

HOW GRATITUDE HELPS FEND OFF FIGHTS

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When you think of the way you express and experience gratitude in your relationship, what comes to mind? Perhaps it's kind words, heartfelt gestures, or a loving smile or touch. These are momentary expressions of the sentiment, but the fact is, the influence of *a grateful mindset* has a way of echoing throughout your entire relationship in a positive way that promotes a sense of harmony. We're not saying it will prevent you from ever fighting but it can help you avoid the unnecessary ones that do more damage than good. Not sure what we mean? Keep reading.

Gratitude prevents you from taking each other for granted.

We've learned to live with a lot more uncertainty lately; we don't know what tomorrow, next week, or next year will bring, so instead, focus on how to cherish each other every day. Knowing life can change in the blink of an eye makes us less likely to want to spend time fighting about trivial things.

Gratitude sparks a cycle of positive interactions.

Dr. John Gottman's "magical ratio" posits that in the happiest marriages, there are five positive interactions for every negative one. Regularly expressing genuine gratitude to each other means you'll likely receive a positive response, evoking a positive response from you and so on. You'll be less likely to get into a fight over something trivial if it's sandwiched by kind words or some physical affection.

Gratitude helps you see the bigger picture.

In situations in where annoyance or anger would be the easy response, a lens of gratitude gives you the perspective shift you need to see the full context of the situation. It helps you zoom out to see the whole person, instead of zeroing in just one mistake or flaw.

Gratitude boosts satisfaction.

Various studies in recent years have found that when partners feel more gratitude toward each other, they also feel more satisfied in their relationship. If you're feeling more satisfied, you're going to be less likely to nitpick at your spouse or let anger or bitterness bubble up. If you do have an issue, you're better able to address it in an empathetic way and be more receptive to feedback from each other.

Gratitude counteracts resentment.

Regularly expressing gratitude to each other can temper the little annoyances that have a way of building up over time. Making an effort to thank each other for specific things (*"Hey, thanks for planning the meals this week, that really lightened my load this week."*) or more general (*"I'm really lucky to have you by my side."*) can help you both let go of irritation that might take root if you rarely show each other appreciation.

Choosing gratitude in the midst of anger, stress, or annoyance isn't easy. It takes conscious effort and practice. But a grateful mindset can spark a chain reaction of good vibes in your relationship, making it less likely that you'll succumb to unnecessary fights that result in hurt feelings or resentment.