

## Combating Negative Patterns

According to the National Science Foundation, an average person has about 12,000 to 60,000 **thoughts** per day. Of those, 80% are **negative**. So it shouldn't come as a surprise that negative thinking can creep into a marriage. As creatures of the Fall, negative thinking just tends to come more naturally. What this means is it takes effort and supernatural presence of God to combat these negative patterns. Below is a great tool that you can use to help you have some enriching conversations that can combat negative thinking and lead to a more positive view of your marriage.

Read the following sentences and complete at least 5 of them. When you are done, share with your partner.

It values me when you \_\_\_\_\_

I feel loved when you \_\_\_\_\_

I feel like you respect me when you \_\_\_\_\_

I feel close to you when you \_\_\_\_\_

I feel happy when you \_\_\_\_\_

You affirmed me when you \_\_\_\_\_

You communicated well when you \_\_\_\_\_

I appreciate your \_\_\_\_\_

One quality I really like about you is \_\_\_\_\_

You helped me when \_\_\_\_\_

You are exceptionally \_\_\_\_\_

Don't let this be a one-time experiment. Learn how to incorporate these statements of blessing throughout your life together. As you work through this exercise, you learn more about your spouse and what is meaningful to them. Look for spontaneous ways to bless your spouse based on what they share with you in this list. For example, if my wife says it values her when I give her eye

contact when we talk, I might make her a cup of tea, turn off the TV(if she is not watching the show!), and ask her about her day.

It is amazing how making little contributions over a long period of time can break to cycle of negativity and lead to a positive and more Christ-like pattern.

This worksheet was published Everett L Worthington, author of the book Hope-Focused Marriage Counseling.