disappointment, unmet needs, unfulfilled longings
* Behind criticism is a wish or request. It is important to state this request. ie. I would really like you to do the dishes more often.
* If instead of focusing on your request, you criticise, you are likely to get negative push back from your partner. Remember, the more you give anger, the more you are going to get the anger back.
* Think about the difference in the following statement: “We never go to the movies.” VERSUS “I really miss when we used to go to the movies. It would be really fun if we could go.”
* Think about the difference in the following statement: “I’m always the one who does the dishes, you never do the dishes, you are very inconsiderate.” VERSUS “I had a really long day and I am exhausted. Can you do the dishes tonight?”

**Content: Spending Quality Time Together**

**Time is a precious resource** and there is an unending list of people, tasks and distractions vying for your attention. An absolute critical success factor for your relationship is not only the quantity, but more importantly, the quality of the time you spend together. Friendship is the foundation for a healthy marriage - and this takes time.

“Couples with deep friendship have mutual respect and enjoyment of each other’s company. They tend to know each other intimately – they are well versed in each other’s likes, dislikes, personality quirks, hopes and dreams. They have an abiding regard for each other and express this fondness not just in the big ways but in little ways day in and day out.”   
*John Gottman*

Time spent together is essential for relationship growth. Of course, this may sound obvious, however we are often slow to create time-slots to ensure we have cohesion. Time-slots can include how much time you want to spend together, apart, with separate friends, with collective friends, with children, without children. There are plenty of areas to consider. Often if we don’t establish our plans, we’ll end up discussing (or fighting about it) once our time is compromised.

**Make sure you both prioritize quality time together.**

***Q)*** *Describe your ideal day*

**Q)** What do you enjoy doing with your friends?

**Q)** What do you enjoy doing by yourself?

**Q)** What do you enjoy doing with your partner?

**Content: Be a Master - Not a Disaster - in Your Relationship**

Read: What is the key to a lasting relationship?

**How can we find out the warning signs to an unhealthy relationship?**

John Gottman, a psychologist who runs the Gottman Institute which specializes in relationship stability, appears to have discovered the answer to such questions. In 1986, Gottman ran a study where he brought newly married couples into the lab and watched them interact with one another. He then separated the couples into two groups, disasters and masters. Six years later, he did a follow-up and the masters remained in healthy and happy relationships, whereas the disasters had broken up or were in unhealthy relationships.

**What are the differences?**

When disasters were interviewed, Gottman noted that they had increased physiological reactions, such as an increased heart rate and more active sweat glands. Essentially, they are in a flight-or-fight mode, either waiting to be verbally attacked or doing the verbal attacking.

Masters, on the other hand, did not have such increased physiological reactions, they appeared to be calm and collected, and subsequently they displayed warm and affectionate behaviours toward one another.

In a follow up study, Gottman observed how one partner would say a statement, which they labelled as a ‘bid’ and the other partner would either turn towards or away from the bid. For example, an individual would say to their partner, “Look, at that beautiful bird outside!” –

Gottman would consider that a bid - and the partner can either respond by ‘turning toward’ their partner and showing interest in the bird, or turning away by ignoring the statement or minimally responding. These bids might seem like inconsequential interactions between partners, but the couples who ended their relationship after the six-year follow-up only turned towards their partner 33 percent of the time, compared to couples who are still married after 6 years, who turned towards their partner 87 percent of the time.

Gottman found that **Masters are scanning the environment and looking for ways to appreciate and say ‘thank you’ to their partner. Disasters, however, are scanning the environment, or more specifically their partners, for perceived mistakes and then criticizing them for it.**  According to Gottman’s research, such negativity is the number one factor that tears couples apart. By constantly focusing on the negative things our partners do we are missing all the positive things they are doing. And as we are only focusing on the negative, our partners will start to engage in less and less positive activities within the relationship, feeling it is not appreciated, and so the negativity between the partners continues to grow and the positivity continues to decline.

On the other hand, the most important predictor of stability and satisfaction in a relationship is kindness. Masters know that a good relationship requires sustained hard work. This doesn’t mean that we should never get angry at our partners, but that our anger should be expressed kindly.

While it is important to be there for each other when things get rough, it is also important to be there for each other when things are going right. Responding with genuine enthusiasm for your partner’s joy is another characteristic of a lasting relationship. Two other important ingredients to a lasting relationship is being kind and generous.

So Gottman came up with the term “Bid-Making” to describe the small connections attempts for the partner’s attention, affection, humour or support; the receiving partner chooses to either accept the bid (turning toward) or to reject the bid (turning away or turning against) of the other partner.

**Exercise: Give an example to the client, and then have them come up with their own responses for the scenarios**

Turning Towards your Partner’s Bids for Connection

Bid: My partner reads a joke that she thinks is funny.

Turning away Response: *Have you seen my black shoes?*

Turning Against: *I can’t concentrate when you’re reading like that.*

Turning Towards: *I don’t get it. What cracks you up about it?*

Bid: My partner tells me some bit of news about a friend.

Turning away Response: *Ok.*

Turning Against: *Are you still friends with them?*

Turning Towards: *Oh really? Asking a question about that?*

Bid: My partner mentions something that needs to be done in the kitchen.

Turning away Response:

Turning Against:

Turning Towards:

Bid: My partner tells me we are out of milk.

Turning away Response:

Turning Against:

Turning Towards:

Bid: My partner admires the neighbour’s new television.

Turning away Response:

Turning Against:

Turning Towards:

Bid: My spouse expresses she is concerned about our child.

Turning away Response:

Turning Against:

Turning Towards:

Bid: My partner tells me about an event at work, she felt unfairly treated.

Turning away Response:

Turning Against:

Turning Towards:

Bid: My spouse touches me in a loving way

Turning away Response:

Turning Against:

Turning Towards:

# Content: Gratitude

For many, gratitude is a practice. It is a decision that is made: to choose a new view of the same life, same moment, same situation and same people. When we choose an attitude of gratitude the external world is not changed – we are. Some are born with the natural inclination to just see the best in all things, but for most, gratitude becomes a choice to shift from an experience of stress, pain, fear or hopelessness to a life view that feels vibrant and purposeful.

The choice to be grateful is like putting on a new pair of glasses. With the old pair, not only is our vision blurred to the clarity of our world or our experience, but our vision may be so poor that we are missing important elements entirely. This is not to be confused with the term ‘putting on rose-coloured glasses’. We are not creating or over-emphasizing an artificially happy, pumped-up view of a situation. Gratitude is openness; a full observation of all aspects of what we are viewing or experiencing. It is simply being aware of what is challenging, while choosing to cultivate our thankfulness for what is beautiful, inspirational and amazing about life.

# Gratitude List

Take time every day to write down all of the things you are grateful for, in a journal or notebook. You may want to do this every night before bed, or before your mindfulness practice or meditation.

Example: **ask the client to think of three things they are thankful for today**

Today I’m thankful for . . .

* the sunlight on the grass outside my window
* the warm breeze on my feet from my heater at my desk
* hot coffee in my favourite mug
* waking up to my cat purring in my ear

**Final Exercise- (if there is time)**

Safe Place Imagery

* Find a comfortable position and close your eyes.
* Imagine a place where you feel calm, peaceful and safe.
* It may be a place you have been before, somewhere you have dreamt about going to, or maybe somewhere you have seen a picture of.
* Focus on the colors in your peaceful place.
* Now notice the sounds that are around you, or perhaps that silence.
* Think about any smells you notice there,
* Then focus on any skin sensation- the earth beneath you, the temperature, any movement of air, anything else you can touch.
* Now whilst you are in your peaceful and safe place, you might choose to give it a name, whether one work or a phrase that you can use to bring that image back, anytime you need to.
* You can choose to linger there a while, just enjoying the peacefulness and serenity. You can leave whenever you want to. just by opening your eyes and being aware of where you are now.

**Homefun for Next Week:**

**Videos:**

The 7 Principles For Making Marriage Work by John Gottman - **7 MINS**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knBJGNisJS0&ab\_channel=OnePercentBetter**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knBJGNisJS0&ab_channel=OnePercentBetter)

**Worksheets:**

* Building Shared Qualities
* Relationship Growth Activity (find out two NEW things about your partner)

**Check out –** Mood 1-10 Takeaways

**End session:** Summarize key points of session.

**End of Session 9**

# EMAIL Client

**MFFS 10-Week HIR course – Session 9**

Hi \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

It was great to be with you for session 9 today. The goal of this program is for you to obtain skills and knowledge to develop Healthy Intimate Relationships to improve your day-to-day intimate relationships.

**Our homefun this week is:**

1. Watch:
   1. The 7 Principle For Making Marriage Work by John Gottman - **7 MINS**

[**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knBJGNisJS0&ab\_channel=OnePercentBetter**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knBJGNisJS0&ab_channel=OnePercentBetter)

* + 1. ***What are the main points of this video?***
    2. ***What skills/strategies did I learn?***
    3. ***How can I apply these skills to my own situation?***

1. **Read and work on:**
2. Building Shared Qualities
3. Relationship Growth Activity (find out two NEW things about your partner)

**Do what you can, you do not need to do all of it at once. Breaking it down and doing about 5-10 mins a day can sometimes make it easier. Please reach out to your counsellor if you need support.**

Warm regards,

Your Name